













THE HISTORIANS'  
HISTORY  
OF THE WORLD









THE BURGHEERS OF CALAIS

Painted especially for "The Historians' History of the World" by R. E. Miller



# THE HISTORIANS' HISTORY OF THE WORLD

A Comprehensive Narrative  
of the Rise and Development  
of Nations from the Earliest  
Times as recorded by over  
Two Thousand of the Great  
Writers of All Ages. Edited  
with the Assistance of a Dis-  
tinguished Board of Advisers  
and Contributors

BY

HENRY SMITH WILLIAMS, LL.D.



IN TWENTY-SEVEN VOLUMES

VOLUME XI—FRANCE, 843-1715

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**VOLUME XI**  
**FRANCE, 843-1715**



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THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL EVOLUTION OF FRANCE

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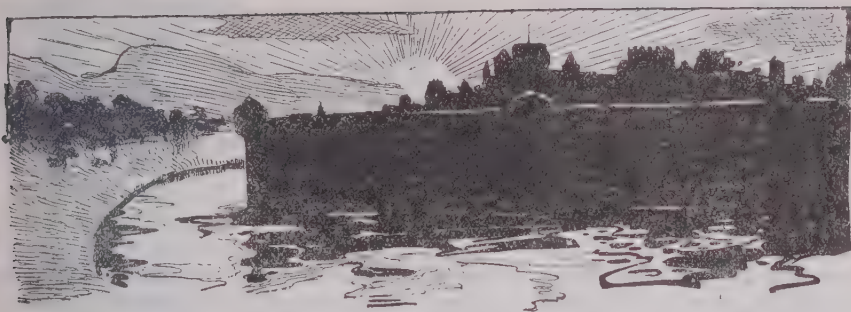
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## CHAPTER I

### THE LATER CARLOVINGIANS

[843-987 A.D.]

CHARLES THE BALD (843-877 A.D.)

UP to the present we have told the history of the Gauls, the Gallo-Romans, and the Franks; with the Treaty of Verdun we begin the history of the French people. There now existed in France, except the Northmen, who already were beginning to appear on its coast and who established themselves there only in small numbers, all the races of which her people are formed, and all the elements, Celtic, Roman, Christian, and Germanic, whose combination goes to make up her civilisation. The medley is even already too sufficiently advanced for one to distinguish any longer the Gallo-Roman from the Frank, the civilised man from the barbarian. All have the same customs and almost all the same tongue. The French idiom showed itself officially in the Treaty of Verdun. Law ceases to be personal and becomes local; national custom replaces the Roman or barbaric codes; there are scarcely any slaves; there are but few free men—we shall soon see nothing but serfs and lords.

But this France has no longer the extent of Gaul; the Treaty of Verdun has confined it to the Schelde and the Maas, the Saône and the Rhone, and the population within these narrow limits finds them still too broad; they wish to live apart, for themselves alone, and not to sustain a vast dominion which is crushing them and which they do not understand.

The son of Judith and Louis le Débonnaire, Charles the Bald, king of France since 840, was nothing but an ambitious man of the people. Length of days was generously bestowed upon him, as it had been with Charlemagne, for he reigned thirty-seven years—but he knew how to do nothing with his life. Difficulties, it is true, were great. The same year when the destinies of the empire were moulded at Fontenailles, Asnar, count of Jaca, helped himself to the sovereignty of Navarre, and the Northmen burned Rouen—in 843 they pillaged Nantes, Saintes, and Bordeaux. At the same

time the Aquitanians rose up for a national king. The Bretons had found theirs in Noménoë, whom Charles had excommunicated by the bishops, but who defeated his lieutenants; and Septimania had its chief in Bernhard. The Saracens and the Greek pirates ravaged the south while the Northmen devastated the north and the west. And as if to fill the cup of misfortune of which this age was the bearer, the Hungarians, successors of the Huns and Avars, were putting in an appearance in the east.

### THE NORTHMEN

These dreaded pirates, the Northmen, were the men whom hunger, thirst for pillage, and love of adventure drove each year from the sterile regions of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. In three days an east wind brought their two-masted ships to the mouth of the Seine. The fleet obeyed a *kuning* or king. "But," says Augustin Thierry, "he was king only at sea and in battle; for when the banquet hour arrived the whole troop sat at the same table, and the beer-filled horns passed from hand to hand without there being a first or a last. The sea-king was followed everywhere with fidelity and obeyed with zeal, for always he was reputed the bravest of the brave, like him who had never drained a cup at a protected fireside.

"He knew how to handle ships as a good knight his horse, and to the ascendancy of courage and skill there was added the power that superstition gave him. He was initiated in the sciences of the Runes. He knew the mysterious characters which, graven on swords, would procure victory, and those which inscribed on the stern or on the oars would prevent shipwreck. All equal under such a chief, supporting lightly their voluntary submission and the weight of mailed armour which they promised themselves to exchange for an equal weight of gold, the Danish pirates gaily travelled the 'path of the swans,' as their ancient national poetry called it. Now they hugged the shores and watched their enemy in the narrow straits, bays, and little anchorage grounds, from which they got their name of vikings, —children of the bays and creeks,—now they hurled themselves forth in pursuit of him across the ocean. The violent storms of the North Sea scattered and crushed their frail ships. There were always some missing when from the chief's ship came the signal to gather together, but those who survived their shipwrecked companions had no less confidence and no more concern. They laughed at the winds and the waves which could not destroy them. 'The might of the storm,' they sang, 'aids the arms of our oarsmen — the tempest is at our service; it throws us where we would go.'"

Some of them often, in the midst of the clash of arms and the sight of blood, became possessed with a sort of mad fury which redoubled their strength and made them insensible to wounds—as if they saw revealed to their eyes the palace of their god Odin and the shining hall of Valhalla. Others showed an irresistible courage under torture, and sang their death-song in the agonies of torment. Thus the famous Lodbrog, when thrown into a ditch filled with vipers, flung proudly back these words to his enemies:

"We have fought with the sword. I was still young when in the East, under the stars of Eirar, we dug a river of blood for the wolves and invited the yellow-legged bird to a great banquet of corpses: the sea was red like a fresh-opened wound and the ravens swam in blood.

"We have fought with the sword. I have seen near Aienlane (England) numberless bodies filling the decks of the ships; we continued the fight for

[837-847 A.D.]

six whole days and the enemy did not give in; the seventh, at sunrise, we celebrated the mass of swords. Valthiof was forced to bend under our arms.

"We have fought with the sword. Torrents of blood rained from our swords at Partohyrth (Pesth). The vulture could find no more in the bodies; the bow thrummed and arrows buried themselves in coats of mail; sweat ran over the sword blades. They poured poison into the wounds and harvested the warriors like Odin's hammer.

"We have fought with the sword. Death seizes me. The bite of the vipers has been deep. I feel their teeth at my heart. Soon, I hope the sword will avenge me in the blood of Ælla. My sons will rage at news of my death—anger will redden their visages; besides, brave warriors will take no rest until they have avenged me.

"I must cease—behold the Dysir whom Odin sends to lead me to his joyful palace. I go thither with the Ases, to quaff hydromel at the seat of honour. The hours of my life have run out and my smile braves death."

Religious and warlike fanaticism are here joined together—these pirates loved to shed the blood of priests and stable their horses in the churches. When they had ravaged a Christian land: "We have sung them," they said, "the mass of spears; it began at early morn and lasted till the night." Charlemagne felt these terrible invaders from afar; under Louis le Débonnaire they grew bolder. Some of them set up abodes, in 837, on the island of Waleheren, and made tributary the river lands of the Maas and the Waal. After 843 they came every year. From the mouth of the Schelde, the Somme, the Seine, the Loire, and the Gironde, they ascended into the interior of the country. A number of towns, even the more important, as Orleans and Paris, were taken and pillaged by them without Charles being able to make any defence. From the Rhine to the Adour, from the ocean to the Cévennes and the Vosges, all was devastated. They even acquired the habit of not returning home during the winter and settled down on the island of Oissel—above Rouen, at Noirmoutiers at the mouth of the Loire and on the island of Bière, near St. Florent. It was thither they carried their booty and thence they set out on new expeditions.

## EDICT OF MERSEN (847 A.D.)

Chroniçlers not understanding that apathy of the Frankish nation once so brave, who now let themselves be pillaged by a handful of adventurers, could only explain these things on the supposition that there had been a tremendous massacre at Fontenailles (Fontenay):

*La peri de France la flor  
Et des baronz tuit li meillor  
Ansi troverent Haenz terre  
Vinde de gent, bonne a conquerre.*

[There perished the flower of France  
And the best of all the barons died  
And thus was the land of Haenz  
Void of the brave—easy to conquer.]

There is some truth in these words. Charlemagne's fifty-three expeditions had used up the Frankish race, and his conquests, where always some of his warriors were left behind to rule, had spread it over three kingdoms. The dissensions of Louis le Débonnaire's sons completed this dissemination. Now there were no longer free men to be found, because of the terrible



results of so many wars, because in the midst of growing anarchy almost all the free men had renounced an independence which left them in isolation and consequently in danger, to become the vassals of men able to protect them. The Edict of Mersen (847) says, "Every freeman may choose a lord, either the king or one of his vassals, and no vassal of the king will be obliged to follow him in war unless against a foreign enemy." With the subjects thus disposing of their obedience, the king in civil war remained unarmed and powerless, and as he was as incapable of making the great obey him as he was of protecting the small, the latter gathered around the former. The king's vassals diminished; those of the great lords increased. On all sides national interest was forgotten in solicitude for that of the individual. Rouen troubled itself little about the misfortunes of Bordeaux, Saintes, and Paris, and that is why in this age, as in the last days of the Roman Empire, and for the same reason, namely the absence of that common and spirited sentiment known as patriotism, a few small bands could ravage a great country. Charles tried to send them back by giving them gold; but this was the surest means to attract them. The Roman Empire had done the same thing with the barbarians, and we know with what result.

#### THE NORTHMEN'S ALLIES

The number of true Northmen must have been comparatively few, since they came from afar and over the sea. "But," as a chronicler of the time remarks, "many inhabitants of the country, forgetting their regeneration in the holy waters of baptism, plunged into the dark errors of the pagans: they ate with these pagans the flesh of horses sacrificed to Thor and Odin, and took part in their atrocious crimes." And these renegades were the most to be feared. They acted as guides to the invaders, they knew how to foil the ruses their countrymen adopted to cheat the greed of the barbarians, and showed even less respect and mercy than the latter for the religion and the people they had abandoned. Sometimes even some of the powerful nobles were paid by the Northmen, with money raised by the pillage of France, so as not to be disturbed in their expeditions.

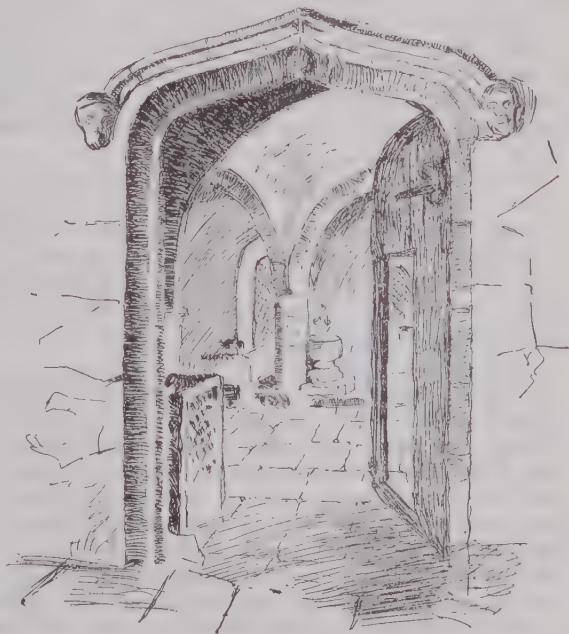
The most dreadful of these pirates was Hastings, who ravaged the banks of the Loire from 843 to 850, sacked Bordeaux and Saintes, threatened Tours, which still celebrates to-day, on the 21st of May, a victory won from him, circumnavigated Spain and, robbing and burning the while, reached the shores of Italy. He had been drawn by the great name and wealth of the capital of Christendom; but he mistook Luna for Rome. Hastings sent word to the count and the bishop that his companions, conquerors of France, wished no harm to the people of Italy and only wished to repair his storm-battered ships, and that he himself, wearied of his roving life, wished to seek repose in the bosom of the church. The bishop and the count refused him nothing; Hastings even received baptism; but the gates of the town remained shut. Some time after the camp was filled with lamentations; Hastings was dangerously ill. Messengers came with the news and declared at the same time that the dying man intended to leave all his booty to the church provided his body might be interred in consecrated ground. The Northmen's cries of grief soon announced the death of their chief. They were permitted to bring his body into the town, and the funeral ceremony was prepared in the cathedral itself. But when they had set down the corpse in the middle of the choir, Hastings suddenly rose up and struck the bishop down, while his companions, drawing their concealed arms,



[850-882 A.D.]

massacred both priests and soldiers. Master of Luna, Hastings perceived his mistake. He was made to understand that Rome was a long way off, and could not be so easily captured, so he set sail with his booty and at the end of several months reappeared at the mouth of the Loire.

Charles the Bald had reunited one part of the country, between the Seine and the Loire, under command of Robert the Strong, ancestor of the Capetians, in order to oppose a more efficacious resistance to the Northmen and the Bretons, a great number of whom had joined the pirates. Robert gained two victories over the Bretons and defeated a body of Northmen loaded with the booty of Brie and of the town of Meaux. This was the valiant leader whom Hastings encountered on his return from Italy. He had just sacked Le Mans when Robert and the duke of Aquitaine caught up with him at Brissarthe (Pont-sur-Sarthe) near Angers. The barbarians numbered but four hundred, half Northmen, half Bretons; and at Robert's approach they betook themselves to a church and barricaded it. It was evening, and the French put off the attack until the next day. Robert



ANCIENT FRENCH DOORWAY

had already taken off his helmet and coat of mail, when the Northmen, suddenly opening the doors, threw themselves upon the dispersed troops. Robert rallied his men, drove the enemy back to the church, and tried to follow them in. But he fought with bared head and breast and on the threshold was mortally wounded. Duke Rainulf of Aquitaine fell by his side (866). Hastings, delivered of his dread adversary, ascended the Loire and made his way as far as Clermont-Ferrand. No other means could be found of ridding France than by giving him, in 882, the county of Chartres. But he even abandoned this at the age of nearly seventy, to resume his life of adventure.

#### BEGINNING OF THE GREAT FIEFS

The Northmen were the greatest but not the only one of Charles' troubles; the Breton Noménoë repelled all his attacks, crowned himself king, and left the title to his son Hérispoë. The Aquitanians elected as leader the son of their late king, Pepin II, whom Charles the Bald had deposed. Driven out on account of his vices, Pepin allied himself with the Northmen and Saracens to pillage his former subjects, but he was captured and shut up in a cloister. Charles recovered, for the time, Aquitaine, lost it, recovered it again and gave it to one of his sons. But the true masters of the country

were Raymond, count of Toulouse, who also ruled over Rouergue and Quercy ; Walgrin, count of Angoulême ; Sancho Mitar, duke of Gascony, whose capital was Bordeaux ; Bernhard, marquis of Septimania ; Rainulf, duke of Aquitaine and count of Poitiers ; Bernard Plantevelue, count of Auvergne ; all of whom founded hereditary houses. To the north of the Loire, Charles had been constrained in the same way to constitute, for Robert the Strong, the grand duchy of France, from which sprang the third line of kings. North of the Somme it had been the same thing with the county of Flanders, given to the king's son-in-law, Baldwin Bras de Fer (Iron Arm), and between the Loire and Saône, the powerful duchy of Burgundy for Richard the Judge. Thus under Charlemagne's grandson not only was the empire divided into kingdoms, but the kingdoms themselves were dismembered into fiefs.<sup>1</sup>

#### EDICTS OF PISTES AND QUIERZY

Charles made, however, more and more the effort to retain in his service and that of the state the class of freedmen. In 863, the Edict of Pistes ordered a census of the men bound to military duty. The most severe penalties were pronounced against those who deprived these men of their horses and their arms, and also against the artful ones who sought to avoid military duty by giving themselves to the church.

This prince, so weak at home, wished nevertheless to aggrandise himself abroad. The king who could not wear his own crown undertook to acquire others. At the death of the emperor Lothair, in 855, the inheritance was shared between his three sons. The eldest took Italy, the second Lorraine, and the third Provence. The last only lived until 863, and the king of Lorraine until 869, and neither had any children. Charles the Bald tried, on their death, to lay hands on their dominions. His plans miscarried in 863, but succeeded in 870, when he shared Lorraine with his brother, Louis the German. In spite of the weakness and dishonour of his reign, Charles the Bald brought together again, at least on one side, the France which the Treaty of Verdun had broken up.

Instead of continuing this policy Charles sought for the imperial crown, left once more without a wearer in 875. He sought it in Rome from the hands of the pope, took on his return to Milan that of the Lombard kingdom, and as his brother, Louis the German, had died, he attempted to annex the latter's dominions to his own—that is, Germany to France. At this moment the Northmen took Rouen from him. He was beaten on the Rhine ; Italy likewise escaped him.<sup>b</sup>

Unity existed only in the ambitious fancy of the feeble Charles. In spite of his titles and his crowns, his power in Italy, Lorraine, and Provence was as much a cipher as it was in Gaul ; the dismemberment of the kingdoms into duchies and counties, and of the latter into viscounties, *sireries*, and *seigneuries*, still continued ; and, at the very moment when he was dreaming of his grandfather's empire, he was finally completing his own destruction by changing the feudal system from a custom into a law.

Before going to Italy in 877, he assembled a diet at Quierzy to formulate rules for the government of Gaul by his son, and there was delivered that famous capitulary from which we may date the feudal revolution : "If one of

[<sup>1</sup> The gradual re-absorption of these fiefs or provinces into the royal domain is the story of the development of the French monarchy. They were annexed at different periods by conquest, purchase, voluntary or forced cession, confiscation, forfeiture, inheritance, marriage, or treaty. The reader is referred to the chronological table for the dates and manner of these annexations.]

[877-879 A.D.]

our trusty subjects," runs this capitulary, "inspired by the love of God, desire to renounce the world, and if he have a son or some other relative capable of serving the state, he is free to transmit to him his privileges and honours at pleasure. If a count of this kingdom dies, we desire that the nearest relatives of the deceased, the other officers of the county, and the bishops of the diocese provide for its administration until such time as we shall be able to intrust his son with the honours with which he was invested."

This capitulary effected no change in the existing state of things, it only confirmed accomplished facts and legalised a revolution which had its origin in the customs of the Germans even before their entry into Gaul, that is to say the transformation of fiefs into freeholds and the acquisition of hereditary rights in duchies and counties. From this time the distinction between *allods* and *fiefs* had no longer either reality or importance; as the son of the count inherited not only the domains but also the offices of his father, the distinction between the magistrate sent from the king and the lord of the manor was done away with; and the titles of duke and count no longer expressed merely an office, an honour, or a dignity, but sovereign rights. The feudal system was thus inscribed in the law.<sup>c</sup>

Such was the condition in which Charles the Bald left France when, in 877, he went to Italy, to fulfil the obligations he had contracted on receiving the imperial crown. Pope John VIII had begged him to drive the Saracens from the peninsula, and repress the aggressions of his nephew Carloman, king of Bavaria, a pretender to the empire. It is astonishing, the persistence with which Charlemagne's descendants, in taking arms against each other, not only hastened the disorganisation of their own states, but accomplished the rapid ruin of their house in Italy, Germany, and even France, where it lasted three or four generations longer than anywhere else. The campaign of 877 bore no result. Charles' only idea after he got to Italy seems to have been to pillage the imperial domains. Abandoned for the most part by his vassals, he was obliged to return to France, fell ill during the return, and died the 6th of October, a few days after he had crossed the Mont Cenis.

## LOUIS II TO CARLOMAN (877-884 A.D.)

Louis the Stammerer, given a share in the throne during his father's lifetime, was crowned by Hincmar at Compiègne in presence of most of the great vassals. By the advice of Hincmar the new king pledged himself to disturb no man in the possession of his benefices or offices and to respect the liberty of the churches. He was also obliged to make a distribution of lands, abbeys, and counties "to whoever," says one chronicle, "demanded them first."

Charles the Bald had worn four crowns, those of France, the empire, Italy, and Lorraine. His son inherited the first only. The imperial crown and the crown of Italy passed to the head of a Carolingian prince of the Germanic branch. Ludwig of Saxony contended with Louis the Stammerer for that of Lorraine and the two claimants came to terms by dividing the kingdom on the bases of the treaty of 870. This treaty was renewed in 878 at Fouron on the Maas. The south was troubled by the revolt of Bernhard, marquis of Gothia, who took arms and formed a league of malcontents. But Bernhard, count of Auvergne, and Boson, duke of Provence, took from him successively Gothia and several counties which he possessed in Burgundy.

Louis the Stammerer, having fallen into a decline, died in 879 at Compiègne leaving two sons, Louis and Carloman, of whom the eldest was sixteen years old. The seigneurs were divided; some wished to proclaim the young



French princes, others to give the crown to the German prince, Ludwig of Saxony. But the party of French princes was the most numerous and the abbot Hugo, who was its leader, hastened to crown the two brothers.<sup>d</sup> Two



LOUIS III AND CARLOMAN

(From an old print)

victories over the Northmen, notably that of Saucourt in Vimeu, gave a little glory to these princes. But these advantages did not prevent the recommencement of brigandage. In 885 the famous Hastings gave up the county of Chartres, and Carloman paid the others of his race to take themselves off. "They promised peace," says the chronicler sadly, "for as many years as we could count them one thousand pounds' weight of silver." The two kings died by accident, Louis in 882, Carloman in 884. One had governed the north of France, the other Burgundy and Aquitaine.

CHARLES THE FAT, KING AND EMPEROR (884-887 A.D.)

These two had a brother, Charles the Simple, but the nobles preferred a grandson of Louis le Débonnaire, Charles the Fat, then emperor and

king of Germany. The whole heritage of Charlemagne was now reunited in Charles the Fat's hands. But times had changed. This man weighted down with so many crowns could not even inspire terror in the Northmen.

Charles had already ceded Friesland to one of their chiefs. Another, the famous Rollo, a kind of giant who, as legend tells us, always went about on foot because no horse could be found for his mount, had recently taken Rouen and Pontoise and killed the duke of Le Mans. At the approach of his countrymen, the new count of Chartres, the former pirate Hastings, hastened to meet them and all marched upon Paris, which had already three times submitted to the sack. But Paris had recently been fortified. Great towers covered the bridges (Petit-Pont and Pont-aux-Changes) which connected the island of the city of Paris with the two shores. The Seine was then barricaded with seven hundred huge barges in which the Northmen intended to voyage into Burgundy, a region they had not yet visited. The inhabitants, encouraged by their bishop Gozlin and by Count Eudes, son of Robert the Strong, held out for one year. The attack began November 26th, 885. The tower of the Grand-Pont, on the right bank, not being finished, the Northmen assailed it. For two days they fought there with great fury and Bishop Gozlin was wounded by a javelin. The Northmen were driven back and intrenched themselves in a camp around the church of St. Germain l'Auxerrois, where deserters soon taught them all the knowledge of Roman military science that had survived the ages. The invaders first built a three-storied rolling tower, but when they tried to bring it up to the walls, the Parisians killed with arrows those who were moving it. Then they advanced with battering-rams, some under portable screens covered with raw leather for protection from fire, and some

[885-887 A.D.]

under shields in the form of the Roman testudo. When they came to the edge of the moat they began to fill it up with earth, fascines, whole trees, and even the bodies of captives whom they put to death before the very eyes of the besieged. While those farthest away drove off the defenders of the battlements with a hail-storm of arrows and leaden ball, those close to the tower hammered it with the rams; but all in vain. The Parisians poured streams of boiling oil, wax, and molten pitch upon the enemy; their catapults hurled huge rocks which crushed the assailants' screens and shields, and let down iron hooks which tore away the coverings and made the enemy a target for their arrows. Three blazing ships floated down to the bridge, were stopped by the abutting stone piles, and could not set it on fire.

This hopeless resistance had lasted for more than two months when a sudden rise of the river carried away, on the night of February 6th, 886, a portion of the "Petit-Pont." The Northmen immediately rushed upon the tower on the left bank, now cut off from the city. Only twelve men were stationed there, but they held out for a whole day and then retired, still fighting, to the wreckage of the bridge. Finally they surrendered on the promise that their lives would be saved, but as soon as the barbarians got hold of these brave men they put them to death. One of them, of gigantic frame, appeared to be a chief, and the Northmen decided to spare him; but he begged to share the fate of his companions. "You will never get ransom for my head," he told them, and so forced them to kill him.

Meanwhile reports of the Parisians' courage had spread over the land and others were emboldened to emulate their example. Several pirate bands which had left the siege were beaten; the counsellor of the emperor Charles, Duke Henry, succeeded even in getting relief into the besieged town, but the pagans still maintained the blockade. Misery became extreme in the city and many people died. Bishop Gozlin and the count of Anjou "passed to the Lord." The brave count Eudes managed to make his way out and went to hasten the emperor's arrival, and when he saw the latter started, went back to his besieged people. The promised relief finally appeared, Duke Henry at its head. Wishing to reconnoitre the situation himself the duke advanced too near, and his horse fell into one of the Northmen's pits. Here he was killed and those who had come with him were disbanded. Paris was once more left to its fate. The Northmen now believed that despair reigned there, and that they could have the people at little cost. They began a general attack, but the walls covered with valiant defenders proved insurmountable. They then tried to fire the door of the great tower, by heaping up against it a great wooden pile, but the Parisians made a sudden sortie and drove back the assailants and the fire at the same time.

At the end of long months, Charles finally arrived with his army on the heights of Montmartre. The Parisians, filled with ardour, awaited the signal of combat, when the news came to them that the emperor had bought with money the withdrawal of their half vanquished enemy and given the barbarians permission to "winter" in Burgundy, that is to say, to ravage that province. They at least refused to be a party to this shameful agreement, and when the Northmen's ships presented themselves at the bridges they refused to let them pass. The pirates had to drag their boats upon the shore and made a wide detour in order to avoid the heroic city (November, 886). The brave people of Sens imitated the courage of the Parisians and resisted the Northmen for six months.

In that year Paris gloriously won its title of capital of France; and its chief, the brave count Eudes, laid the foundation of the first national



dynasty. The contrast between the courage of the little city and the cowardice of the emperor turned everyone against the unworthy prince.<sup>b</sup> On all sides he was accused of indolence and incapacity. A great weakness of body and spirit had come over him. The vassals wanted an able and active king.

Those of Germany and Lorraine, assembled at Tribur, near Mainz, in 887, pronounced Charles' deposition "because he was lacking," says the *Annals* of St. Waast, "in the necessary strength to govern the empire." The feeble and unfortunate emperor suffered the fate of the "do-nothing" Merovingian kings. He was shut up in the monastery of Reichenau, on Lake Constance, and died in about two months.<sup>d</sup> The empire of Charlemagne was irrevocably dismembered; its pieces served to form seven kingdoms—France, Navarre, Cisjurane Burgundy, Transjurane Burgundy, Lorraine, Italy, and Germany.

### THE FEUDAL RÉGIME

But it was not only the empire that was dismembered; it was also the realm and royalty itself. At the close of Charlemagne's reign, feudalism was not yet founded, but it was almost completely established at the death of Charles the Bald a half century afterwards. And this was because the progress of feudal institutions was singularly hastened by the historical events we have just been studying.

Royal authority at the end of Charles the Bald's reign was ruined, as it had been under the later Merovingians, for the same reasons and in the same fashion. The king had no more money and he had no more land to give away. He tried to take from the church, but the church resisted. The bishops assembled in council at Meaux and at Paris in 846, in the early years of the reign, advised Charles the Bald to send *missi dominici* to make a thorough investigation of the lands of the royal fisc, which had been usurped. "You must not," they told him, "let a state of poverty, which does not accord with your dignity, push your magnificence to do things you would not wish to do. You cannot have attendants to serve you in your house, unless you have the means to pay them." Here we see royalty reduced to indigence. The king himself recognised it. "We wish," he said, one day, "to determine, with the advice of our faithful, how we may live in our court honourably and without poverty, as our predecessor did."

Since the reign of Charles the Bald, public authority had disappeared. The kingdom, ravaged by the Northmen, the Bretons, and the Aquitanians, was in the throes of brigandage. Brigandage had sunk so deeply into the customs of the country that oaths were exacted from freemen not to attack houses or to conceal robbers. In his twenty-third capitulary (857) the king, after speaking of the infinite evils caused not only by the incursions of the pagans, but also by the vagabondage of some of his own royal subjects, orders the bishops, counts, and *missi* to call together general meetings which everyone without exception must attend. The bishop was to read to the gathering the precepts of the Gospels, the fathers, and the prophets against brigandage. The capitulary itself furnished quotations from Christ, the prophet Isaiah, St. Augustine and St. Gregory. If these were not sufficient the bishop was to add all those he might find himself. He was also to threaten all hardened sinners with anathema, and to explain to them what a terrible punishment it was. On their own side the counts and *missi* were to read the laws of Charles and of Louis against brigandage.

[843-887 A.D.]

If these readings had no effect the guilty man was threatened with the sentence of the bishops and the prosecution of the judges. If he showed contempt for the one or the other he could be summoned to the king's presence. If he refused to come he would be excluded from the holy church, on earth



RUINS OF A NORMAN CHURCH, FRANCE

as well as in heaven. He would be pursued until driven from the realm. But to this there must be a public force, and such existed no longer; and this is why the king was compelled to replace it with sermons and threats of hell.

In no age of history did the weak have more need of protection than in the tenth and eleventh centuries, and this is why the last freemen disappeared throughout a large portion of Gaul, especially north of the Loire.

After having fled for a long time at the approach of the pagans to the forest, among the wild beasts, some stout-hearted had turned their heads and refused to abandon all they had without some attempt at defence. Here and there in mountain gorges, at river fords, or on the hill overlooking the plain, walled strongholds were raised up where the brave and the strong held their own. An edict of 862 directed the counts and the king's vassals to repair their old castles and to build new ones. The country was soon covered with these strongholds against which invaders often flung themselves in vain. A few defeats taught these bold people prudence, and they dared not venture so far amid these fortresses which had sprung out of the ground on all sides, and the new invasion, now made hazardous and difficult, came to an end in the following century. The masters of these castles became later the terror of the country side they had helped to save. Feudalism so oppressive in its age of decadence had its legitimate term. All power is raised up by its good services and falls by its abuses. These hedged and walled-in castles were places of refuge from the Northmen, but often also they became nests of brigands. However, little by little, out of the chaos came a new order of things.

We have seen how the king and his nobles assured themselves of the services of a greater or less number of men by giving them benefices or rather taking these men under their protection by making them their vassals. One might be a beneficiary without being a vassal or a vassal without being a beneficiary; in the days of Charles the Bald there were vassals who held no land. These were the *vagi homines*, so often mentioned in the prince's edicts—brigands in search of fortune and who transferred their loyalty from one noble to another at their pleasure. It was to remedy these disorders and to organise these unruly members of society that Charles the Bald ordered every freeman to choose a lord and remain faithful to him.

Doubtless it happened more often than otherwise that the man who received a piece of land made himself a vassal of the man who gave it to him, but the two states finally became much confused. One might be at the same time both beneficiary and vassal, and take upon himself the very narrow obligations of one and the other condition. Indeed after a property had been held for several generations by men who inherited their obligations together with the land, it seemed as if the fief carried its rights and duties with it and communicated them to those that held it. In the end the property, which always remained, was considered rather than the men, who came and went. It was no longer the weak man who bound himself to the strong one but the little acreage to the great domain, and certain formalities symbolised this new relation. The land became his in a manner to replace itself in the hands of the great landlord, in the shape of a clod of sod or the branch of a tree, which the petty proprietor brought himself. This land, so burdened with obligations, was the fief.

When France became covered with fiefs each property had its own organisation; it had its lord, great or small, and there was no land without its lord. Whoever had no land had no condition, for there was no lord without his land. Certain relations were established between the different fiefs—there were some which were dominant and others which were dominated. The dominant fiefs were those of the dukes and the counts, who assumed all the power which royalty had delegated them and who ruled as petty kings over their duchies and counties. Their vassals and the latter's sub-vassals depended upon them before depending upon the king. As for the dukes and counts, they were the vassals of the king, but as the feudal



[843-887 A.D.]

hierarchy developed, the obligation of the vassal became, as a matter of fact, less strict. The duke of Burgundy's vassals obeyed him; of course the duke of Burgundy would not make the mistake of disobeying the king.

Such was the great revolution accomplished at the end of the ninth and in the tenth century. After the deposition of Charles the Fat appeared the great fiefs whose names we find over and over again throughout the whole of French history. The duke of Gascony owned all the country south of the Garonne, and the counts of Toulouse, Auvergne, Périgord, Poitou, and Berri, the district between the Garonne and the Loire. To the east and north of the latter river everything belonged to the count of Forez, the duke of Burgundy, the duke of France, and to the counts of Flanders and Brittany who exercised their royal rights over the land. To the kings remained only a few towns which he had not yet been constrained to give away in fiefs.

### THE CHURCH

In the ninth century royalty fell and feudalism arose; the former had lost its strength, the latter had not yet acquired that which it was soon to have. The church alone had all the power. She wanted nothing—the authority in knowledge and morality, the ardent faith of the people, rich domains—in fact, while everything was breaking up and civil and political society going to pieces, the ecclesiastical body showed its unity and its healthy condition in the fifty-six councils which were held in the reign of Charles the Bald alone. The bishops, reasoning on the right of the church to interfere in the conduct of every man guilty of sin in order to correct and punish him, arrived logically at the pretension that they could depose kings and dispose of their crowns. They were not only the ministers of religion, but participated at the time in the administration of public affairs. Since Charlemagne, who brought them into the government of his empire, they may be found taking part in all affairs and speaking everywhere with authority. These were they who degraded and re-established Louis le Débonnaire, who told at Fontenailles on which side justice lay. In 859 Charles the Bald, threatened with deposition by some of the bishops because he violated his own laws, could find nothing further to reply to this assumption of authority than that “having been consecrated and anointed with the holy chrism, he could not be overthrown on his throne, nor supplanted by anyone without being heard and judged by the bishops who had crowned him king.” This right Archbishop Hincmar, of Rheims, the most illustrious personage of his day, had haughtily claimed.

This power of the church was a fortunate thing in these days, when might made right, for she alone found herself in a position to keep alive the idea that justice was above strength; and to oppose the aristocratic principle of the feudal organisation, she put forward that of the brotherhood of man. In place of hereditary primogeniture which prevailed in civil society, she practised election for herself and proclaimed the rights of the intellect. If the prerogative of deposing kings which she claimed was a usurpation of temporal authority it must be recognised that the latter had no antidote but the sacerdotal power, and the weak and oppressed no other security than the protection of the churches. When Lothair II, king of Lorraine, put away without reason Queen Thietberga in order to marry Waldrada, Pope Nicholas I took up the poor, betrayed, outraged woman's cause, and at the risk of persecution established her rights. While law was impotent and opinion without strength, it is well that somewhere there existed an avenger of outraged morality.<sup>b</sup>

## CAPETIANS AND CARLOVINGIANS (887-936 A.D.)

Eight kings shared in the division of the empire through the deposition of Charles the Fat. In France it was Eudes, count of Paris, who had just defended that town against the Normans and whose glory was heightened by contrast with the ignominious conduct of Charles the Fat.

The accession of Count Eudes was an important fact, although overestimated perhaps, if one wishes to regard it as a bridge between Gaul and France and between the Franks and the French. It was not the beginning of a revolution of which he was the consummation; nor yet a point of departure, for it was Frenchmen rather than Angevins who fought with Robert the Strong at Brissarthe. However, apart from the fact itself, the reign of the first French king was certainly important. The Normans, turned loose upon Burgundy by Charles the Fat, had gone still further; they threw themselves upon Champagne which they were proceeding to ruin with fire and sword when the new king attacked them in the defiles of the Argonne, near Montfaucon. A brilliant victory made a worthy beginning to his reign, but that was all. Wearied by the fruitless struggle, occupied elsewhere by the anxieties which Aquitaine gave him where through race jealousy his "usurpation," as the monks of that time and the seventeenth century historians called it, had not been recognised, and at a time when they placed at the head of acts, *Christi regante: rege nullo* ("in the reign of Christ and absence of the king"). Eudes finally adopted the Carolingian policy and drove the Normans back with his purse. What brought about his ruin was that he broke too abruptly with the feudalism that made him king. His cousin Vaucher rebelled against royal authority. Eudes could not understand that this authority was no longer anything but a phantom, even in his hands, and he had his cousin's head cut off after obtaining his submission. The people deplored the light-hearted nonentity of a Carolingian king, but a faction which formed in favour of young Charles the Simple, youngest son of Louis the Stammerer, waxed in strength until the former count of Paris was obliged to capitulate. He admitted his rival to a sort of partnership and at his death the kingdom of France returned to Germanic dominion, if we can admit, that it is still possible to recall the Austrasian origin of Charles the Simple (898).

Under this reign the people were finally delivered from the long Norman invasion, which stopped of its own accord, and by act of the invaders rather than resistance of the invaded. Since the time the Norman vassals collected at the mouth of the Seine, the country round about had been nothing but a desert, towns abandoned, villages in ashes; one could travel whole leagues without even hearing a dog bark. Since there was nothing more to be got they ran the risk of dying by hunger. The Normans finally perceived with their positive spirit that it was better to take possession of the land than to pillage its ruined inhabitants, and that it was worth more to make these rich territories valuable than to get sustenance from their ruins. Thenceforth everything was changed. The fleets from the north brought colonists instead of pirates, and the peasants found in their midst a protection which they could not have gotten anywhere else.

The new plan had been in operation for some time when a great emigration was determined upon in the north, owing to the subjection of all the chiefs under one head. The movement set out in the direction of Neustria under the leadership of Rollo, the famous sea-king—one of those who had assisted at the siege of Paris in the days of Charles the Fat, and had established a fixed home in that country. For some years the new-comers kept



[911-923 A.D.]

up their old practises. They burned St. Martin of Tours, and went to Bourges and killed the bishop. Rollo reappeared before the towers of the châtelet. Finally he came to an understanding with Charles the Simple, who gave him his daughter Gisela in marriage and raised him to the rank of the feudal barons, by legalising his seizure of Neustria. Rollo became duke of Normandy, and the king of France's vassal, not without making the latter often feel that he troubled himself little about the nominal suzerainty. When the time for doing homage came and they wished him to do it in the Carolingian manner, by kissing the sovereign's foot, "No, by God," exclaimed the proud sea-king, and he signed to one of his soldiers to kiss the royal foot for him. But the soldier, not less proud, seized Charles' foot and put it to his lips without kissing it. The king fell back and his people remained dumb and motionless amid the laughter of Rollo and his companions<sup>1</sup> (912). The barbaric traits of the Normans did not prevent their quickly assimilating the semi-civilisation they found in their new country. Normandy was soon the most prosperous and best policed province in the kingdom. As Ordericus Vitalis<sup>2</sup> says, a child could have crossed it in safety, a purse full of gold in his hand. There runs a tale that one day while hunting Rollo hung his gold bracelets on a tree and they remained there two years without anyone's daring to touch them.

Charles the Simple lost no time in indemnifying himself for the cession of Neustria by the acquisition of Lorraine which became his on the death of Louis the Child, son of the emperor Arnulf; but he did not profit long by this addition to his realm. He had made a favourite of a person of low degree, a man named Haganon. Haganon, more solicitous than his master to uphold the royal dignity, soon displayed the desire of raising it, to his own profit, from the state of subjection in which it was kept by the powerful nobles. Two of the latter presented themselves four days in succession to speak with the king and waited in vain at the door of his bedchamber. They finally went away thoroughly angry, saying that Haganon would soon be king with Charles, or Charles a man of low condition with Haganon. Of these two noblemen, one was Henry the Fowler, or the Saxon, king of Germany, and the other Robert, duke of France, brother of the late king Eudes.

In 920, at a court held at Soissons, the nobles assembled together, all broke the blades of straw and threw them on the ground at the feet of Charles the Simple, declaring that they disowned him as their king. Each took his departure at once, and Charles remained alone on the spot where the assemblage had met. There followed two years of hesitation, at the end of which Robert, duke of France, caused himself to be proclaimed king in the cathedral of Rheims by his vassals and those of his son-in-law, Rudolf of Burgundy. Charles having retired to Lorraine, the new king prepared to seek him as far as the foot of the Ardennes. He did not anticipate any resistance, but Haganon purchased the services of a band of Normans, living along the Maas, which Charles led in person into Robert's domains. A battle took place on the plain of St. Médard (Soissons) near the Aisne (923). Robert, throwing his long white beard over his coat of arms, seized his banner and flung himself into the mêlée. He fell upon Fulbert, his rival's standard-bearer, when Charles cried out, "Take care, Fulbert." The

[<sup>1</sup> "In this unseemly manner," says White,<sup>s</sup> "the pirate of the Baltic, and worshipper of the almost forgotten Odin, took his place among the Christian chivalry of Europe as duke of Normandy and one of the twelve peers of France." On his conversion Rollo took the name of Robert.]

standard-bearer, turning, dodged the blow which Robert was aiming, and cleft the duke's head with his sword. Charles the Simple gained nothing by this. Robert's son, Hugh, hastened up with his brother-in-law, Héribert de Vermandois, and remained to the end master of the battle-field, strewn with eighteen thousand dead.

Of the two men who had claimed the title of king that morning, one lay cold in death, the other was dethroned by defeat. Robert's son sent to consult his sister Emma, wife of Rudolf of Burgundy, to know what he



RUDOLF, KING OF FRANCE

should do with the crown on his hands. Emma replied that she would prefer to kiss the knees of her husband rather than those of her brother, and Rudolf was made king (July 13th, 923).

The aged Rollo was now minded of the homage which he had formerly held so cheaply, and as faithful vassal loudly declared himself the protector of the vanquished king. Doubtless he preferred such a sovereign as Charles the Simple to a connection with that powerful house of the dukes of France, who moved everything at their pleasure. Unfortunately he did not have the king in his hands. Charles had taken refuge at Bonn with the king of Germany, the same Henry the Fowler whom he had once kept waiting at his own door. He wished now to make use of the services of Héribert of Vermandois, who

swore to replace him on the throne. The king sought Count Héribert at the gates of St. Quentin, where the latter knelt and kissed the king's knee. The count's son refused to do the same and Héribert took him by the neck and forced him to kneel. Then he conducted the king into St. Quentin and entertained him with great magnificence. But the next day he had him seized in the night and conducted to Château Thierry, whence they carried him to the tower of Péronne. Héribert then marched with Rudolf against the Normans, who were with great difficulty driven back from the Île-de-France and Beauvoisis. Rudolf believed himself mortally wounded during an encounter in Artois and the inhabitants of Laon saw him carried into their city on a barrow. Rollo died a short time afterwards, leaving as successor his son, William Longsword.

The count of Vermandois had not undertaken this piece of treachery for nothing, and had already obtained the archbishopric of Rheims for his son, a child of five years. They placed the boy on a table in the presence of the bishops, and after stammering a few words of catechism, he was consecrated with the approbation of the onlookers. But even this did not satisfy the father's ambition, who demanded the county of Laon for himself. Rudolf,

[927-942 A.D.]

who was finding his restless and dangerous auxiliary too powerful, feared perhaps the fate of Charles the Simple, and met the demand with a refusal. Thereupon Héribert dragged Charles from prison, clothed him in rich raiment, and took him to the court of William Longsword, who saluted him as king. This was all that was needed to decide Rudolf, who ceded the county of Laon, and Charles was put back in Péronne. But when Héribert tried to commence the same game again, Rudolf this time took up arms and pressed him so hotly that he was obliged to flee to Germany. There now remained to him nothing but Péronne, but Henry the Fowler, the count of Flanders, and the duke of Lorraine interfered; Rudolf gave him back his possessions and died soon after without a male heir (936). Charles the Simple had preceded him by a few years to the tomb (929). The vacant throne was for a second time at the disposition of the duke of France, who did not want it, since he found it much pleasanter to remain peacefully in real possession, pre-eminent as he was among the feudal lords, than to plunge himself into interminable controversies by placing on his head a crown which had become the target for so much contention. Rudolf's enemies, of whom we have mentioned but a small part, had much reason to support the duke in this resolution. Hugh now remembered that at the time of the fall of Charles the Simple the latter's wife Odgiwe had taken to England their son Louis, then a child, but now, after thirteen years of exile, entering upon his sixteenth year. Hugh congratulated himself on his great mind and went after him.

## THE LAST CARLOVINGIANS (936-987 A.D.)

Louis IV, surnamed Louis d'Outre-Mer on account of his long sojourn on the other side of the Channel, occupied the throne eighteen years, but his reign was one long humiliation. Hugh exploited his generosity to the king, as Héribert had done about his treachery, and scarcely got him to the shores of France than he dragged him to the duchy of Burgundy and made Louis invest him with it; and moreover Louis had the chagrin of seeing that his act was useless. Hugh the Black, Rudolf's brother, bravely defended his heritage. The royal signature served nothing to the duke of France who, armed as he was, could only snatch a few shreds from the duchy of Burgundy. Thwarted in his ambition he turned to other things and demanded the county of Laon. Following Rudolf's example, Louis refused this demand, but for a still more powerful reason. The county of Laon was the sole domain left the crown through the usurpations of feudalism. Louis, who would have been nothing more than a stranger in his kingdom if this were taken from him, preferred a one-sided struggle. Fortunately for him, the emperor Otto came to his rescue, but not before he was besieged in his own city, and deserted by his most faithful partisans. The presence of the imperial army saved him from disaster, but Otto when he went home did not leave him any the stronger. Incapable of holding his own so close to the duke of France, Louis appeared before the people of Aquitaine, always favourably disposed towards the Carolingian kings, since they had nothing to fear from them and had shown no more preference for the kingship of Duke Rudolf than they had for that of Count Eudes. Well received everywhere, Louis nevertheless encountered but a sterile compassion, and must have thought himself fortunate in that the duke of France, become more formidable than ever since the death of Héribert de Vermandois, was willing to await an occasion of revolt or rather of war.



Meanwhile William Longsword had met a tragic end, assassinated by Arnulf, count of Flanders, after an interview on one of the islands of the Somme, in December, 942. He left one son named Richard, only ten years old. The moment was now favourable for Louis to assert the royal authority, inactive in his hands. He appeared at once in Rouen, received the homage of the young Richard, and made himself the child's guardian. The people nearly besieged the house in which he lodged when they learned that he intended to take the boy back to Laon, but a few tactful words calmed everything. But once he had the young duke in his palace he used no more caution. The child, separated from all his Norman attendants, even from his tutor, found himself in truth a captive. The people who looked after him were severely reprimanded on one occasion for having taken him outside the city on a hunt for birds. Evidently the king's intention was to strengthen the royal crown by putting it under the protection of the ducal crown of Normandy. Osmond, Richard's tutor, cut this dream short by a bold stratagem. Disguised as a groom he managed to get near his pupil, enveloped him in a bale of hay, and carried him thus on his shoulders to the outskirts of Laon, where horses were waiting.



LOUIS IV  
(From an old print)

Touched to the quick Louis d'Outre-Mer appealed to the ambition of Hugh of France and proposed to share Normandy with him if he would help get it back. Hugh agreed, but scarcely was Louis established in Normandy than he forgot his promises and sent the duke back to Paris. But the king paid dearly for this breach of faith. At news of the subjection with which their Neustrian brothers were threatened, the Northmen sent a large fleet under the command of Harold, the Dane. A battle took place on the banks of the Dive, not far from Rouen, in which the French were completely routed (945). Louis, wandering swordless through the country at the will of his horse, whose bridle had been cut by sword-blows, met a soldier from Rouen who, anxious for the king's safety, concealed him on an island in the Seine, where however he was discovered. The king's liberty was negotiated with great show by Hugh of France, who finally got him out of the Normans' hands. Great was the surprise when the end of this fine devotion became known. From his Norman prison Louis entered another which Hugh was determined he should not leave until he gave up the city and county of Laon. After this last misfortune Louis seemed less a king than a ruined lord. He filled the German court with his complaints, wrote to the pope, and summoned councils. Councils, pope, and emperor all failed before Hugh's will. Finally tired of the fight, and knowing well that Louis would be none the more formidable with it, Hugh gave the county back to the king, who did not enjoy it for long. Four years later, while pursuing a wolf on the road from Rheims to Laon, Louis' horse threw him and he died from the fall (954).

[948-980 A.D.]

Hugh had obtained a part of Burgundy on the return of Louis d'Outre-Mer; he now made use of the accession of Louis' son Lothair, to have Aquitaine given him. But this time again, the royal sanction was powerless. William, duke of Aquitaine, received the invader in arms, and the war lasted for two years, when the duke of France died. He had named two kings and permitted a third to reign. Hugh Capet, his eldest son, inherited the duchy of France, and at the same time his father's great influence, which he used in more moderate fashion.

He never came into hostility with Lothair throughout the latter's whole reign. He looked on quietly while the king was active in the east, west, and north, trying to get his hands on Normandy, seizing some territory from the count of Flanders, which he had to give back, and making military excursions into Lorraine as far as the borders of Germany. This fruitless activity, this restless desire to attempt hopeless conquests, was in singular contrast with Hugh Capet's power of repose. One would have said that the latter divined the future and that he disdained to forestall fortune by a single step in the belief of what would come to him.

In all this empty reign there is but one event that offers anything of interest. During an expedition in Lorraine (978), the principal object of his covetousness, Lothair came unexpectedly upon Aachen (Aix-la-Chapelle), where Otto II was then staying. The emperor was about to sit down to table when the arrival of the king of France forced him to flee, and Lothair ate the dinner prepared for Otto. Otto swore to sing to him beneath the walls of Paris such a Halleluiah as the king had never heard; and what seemed like an angry piece of bravado was really carried out. The emperor appeared with sixty thousand men upon the heights of Montmartre after having ravaged the country around Rheims, Laon, and Soissons, and caused to be intoned by a number of clerks the Halleluiah with which he had threatened Parisian ears, and in the chorus of which this whole army joined.<sup>1</sup> Paris was avenged for this din; for in crossing the Aisne, swollen by storms, on his return, Otto lost his booty, baggage, and all his rearguard (980). It is true that he carried away with him the remembrance of the most formidable psalmody of which history makes mention, and the honour of having planted his lance in one of the gates of Paris; but these were rather frivolous achievements for the son of Otto the Great, and his Halleluiah would certainly have produced much more effect had he taken his sixty thousand men to sing it at Rome.<sup>f</sup>

The campaign, however, was successful in having raised mutual disgust between Lothair and Hugh Capet, the latter finding himself exposed to incursions and ravage from the idle ambition and provocation of Lothair, who was unable to support him by any force; while Lothair, on his side, saw that Hugh merely protected his own territories, without caring for Laon or Lorraine. Lothair, therefore, became reconciled to Otto, held a meeting with him on the Maas, and, as the price of the emperor's friendship, waived his pretensions to Lorraine, at which his followers' hearts *corda Francorum*, says the Chronicle of St. Denis,<sup>j</sup> were much saddened. If the descendant of Charlemagne gave up his claims upon Lorraine to Otto, it was idle for Hugh Capet to remain in hostility with the German emperor. The latter, after his pacification with Lothair, had gone to Italy; thither Hugh Capet sent, proffering friendship and alliance with Otto. The reply was an invitation to the duke to visit the emperor in Italy: a request with which Hugh Capet

[<sup>1</sup> It must be stated that this incident, though related by many historians, is based solely upon tradition.]



complied, to the great anxiety and suspicion of Lothair, who, according to Richer,<sup>k</sup> used every effort to have Hugh's return intercepted. The latter felt it necessary to pass the Alps in the disguise of a groom, and thus returned to his duchy.

Otto II expired in 982. Henry of Bavaria claimed the throne, setting aside the right of the future Otto III, a boy of but five years of age; and Lothair, alive to every opportunity of gaining Lorraine, leagued with Henry and undertook an expedition to the Rhine. The people of the country were, however, hostile to him, and he retreated with some difficulty. In the following year he was more fortunate; aided by Héribert of Troyes, he succeeded in winning possession of the strong town of Verdun, from the walls of which he repelled all the efforts of the Lorraine chiefs to expel him. A gleam of prosperity thus shone upon Lothair, when death carried him off in 986. His eldest son, who had been crowned by anticipation several years previous, succeeded to the hopeful position of his father. Even Hugh Capet seemed inclined to restore his friendship and protection, as the first act of the young king was, in concert with the duke, to march to the reduction of the archiepiscopal town of Rheims.

It is considered by M. Thierry, who has been in general followed by modern French historians, that the principal cause which about this time led to the enthronement of Hugh Capet as king of France or of the French, in place of the Carlovingian princes, was the antipathy of race, and especially that of French against Germans, which prompted the chiefs and the population of the central provinces to throw off the yoke of the Germans, which the Lorraine or Belgian princes were to a certain degree. A study of the records and chronicles of the time does not lead to this conclusion. On the contrary, they prove beyond a question that the personages and the party which were most influential in awarding the crown definitively to Hugh Capet were precisely Belgian or Lorraine, and attached moreover to German interests.

Hitherto the Carlovingian princes had maintained their hold and influence in their own circumscribed territories by the support of the archiepiscopal church of Rheims, which maintained its jealousy both of the duke of Paris and of the German emperor, labouring at the same time to save and to recover its church property, as best it might, from the counts ever ready to despoil it.

Adalbero, son of Godfrey, count of the Ardennes, had been promoted to that see, and had laboured to reform and restore it. The prelate Adalbero was not what his predecessor had been, a devoted partisan of the Carlovingian princes. He saw that they were too weak to protect the church, especially that of Rheims, which, situated between the frontiers of two great nations, was continually the spoil of both. Adalbero, connected with all the German noblesse and princely families of Lorraine, was for preserving that province for the young emperor Otto; and his letters of exhortation written by Gerbert, addressed to all the prelates and counts of the border region, entreat them to resist all the efforts of Lothair and Louis, whilst recommending that they make a friend of Hugh, duke of France.

Policy so hostile to them on the part of the prelate of Rheims excited the inveterate enmity of the Carlovingian princes; and, at length, Louis marched to reduce Rheims with an army that Adalbero could not for the moment resist, for he gave hostages to answer for his conduct before an assembly that was to be convened. The prelate did this, apparently, in connivance with Hugh Capet, between whom and Adalbero there was in all probability an early agreement to aim at the setting aside of the Carlo-

[987 A.D.]

vingians, and the division between the German emperor and Hugh Capet of the countries between France and Lorraine. The great obstacle to the completion of such a scheme, young king Louis, was at this very time carried off.<sup>g</sup> As the result of a fall from a horse "he was seized with a great pain in his liver and a burning fever; much blood flowed from his nose and throat"; he died May 21st, 987. Such is the simple account of the contemporary, Richer.<sup>k</sup> But if Adhiemar de Chabannes<sup>l</sup> and other more recent chroniclers are to be believed Louis died "the same death as his father, of a poisoned draught given by his wife." This more dramatic tradition has prevailed with the greatest number. The multitude were not willing to believe that so famous a dynasty could have come to an end by a burning fever or a commonplace accident. Both father and son died most opportunely for Hugh Capet, and what we know of the moral tone of that century allows us to suspect anything: but the testimony of Richer lends all the more weight to Hugh's justification, since the monk of Rheims is a partisan of the ancient dynasty and not of the Capets.<sup>h</sup>

The meeting of chiefs and prelates already summoned at Compiègne to hear Louis' accusation of Adalbero took place. But no accuser appeared. Charles the uncle of Louis held aloof. By his conduct as lord of Cambray, which dignity he had accepted under the suzerainty of the emperor, he had alienated the clergy, the French or Franci, both of Laon and of the duchy of France, as well as public opinion in general. He had made a lowly marriage, lived a dissipated life, and had, in fine, but few friends. Hugh Capet took upon himself to absolve Adalbero of the crime laid to his charge, that crime being treason to the Carolingian family, which was then in the thoughts and purposes of all. It was, however, judged right to defer the final decision, and to appoint another meeting at Senlis, where, after due reflection and deliberation, a solemn resolve might be made. In the interval between the assemblies, Charles came to remonstrate with Adalbero. The prelate repelled him as one given to the worst vices and the worst associates. When the second meeting took place at Senlis, Adalbero represented Charles as unworthy of the crown, which he declared had never been hereditary. And no doubt Adalbero, as archbishop of Rheims, had in view the example of Hatto, archbishop of Mainz, who, on the extinction of the German Carolingians, had rendered the crown of the empire elective, and attributed to the church and its metropolitan the chief influence in the election. Hugh Capet was therefore unanimously declared king in the midsummer of 987, and was solemnly crowned soon after at Noyon.<sup>g</sup>





## CHAPTER II

### THE FOUNDATION OF THE CAPETIAN DYNASTY

[987-1180 A.D.]

THE period of 240 years—from the accession of Hugh Capet to that of St. Louis—is described by Sismondi as “a long interregnum, during which the authority of king was extinct, although the name continued to subsist.” A history of France, during this period, is a history not of its monarch but of its nobles. And as yet these details are neither heroic nor important enough to be interesting. A duke had sprung up in Aquitaine, a king in Provence. The establishment of the Norman princes has already been narrated. Betwixt them and Aquitaine, Anjou obeyed a warlike count. To the north, the first Baldwin possessed the county of Flanders betwixt the Somme and the Maas. The duchy of Burgundy was formed in the east; whilst that of Lorraine was altogether independent of France, and held by tongue as well as régime to the empire of Germany. Taking away these provinces from the map of France, a central portion will be found to remain betwixt the Loire and the Flemish border. Even here, however, the last Carolingians possessed scarcely a castle which they could call their own. The counts of Paris possessed that city, as well as Orleans. The counts of Vermandois, whose capital was St. Quentin, at this time ruled Champagne also; but soon after that province came to increase the territories of the counts of Blois. The only town that obeyed the last reigning descendants of Charlemagne was Laon, and here they usually resided, unless when obliged to take refuge at Rheims, under the protection of the archbishop, against the attacks of the surrounding nobles.

Charles of Lorraine, the uncle of Louis V and sole heir of the Carolingians, though thus prevented of his rights, was neither friendless nor vanquished. He soon took forcible possession of Laon and of Rheims, from which Hugh Capet was unable to drive him by force of arms. He adroitly, however, contrived to attach to his interests Ascelin, bishop of Laon, whom Charles, somewhat mistrusting, kept with him at Rheims. A conspiracy, formed by Ascelin, was attended with complete success. Charles was seized in his bed, and, together with his nephew, the archbishop of Rheims, delivered over to



[991-996 A.D.]

Hugh Capet. That monarch placed his prisoners in confinement at Orleans, where the competitor, Charles of Lorraine, soon after died (991).

These, if we except a long quarrel respecting the archbishopric of Rheims, are the sole events of the reign of Hugh Capet, which is supposed to have occupied nine years. Some modern historians regard the founder of the third dynasty of French monarchs as a hero and a master spirit, whose talents won for him a crown. Others, amongst whom is Sismondi,<sup>i</sup> represent him as a pious sluggard, indebted solely to fortune for his elevation. Both are in extreme.

We see no proof of his heroism. But his was an iron age, in which the exertions of individuals had slight power in changing the course of events. Nor does it follow that, because he was pious, he was pusillanimous. He made war on the count of Montreuil, to recover the relics of St. Riquier, which that count had stolen. Hugh Capet compelled him to surrender them, and himself bore the memorable remains on his royal shoulders to the abbey of the saint. Such is the account of the chroniclers. But if we observe that Hugh at the same time built and fortified Abbeville, the monarch will not seem altogether sunk in the superstitious votary.

"Who made thee count?" demanded Hugh Capet of a refractory noble, supposed by some to be Talleyrand, count of Angoulême. "The same right that made thee king," was the bold reply. Such was the measure of the new monarch's authority.

The great feudatories, in consenting to place the crown on one of their own body, thought less of his elevation than of humbling the throne. Their views were sound, if they considered but themselves—short sighted, if they looked forward to posterity. Feudality ascended the throne with Hugh Capet; and, despite the precautions or intentions of the founders, the head of so powerful a system could not long remain powerless himself. Organised as society now was in regular and successive gradations of inferior and superior, a supreme chief became necessary to complete the whole. There was something wanting to crown the structure. The nobles imagined to adorn it with the lifeless image of royalty. But their statue, like Pygmalion's, took life as it became the object of veneration, and grew at length to wield its sceptre with a muscular arm.

Hugh Capet had taken the precaution to have his son crowned and consecrated during his own life-time. Thus, on the demise of the former, Robert II found himself the undisputed king of France. The young monarch was one of those soft, domestic tempers which fate so often misplaces on a throne. He had married Bertha, the widow of the count of Blois, and was tenderly attached to her. The spouses had the misfortune to be distantly related, and Robert had been godfather to one of Bertha's children by her former husband. The pope considered these circumstances sufficient to render the marriage incestuous; and he accordingly issued a command to Robert, desiring him to put away Bertha, under pain of excommunication. The popes had erected



ROBERT II, KING OF FRANCE



themselves into the censors of princes, and they were especially rigid in prohibiting the marriage of cousins. Such unions, they said, drew down divine vengeance, and were to be avoided, lest they should produce national calamities. Nor was this mere superstition on their part: it had its policy. It was chiefly by intermarriages that the great aristocracy at this time increased their territories and influence. Every obstacle thrown in the way of these alliances consequently checked the growth of their exorbitant might; every difficulty or scruple, being in the power of the pontiff alone to remove, brought considerable advantage, both in revenue and respect, to the holy see. Robert struggled for four or five years in behalf of his legitimate wife, against the terrors of excommunication; but he was at length compelled to yield, to chase poor Bertha from his presence, and to take another wife, Constance, the daughter of the count of Toulouse. With her, a woman of more spirit than her predecessor, Robert was less happy. The monarch dreaded her, and was even obliged to do his alms in secret for fear of her reproof. His chief amusement was the singing and composing of psalms, to which the musical taste of that age was confined. In a pilgrimage to Rome, Robert left a sealed paper on the altar of the apostles. The priesthood expected it to contain a magnificent donation, and were not little surprised and disappointed to find it to contain but a hymn of the monarch's composition. The piety of Robert was most exemplary. He was anxious to save his subjects from the crime of perjury; the means he took were to abstract privately the holy relics from the cases which contained them, and on which people were sworn. He substituted an ostrich's egg, as an innocent object, incapable of taking vengeance on the false swearer.

Such are the facts which we have to relate of a reign of nearly thirty-five years. The good king Robert slumbered on his throne, with a want of vigour and capacity that would have caused a monarch of the first two races to totter from his seat, or at least would have transferred his authority to some minister or powerful duke. The Capetians as yet, however, unlike the Carolingians, had neither power nor prerogative to tempt the ambition of a usurper. The very title of king was unenvied. And whilst the sovereign led the choir at St. Denis, France was not the less vigorously governed by its independent and feudal nobility. <sup>b</sup>

#### HENRY I (1031-1060 A.D.)

Robert's son and successor, Henry I, had first of all to sustain a family war against his mother, Constance, who put his young brother Robert on the throne. The church declared for Henry, and the famous Robert the Magnificent, more commonly known as Robert le Diable, duke of the Normans, lent him the support of his sword and secured the crown upon Henry's head. Henry vanquished his brother, pardoned and granted him the duchy of Burgundy, the first house of which was founded by Robert. During this reign a famine made terrible ravage among the French and in several places men ate one another. Following this scourge, troops of wolves devastated the country, and the lords, more terrible than wild beasts, carried on their barbaric wars in the midst of this widespread desolation.

The clergy with difficulty husbanded their anger in calling the vengeance of heaven upon this state of affairs and in affirming a multitude of miracles, and finally, in councils, ordered everyone to lay down his arms. They put forward the "Peace of God" in 1035, and threatened excommunication to those who violated so holy a decree. When the council in each province had

[1035-1060 A.D.]

formulated this peace deacons made it known to the people assembled in the churches. After the Gospel had been read the deacons mounted the pulpits and launched against infractors of the peace the following malediction: "Cursed be they who aid in doing evil; cursed be their arms and their horses! may they be banished with Cain, the fratricide, with Judas the traitor; with Dathan and Abiram, who descended living into hell. May their joy be extinguished at the sight of the holy angels as are these flames before your eyes." At these words the priests who were holding lighted tapers threw them down and put them out, while the people, seized with fear, repeated with one voice, "May God thus extinguish the joy of those who will not accept peace and justice."

But passions were too rampant and ambitions too indomitable for evil thus to be rooted out entirely. The Peace of God only multiplied perjurers without diminishing assassins. Five years later another law known as the "Truce of God" was substituted for it. The councils which proclaimed this did not try to stop the flow of all human passions but to control them and regulate war according to laws of honour and humanity. Recourse to force was no longer forbidden to those who could invoke no other law, but the employment of this means was submitted to wise restrictions. All military attack and all shedding of blood was forbidden from sunset Wednesday evening



HENRY I

(From an old engraving)

to sunrise Monday morning, as well as on all fast and feast days. A perpetual inviolability was accorded the churches, unarmed clerics, and monks, while the protection of the truce was extended to the peasants, their flocks, and implements of tillage. Promulgated first in Aquitaine, this wise and beneficial law was adopted throughout almost all Gaul, where the lords swore to observe it; and although it was often violated and soon fell into desuetude, it did much good in softening the manners of the nation and was the finest work of the mediæval clergy. Rumour spread that a horrible malady known as the "sacred fire" would punish infractors of the truce. The weakling king Henry, through "unreasonable pride," was almost the only one to refuse to recognise it within his estates, giving as a pretext that it was an encroachment of the clergy upon his authority.

This king has left no creditable impression upon history.<sup>d</sup> Save for a few expeditions into Normandy, most of which were unfortunate, he did nothing. In 1046 he refused the homage of the duke of Upper and Lower Lorraine, and even allowed the count of Flanders to declare for the emperor of Germany as suzerain.<sup>e</sup>

It is said that from fear of unwittingly marrying a wife who might be allied to him by ties of blood, he sought one at the extremities of Europe, and married for his third wife the princess Anne, daughter of the grand duke Iaroslaff of Russia. Henry had three sons by this marriage, of whom he caused the eldest, Philip, to be made joint king in the last year of his life. He died in 1060 after a reign of twenty-nine years.<sup>d</sup>

*Deeds of the Great Barons*

The king did nothing, but the great lords accomplished much. Three especially filled France with the noise of their ambitions and their wars. Robert, surnamed the Magnificent by the nobles and the Devil by the people, had usurped the ducal crown of Normandy by poisoning his brother Richard III and his chief barons at a feast (1028). By force of energy and courage he crushed the opposition which his crime aroused and, uncontested sovereign of Normandy, interfered with all his neighbours.

He upheld King Henry I against his brother, for which he received the French Vexin in return. He set out to oust Canute the Great from the throne of England for the profit of the sons of Ethelred, his cousin; but a storm having driven his fleet from the English coast upon that of Brittany, he invaded this country and forced the duke Alain to do him homage (1033). In 1035 struck with remorse he went to seek peace of conscience at Jerusalem. While returning he died in Asia Minor. Below Rouen, in one of the most beautiful positions in Normandy, you may see a hill covered with shapeless ruins. These are the remains of Robert le Diable's castle, which, according to tradition, was haunted by evil spirits. The place is not far from the spot where John Lackland is said to have stabbed his nephew.

The son and successor of Robert the Magnificent was William the Bastard, who had much to do to obtain the obedience of his vassals: the battle of Val-des-Dunes, near Caen (1046), finally rid him of his adversaries. King Henry, his suzerain, who fought that day on his side, soon found the young duke too powerful, and formed an alliance of all his enemies. This was the cause of numerous encounters between the Normans and the French (inhabitants of the Île-de-France), the latter in every event sustained by the Angevins and the Bretons. The bloodiest of these combats was that fought at Mortemer in 1054. The king supported by the count of Anjou had entered Normandy through the county of Évreux, while his brother Eudes penetrated the Pays de Caux with horsemen from Picardy, Champagne, and Burgundy.

Duke William met this double invasion with two armies—that which marched against Eudes encountered, near Mortemer, the French, dispersed, and engaged in pillaging. The Normans killed some, took others, and put the rest to flight. Swift messengers bore the good news to the duke. "When night had come he despatched one of his men who climbed a tree near the king's camp and began to utter loud cries. The sentinels asked why he thus cried aloud at an unseemly hour. 'My name is Raoul de Ternois,' he replied, 'and I bring you bad news. Take your wagons and carts to Mortemer to carry away your friends who are dead, for the French came against us to test the Normans' chivalry, and they have found it much greater than they liked. Eudes, their standard-bearer, has been put to flight in shame; and Guy, count of Ponthieu, has been taken. All the others have been made prisoners or are dead, or have had great difficulty in saving themselves by rapid flight. Announce at once this news to the king of the French, on the part of the duke of Normandy.'" The frightened king retired in all haste, and Geoffrey Martel was obliged to abandon to William the sovereignty of Maine.

Eudes II, count of Blois, desired to seize the kingdom of Provence and afterwards Lorraine, and to this reconstructed Lorraine he hoped to add the crown of Italy. But a battle in Barrois ended the schemes of the turbulent baron. Eudes was defeated and killed (1037); his wife alone was able to



[987-1066 A.D.]

recognise his body among the corpses which strewed the field, and pay the last honours to his remains.

A prince against whom Eudes often fought, Fulk (Foulques) Neva — or the Black — count of Anjou, was even more renowned. Thrice did he make pilgrimages to the Holy Land. On the last he caused himself to be drawn on a sledge, naked, and with rope around the neck, through the streets of Jerusalem, whipped the while with great blows by two valets, and crying with all his might, "Lord have mercy on the traitor, the perjurer Fulk." Then he attempted to return on foot, but died on the way (1040). Fulk had indeed many crimes to expiate. Queen Constance was his niece. One day she complained to him of one of her husband's favourites, and Fulk immediately despatched twelve knights with orders to stab the favourite wherever they might find him. Of his two wives, he had one burned to death, or according to other accounts stabbed her himself after she had been rescued from a precipice over which he tried to throw her; the other he compelled by ill treatment to retire to Palestine. His son Geoffrey Martel was also a fighter. He tried by force of arms in 1036 to compel his father to cede him the county of Anjou, but the old Fulk defeated and made him undergo the punishment of the *harnesear*. The rebel son had to travel several miles on all fours, a saddle on his back, to reach the count's feet and implore his pardon.

Geoffrey Martel, jealous of the duke of Normandy's power, united with Henry I against him. His successors kept up this policy and the kings of France found the Angevin counts useful allies against the Norman dukes — now become kings of England, at least until the moment the counts inherited the English crown themselves. It is related that Geoffrey Martel's wife was fond of reading, but such was the scarcity of books that she was obliged to give two hundred sheep, five quarters of wheat, and as much rye and millet for a manuscript of the homilies. The beautiful cathedral of Angers was begun under Fulk Neva.<sup>c</sup>

#### PHILIP I (1060-1108 A.D.)

Philip I at the age of eight succeeded his father under the regency of Baldwin V, count of Flanders. The most important event of Philip's minority, and one in which he took no part, was the conquest of England. The Norman knights were distinguished above all others by their immoderate desire for warlike adventure and their brilliant exploits. Some of them, landing sixty years before as pilgrims on the south coast of Italy, had helped the besieged inhabitants of Salerno to drive off a Saracen army. Inspired by the success of their compatriots, the sons of a petty nobleman, Tancred de Hauteville, followed by a band of adventurers, wrested Apulia from the Greeks, Lombards, and Arabs, and sustained with success a most unequal struggle against the German and Byzantine emperors, who joined forces to exterminate them. They made prisoner the German pope Leo IX, devoted to the family of the emperor Henry III; and, humbling themselves before their captive, obtained permission to hold their conquest as a fief of the church. Robert Guiscard completed the subjection of Apulia and Calabria, and his brother Roger conquered Sicily, and it was thus the Normans founded the kingdom of the Two Sicilies and the pope obtained suzerainty over it.

Norman valour was the talk of Europe, when William the Bastard, son of Robert the Magnificent, began to assemble an army for the conquest of



England. Warriors, full of confidence in his destiny, rushed from all directions to his standard.<sup>1</sup> It was several hundred years since Britain had been conquered by the Saxons, and the country was now under the rule of King Harold, whom a storm had once wrecked, before he was king, upon the coast of Normandy. As William's prisoner, Harold was compelled to cede the Norman his rights to the throne; and when free at this price no longer considered himself bound by an oath extracted under compulsion. It was the custom in those days to consider shipwrecked persons as delivered by the judgment of God to the lord of the shore on which the storm had cast



PHILIP I

(From an old French print)

them. They could be held captive and even put to torture for the sake of ransom. William recalled to Harold his promise, especially invoked the will of Edward the Confessor, the last king of England, and declared his willingness to abide by the decision of the church. The consistory, assembled at the Lateran, pronounced in William's favour, and at the instigation of the monk Hildebrand awarded him the kingdom of England and sent him, together with a blessed standard, a diploma as sovereign of the country. A great battle fought between the two rivals near Hastings in 1066 decided the issue. Harold lost his life; and England, after a desperate struggle, became the conquest of the Normans. William divided the country into fiefs for his barons and knights, and thenceforth feudalism spread over England the network it had already

fastened upon France, Germany, and Italy.

This great event inflamed people's spirits and disposed them to adventurous expeditions in distant lands. It was the forerunner of the Crusades; although the latter had a nobler motive than the others, springing, as they did, from the enthusiasm of exalted piety.

A great revolution was taking place at this time in the church. Nicholas II occupied the pontifical chair at this moment. He had for counsellor a monk who deplored the vices of the clergy and the degradation of the church as much as the encroachments of the temporal upon spiritual authority. This monk, this man so celebrated in ecclesiastical history, was Hildebrand. He resolved to deprive the princes and lords of every source of influence over the clergy, to strengthen the ecclesiastical hierarchy, and to raise the pope above the kings of the earth, hoping thus to regain for the church her virtue, her splendour, and all her power. Such a project of universal domination, which would seem like madness to-day, was in Hildebrand's age a conception of genius. It was Hildebrand's glory to have wished to free the church's spiritual authority from all temporal bonds; it

[<sup>1</sup> Contemporaries assign very varied and incoherent numbers for the size of William's army. One of them, Hugues de Fleury, estimates it at 150,000 men. Modern historians have cut this down to about 60,000, which is still regarded by some as too high.]

[1071-1099 A.D.]

was his mistake to have listened too much to his own ambition in trying to enslave the political government of the princes to ecclesiastical authority. In 1073 Hildebrand was chosen by the people and clergy of Rome as successor to Pope Alexander II. He took the name of Gregory VII.

Philip of France was leading a life filled with scandal and violence. To satisfy his unbridled desires he, like Henry IV of Germany, was carrying on, in contempt of Gregory's prohibition, the most shameful traffic in clerical benefices. The angered pontiff threatened Philip with excommunication. The colossal structure raised by the pontiff did not perish with him; his successors bound it together. He founded the universal monarchy of the popes upon a durable basis and on the ruling spirit of the time, and this domination reached a century after him, its highest point. The Crusades contributed powerfully to hold it together. Gregory conceived the plan of these, but it was not given to him to carry it out. The first of these memorable events took place in the time of Philip I and in the pontificate of Urban II. Philip was not associated with the First Crusade; he took no part in any of the great enterprises which marked the age in which he lived, and his reign offers nothing worthy of remembrance.

In 1071 the widow of his guardian, Count Baldwin of Flanders, was robbed by the latter's brother, Robert the Frisian, and she had recourse to Philip. The king took up arms in her behalf and marched against Robert, but suffered a shameful defeat at Cassel.<sup>1</sup> He also fought a twelve years' war with William the Conqueror, but it was a war marked by no memorable event. William seduced Philip's counsellors and partisans by offering them great domains in England. Philip on his side promised protection to the discontented element among the Normans and took the part of William's eldest son Robert, in revolt against his father. After a truce and during an illness of the duke, the king made fun of the former's extreme fatness by inquiring when he expected to be brought to bed. William heard of this and, furious, swore to bring the king the candles for the churching. He assembled a formidable army and was setting out to ravage Philip's estates when he fell ill at Rouen and died there in 1087. When he was scarcely cold the lords who were with him departed in haste for their castles; his servants pillaged his effects, taking everything but the bed he lay on, and left the body of the conqueror naked on the mattress. A poor knight found it in this state and moved to pity covered it, at his own expense, with mourning robes and prepared to bury it. He had spoken the funeral service and the body was in the grave when a Norman named Asselin came forward and said, "This ground belongs to me; the man whose eulogy you have just pronounced robbed me of it. On this spot stood my father's house, this man seized it against all justice and without paying a price for it. In God's name I forbid you to cover the robber's body with earth that is mine." This is a memorable example of the vanity of an existence full of greatness and iniquity—a striking sign of the forerunner of the judgment which threatened, on the threshold of the other life, him who had founded his power on rapine and the extermination and misery of a people. This William, conqueror of a great realm and ravisher of immense domains in a foreign land, only obtained a resting-place in his native soil through pity; those who assisted at his funeral had to lay the price of it upon his coffin.

None of his three sons paid him his last duties, but waged fierce war for his heritage.<sup>d</sup> William Rufus succeeded to the throne in England, and his

[<sup>1</sup> The trouble with Robert did not end until 1076, when a treaty was made and the king received the homage of Flanders.]

brother Robert Courte-Heuse (Court-Hose or Short-Hose) in Normandy. But William was not content with his portion. He invaded Normandy in 1090, and also disturbed the peace of the French monarchy by a vigorous claim on the French Vexin and a war on the count of Maine. When Robert joined the First Crusade he mortgaged his duchy to his brother, who occupied it. But William's tenure was short. An arrow in the New Forest ended his life (1100). Robert Courte-Heuse hastened home and resumed his rule, but Henry I, the Conqueror's youngest son who succeeded William Rufus in England, thirsted likewise for the paternal dominions. In 1104 he appeared in Normandy and two years later the struggle was over. At the battle of Tinchebray Robert lost his lands and his liberty. Normandy passed to the English crown.<sup>a</sup>

The death of the Conqueror was a great cause of joy to Philip and enabled him to continue his indolent and scandalous career. He had married Bertha, daughter of Count Florent of Holland, but tired of her and shut her up while he eloped with Bertrade, wife of Fulk le Réchin, count of Anjou, and married her. Pope Urban ordered the dissolution of this marriage, and on his refusal to obey a council assembled at Autun in 1094 excommunicated the king. Philip no longer wished to wear the external marks of royalty; he was afflicted with grievous infirmities, which he recognised as the chastisement of God; so in 1100 he associated his son Louis with the crown, and thenceforth reigned only in name. A terrible fear of hell seized upon him. In humility he renounced burial in the sepulchre of the kings at St. Denis, and died in 1108 in the habit of a Benedictine monk.<sup>d</sup>

#### LOUIS THE FAT AND LOUIS THE YOUNG (1108-1180 A.D.)

Feebleness and inertness mark the reign of the first four Capetians. In the successor of Philip the race began to partake in the general activity of the age.

The reign of Louis VI, better known as Louis le Gros, or the Fat, began in the life-time of his predecessor. He was the first French monarch that entertained any settled maxim of government, or whose ideas reached a system of policy. His predecessors had been the creatures, the followers, of events. Louis knew how to control these. The whole effort and aim of his reign was to reduce the barons of the duchy of France to obedience. His views did not extend to the kingdom. He prudently limited his exertions to the counties within or bordering upon his power. History may disdain to recount minutely the wars carried on by Louis against the barons of Montmorency, whose castle rose within view of his capital, or against the lords of Puiset, of Montlhéry, or of Coucy, possessors of strongholds within a few leagues of Paris, from whence they were wont to sally forth to the plunder of travellers and merchants. And yet, of all the wars that adorn or sully the French annals, none was more wise in aim, more useful or important in consequences, than these petty enterprises of Louis.

His first attempt was against the Burchards, lords of Montmorency, who were continually in quarrel with the abbaye of St. Denis; and, if we are to believe the chronicles of the day, written for the most part in that famous convent, the Montmorencys were impious spoliators and enemies of the church. Louis stood forth the champion of the clergy, and brought the Burchards to reason. His next efforts were directed against the château of Montlhéry and its rapacious owners, who interrupted all communication betwixt the royal towns of Paris and Orleans, greatly to the detriment



[1101-1119 A.D.]

of commerce and the annoyance of the townsfolk. Louis here took care to have a pretext also. He did not assert his royal authority and arm to avenge it. It was as the ally of the clergy that he subdued the Montmorencys; it was as the friend of commerce, and the avenger of the plundered burgesses, that he besieged Montlhéry. Louis XI did not use more policy and feint in his undermining of the aristocracy than did Louis VI; the latter, unfortunately for his own fame, having only the smaller sphere of action (1101).

Nevertheless, the name of Louis the Fat stands connected with one of the most important revolutions in the civil history of France, *viz.*, the enfranchisement of the *communes* or commons, as the early municipalities were called. From him towns received their first charters; from his reign their first liberties date. In some towns the bishops favoured, in some they opposed, the enfranchisement of the commons. The barons were, in general, averse. The king was obliged to wage a tedious war against the family of Coucy, which, by means of a fortress, kept possession of the town of Amiens. He at length took and razed it; and the seignior of the De Coucys merged in the township of Amiens.

It was not merely by military exploits, and by the elevation of the *tiers état* or third estate, that the royal authority progressed during the reign of Louis VI. The judicial authority attributed to the monarch by the feudal system, and exercised by him in his court or council of peers, made him the arbiter of disputed successions. It was thus that Philip I had extended his influence over the province of Berri. His son Louis interfered in the quarrels of the house of Bourbon, where a minor struggled against the usurpation of his uncle. Louis entered the Bourbonnais with an army in 1115, took Germigny, the principal fortress of Aymon de Bourbon, and compelled him to submit. Not since the early Carolingians had the banners of a king of France been seen so far from his capital.

The continued rivalry betwixt the Normans, or English, and the French excited and kept alive the warlike spirit of both nations. Henry I reigned in England, and also in Normandy, which he had usurped from his brother Robert. Louis took the part of the latter, as well as of his son William Clito; and mutual wars, or rather ravages, were frequent, with intervals of peace, betwixt the nations.<sup>b</sup> The principal feud between Henry and Louis was produced by accident.

#### *Battle of Brenneville*

On the 20th of August, 1119, Louis and Henry found themselves unexpectedly face to face on the plain of Brenmule or Brenneville, three leagues from Les Andelys. Henry descended from the height of Verclive with his



LOUIS VI

(From an old engraving)



sons Richard and Robert, five hundred men-at-arms, and some infantry. Louis, seeing that what he had long desired was now approaching, marched straight at the enemy at the head of four hundred knights, accompanied by William Clito, who had taken arms to deliver his father from a long captivity and to win back the heritage of his ancestors. William de Crespigny, a Norman knight on Clito's side, charged first with eighty men-at-arms, penetrated as far as King Henry himself, and smote him such a blow on the head as, but for his cap of mail, must have split his skull; but Crespigny was instantly thrown from his horse and made prisoner with most of his followers. The knights of the Vexin and the rest of the French then fell impetuously on the Anglo-Normans, and at first caused them to give way, but Henry's soldiers, closing up their ranks, pressed between them and overthrew the assailants, who were thrown into disorder by the sheer force of their charge. King Louis, seeing his followers in disarray and anxious to effect a retreat in order to avoid an irreparable loss, fled at full gallop, leaving his royal banner and 140 of his knights in the hands of the conquerors.

"Of nine hundred knights who were present at this battle," says Ordericus Vitalis,<sup>g</sup> "there were only three killed; for they were completely cased in iron and, moreover, mutually sparing one another as much from the fear of God as for the sake of brotherhood in arms. They concerned themselves less to kill the flying than to take them prisoners."

The king of the French, divided from his companions in his fright, lost his way in a forest (that of Lyons) where a peasant, who did not know him, guided him to Les Andelys in the hope of a large reward. King Henry bought the silver standard of Louis for forty marks from a man-at-arms, who had seized it and kept it as a witness of his victory; but the next day he sent back to King Louis his horse with its saddle, its rein, and all the royal trappings (Louis had apparently changed horses that he might fly without being recognised). And William Ætheling had sent back to his cousin, William Clito, the palfrey which the latter had lost in the battle, with other presents which King Henry had thought needful for an exile.<sup>e</sup> After this defeat Louis had to abandon William Clito's cause. Pope Calixtus II arranged a peace and Henry I embarked for England with his family and his court. The journey is memorable for the loss of the "White Ship" (*Blanche Nef*) in which the most renowned knights and the heirs of the most illustrious house of the Norman race, including the two sons and a daughter of the king, perished. One child alone remained to the bereaved monarch, Matilda or Maud, the wife of the emperor Henry V but afterwards married to Geoffrey Plantagenet, count of Anjou.<sup>a</sup>

Another enterprise of Louis, in the year 1121, marks the rapid increase of the king's influence. A few years since he had established his authority in the Bourbonnais: now he extended it to Auvergne. In a quarrel betwixt the count and the bishop of Clermont, the latter appealed to Louis, who summoned the count to his supreme court, and, on his refusal to appear, marched with an army and subdued him, as he had previously the lord of Bourbon. The counts of Anjou and of Nevers aided him in the expedition. They felt no reluctance in carrying into effect the decrees of that court of peers of which they formed a part. Louis was not so fortunate in his treatment of Flanders as in his subjugation of Aquitaine. The Flemings, indeed, proved always intractable to French treatment whether of amity or hostility. The count of that province, perplexed and curbed by the frowardness of the townsfolk and the middle class, sought to taunt the family of Van der Straten by asserting they were serfs. One of them replied by cleaving the young

[1127-1149 A.D.]

count's skull as he knelt at prayers. There being no heir to the family of Flanders, Louis sought to give the county to William Clito (1127). This unfortunate prince soon after fell in an engagement; and Flanders passed to Theodoric of Alsace, a descendant of Robert the Frisian (1129). Louis VI died in 1137. It is strange that history could find for this monarch no epithet save that of the Fat, at the same time that it records innumerable proofs of a talented mind, of an active and enterprising spirit.

Towards the conclusion of this monarch's reign, fortune came to reward and crown his efforts for the extension of the royal authority. William, count of Poitiers, about to undertake a pilgrimage, from which he had the presentiment that he never should return, offered his daughter Eleanor in marriage to Louis the Young, son of Louis the Fat. She was the heiress of her father's possessions, which surpassed in extent and importance those of the king of France himself, comprising Guienne and Poitou — all the country, in fact, betwixt the Loire and the Adour. The marriage was celebrated at Bordeaux; and soon after it arrived tidings of the deaths both of the king and of the count of Poitiers. Thus Louis VII, or the Young, succeeded to dominions and authority infinitely more ample than those which his father had inherited. But the want of talent in the son did away with all these advantages. Nevertheless he commenced his reign with spirit. He chastised several refractory nobles, and resolved to support the queen's rights to the county of Toulouse. Louis besieged that town. He failed in taking it, indeed; but the king



LOUIS VII

of France, at the head of an army, made his name and power known for the first time to the inhabitants of the south. During a war carried on about the same time against Thibaut, count of Champagne, an accident occurred which had a marked effect upon the future conduct and character of Louis the Young. He had taken by storm the castle of Vitry, and set fire to it. The flames chanced to catch the neighbouring church, into which the population had crowded, to preserve themselves from the fury of the soldiery. It appears that they had no means of escape. Thirteen hundred men, women, and children perished in the conflagration. Louis was horror-struck on beholding the mass of half consumed bodies, and the weight of the remorse hung ever after upon him, and weighed down his spirit. It was the chief cause that induced him to receive the cross, and to lead that expedition to Jerusalem which is known in history as the Second Crusade.

Not a single feat of arms marked the stay of Louis in Palestine, where he lingered till 1149, ashamed to return. The ignominy of this ill success, and the desertion of his followers, fell upon King Louis; and he felt it, not to rally and redeem his character, but to sink under the shame. He abandoned the feelings of the monarch and the warrior for those of the pilgrim; refused at first to undertake any enterprise against the infidels, and stole from Antioch to Jerusalem like a craven. If his subjects were discontented with such

weakness in their sovereign, Eleanor of Aquitaine was still more disgusted with such a husband: she refused longer to remain on any friendly terms with him.<sup>b</sup> On his return the king repudiated his wife, who had so displeased him during the crusade. [Queen Eleanor at once petitioned the pope for a divorce. In 1152 the pope granted her wish.] Shortly afterwards a new marriage transferred her duchy of Guienne to Henry Plantagenet, count of Anjou, duke of Normandy and heir to the English crown. When, two years later, Henry entered into possession of his heritage, and afterwards added Brittany, through the marriage of one of his sons with the only daughter of the count of that country, he found himself master of almost the whole of western France.<sup>c</sup>

Hence dates the rivalry betwixt the kings which fills up the rest of their reigns. But in that age war tended more to mutual annoyance than to conquest: it was a livelihood to the needy, a portion to the powerful; and neither were very serious or bent upon the destruction of an enemy. Feudal rights and supremacy were also held in high respect; and the name of suzerain, though but a name, often supplied to Louis the place of the armies of his vassal Henry. In time the church came to fling itself into the scale. The persecution and murder of Thomas à Becket roused all the clergy in enmity to Henry, and Louis took advantage of their aid. Later still, the French monarch used the more unworthy expedient of exciting the sons of Henry to rebel against their parent; and throughout he contrived to supply by intrigue what he wanted in martial spirit, activity, and power. Louis VII married Alix of Champagne, after the divorce; he was long without a son, and at length, so the story goes, he obtained one by dint of prayer. When the life of the prince was threatened by a fever, the anxious parent undertook a pilgrimage to Canterbury, to the tomb of Thomas à Becket, for his recovery. The young Philip recovered; but Louis, on his return, was struck with a palsy, under which he lingered for the space of a year, and died in 1180.<sup>d</sup>

### *The Abbot Suger*

On his return from the crusade, Louis found his country in a most peaceful and flourishing condition owing to the skilful administration of his preceptor the abbot Suger, whom he had left in charge of affairs.<sup>a</sup> Suger is indubitably the most illustrious, perhaps, even, the only historian who has a place in the general history of France, and who really influenced her destinies. Such a fame cannot be usurped; whoso possesses it merits it.

No great and lasting memorials were raised in France by Suger and his master, Louis the Fat; they made no great conquests, established no memorable laws; it is even a mistake to ascribe to them the honour of being the first to enfranchise the communes. This enfranchisement had preceded them; it arose from causes beyond their control, fulfilled its destiny without their aid, and was as often opposed as seconded by them. But Louis the Fat and Suger, the one as king, the other as minister, were the first since Charlemagne to have a true and just perception of their position and mission, and to bind themselves to act upon it. This great idea, without which there can be nothing of state or king, the idea of a public authority, devoted to the maintenance of public order, called to something higher than ministration to the interests and personal caprices of its temporary holder, had been conceived by the giant mind of Charlemagne, but, despite his genius and a long reign, it was not for him to put it into action, to found a throne and a nation. Certain customs of unity, of regularity, of govern-



[1081-1137 A.D.]

ment, in short, existed indeed in the earlier years of Louis le Débonnaire's reign, but they soon vanished, society and authority alike fell into decay, and for two centuries there was neither king, kingdom, nor nation, Frank nor French.

Hugh Capet, in taking the title of king, laid the first stone of a new monarchy in the very heart of feudalism. But it was no more than a title of vague meaning and no import under him. He had not the force of character, nor is there anything to indicate that he had the design, to raise the sovereignty above suzerainty and reunite in one body the scattered members of the nation. Under his immediate successors the power of the throne drooped more and more. In the reigns of Robert, Henry I, and Philip I, one can scarcely discern any traces of national and monarchical unity. Isolation and independence waxed stronger, not only in the case of powerful or distant feudatories, but also among the nearest and humblest vassals of the crown. Only the feudal tie continued in force, a real and precious tie since it still maintained a show of confederation under a leader and prevented the utter dismemberment of the government and the country; but its influence, always more moral than political, yielded at the least shock and seemed even on the point of disappearance. With Louis the Fat a new era begins; the extent of his power, even the sphere of his activities, is still very restricted; the results of his endeavours are, for the present at least, of little value. It is almost always in the outskirts of Paris, against the simple squires, for the securing of a route, for the protection of merchants, that his courage and wisdom are exercised. Nevertheless in these small undertakings, and in certain others more remote, we can see a definite design of central and regular government; sovereignty separates itself from suzerainty, and in its own name claims, though timidly, rights of another sort. It presents itself to us as a power general and superior, called to maintain justice and order, to the advantage of all, and against all comers—a power all too weak for such a task, but awake to a perception of its dignity and its mission, and to a dawning of the same in the mind of its subjects. Such is the true character of the reign of Louis the Fat; he did little for the liberties of the public, much for the forming of the state and national government. He guided sovereignty in its first steps out of a feudal régime, gave to it other principles, placed it in a different attitude; and it is in this work, the development of which decided the lot of France, that Suger rendered powerful assistance during twenty five years' administration.

He did not seem marked out by birth for so great things, his father, Hélinand, being only a man of the people, living, according to the most probable supposition, at St. Omer, where Suger was born in 1081. But even at that date the church busied herself in searching out and welcoming, even from among the lowest ranks, men capable of serving and honouring her. Everywhere present and active, in touch with all the social conditions, associating alike with poor and rich, dwelling with the humble as with the great, she went forward to meet even childhood on its way, studying its varying dispositions, surrounding its earliest days, unfolding to it a brilliant career, the only one which invited development of its intellectual faculties, in which every reward was accessible to merit, and, finally, in which principles of equality and co-operation reigned. The monastery of St. Denis received and brought up the young Suger; he passed ten years in the dependent priory of Lettrée, and when, in 1095, Philip intrusted the education of his son, Louis the Fat, to the monks of St. Denis, Abbot Adam recalled Suger into the abbey itself that he might become the companion of



the young prince. Thus sprang up between the children the intimacy which was to bind them together all their lives. In 1098, Louis returned to his father's house, and Suger went to complete his studies in the monastery of Florent-de-Saumur, where the sciences of the day flourished under Abbot William. In returning to St. Denis in 1103 he speedily became the confidant of Abbot Adam, who, not content with employing him in all matters relating to the monastery, frequently took him to court where Prince Louis, who now for four years had had a share in the throne, knit yet more closely the bonds that had bound him to his childhood's friend. From this date there is no further need to trace the life of Suger; it is part of history and nearly all the details that have come down to us are to be found either in his *Vie de Louis VI<sup>e</sup>* or in the *Panegyric* written upon him by the monk William, his secretary.

Before his elevation to the dignity of abbot of St. Denis, when charged with diverse missions either to ecclesiastical gatherings or to the court at Rome, or even called upon to defend with mailed fist certain domains belonging to St. Denis against the brigand nobles who ravaged them, he displayed in turn the tact of the ecclesiastic and the courage of the knight. Later on, when Louis had constituted him his most intimate adviser, it seems that so much power temporarily dazzled Suger. St. Bernard speaks of his pomp and pride, and of the disorder introduced into his abbey. "The interior of the monastery," he says, "is filled with knights, sometimes it is even open to women; one hears business of all sorts being transacted there; there quarrels break out; lastly it is there that that which is Cæsar's is rendered unto Cæsar, without deduction or delay, but never unto God that which is God's." Whether it be that St. Bernard's warnings aroused Suger from this first intoxication of power, or whether he perceived of himself the harm the scandal would do him, he did not delay putting an end to it. In 1127 he introduced drastic reforms into his abbey, compelled his monks to submit to them, and scrupulously conformed himself, and very shortly his power in the court was but more firmly established by this episode. Proud of the austerity of his morals, whilst at the same time profiting by his influence, the church cried him up on all occasions, and bishops and abbots of the most celebrated monasteries contemplated with equal pride the gorgeous church rebuilt by him at St. Denis, and the humble cell, barely fifteen feet long by ten feet wide, where he applied himself in solitude to religious exercises. After the death of Louis the Fat his power increased yet more; the indolent and incompetent Louis the Young shifting to his shoulders the whole weight of the government.

Suger's regency during this king's crusade, from the year 1147 to the year 1149, is the most brilliant period of his career. He firmly upheld the royal authority, rebuked the usurpations of the vassals, established some degree of order wherever his influence attained to, met the king's expenses in Palestine by his excellent administration of the crown revenues, and the advancement of his domains, and, finally, won such fame throughout the length and breadth of Europe that persons from Italy and England came to study the salutary results of his government, and the title of "the Solomon of the century" was bestowed upon him by foreigners contemporary with him. Hitherto only illustrious bishops, or learned and subtle theologians had attained this European distinction by their authority in the church or by their writings; no other man had ever won it on the sole merit of his political conduct, and from the ninth to the twelfth century Suger remains the first example of a minister who won admiration for his skill and

[1147-1149 A.D.]

wisdom from beyond the mountains and over the seas. He did not show any anxiety to retain this absolute power which the king's absence conferred on him, and, by a rare unselfishness, the interests of the state preoccupied him more than his personal ambitions. He was himself opposed to a crusade from which he foresaw dangers, and had only yielded at the instance of St. Bernard's ardent entreaties, the pope's orders, and the prevailing opinion of the day. When certain of the nobles, Robert de Dreux, his brother, among them, who had accompanied Louis, abandoned him in Palestine and returned without him to France, Suger never ceased from urging his immediate return to his dominions.

"The disturbers of the public peace," he wrote, "have returned, whilst you, under bond to defend your subjects, remain as it were captive in a foreign land. Of what are you thinking, sire, thus to leave the flock intrusted to you at the mercy of the wolves? How can you disguise from yourself the perils with which the robbers who have outstripped you menace the state? No, it is not permissible for you to remain any longer so far away from us. Everything here craves your presence. Therefore we pray your highness, we exhort your piety, we call upon your goodness of heart, finally we conjure you by the faith which binds reciprocally prince and subject, not to prolong beyond Easter your sojourn in Syria, lest a longer delay render you guilty in the eyes of the Lord of disregarding the oath which you swore on assuming the crown. You will, I think, find cause for contentment in our conduct. We have placed in the hands of the knights Templar the money which we had intended to send you. We have further repaid to the count of Vermandois the £3,000 which he had lent us for your use. At the present time your land and your people enjoy a happy peace. We lay in store against your return the broken victuals for the fiefs dependent on you, the tallage and victuals which we levy from your domains. You will find your houses and palaces in good preservation owing to the care we have taken in doing repairs. I have now reached the decline of life, but I dare venture to say that the works I engaged to do from love to God and devotion to your person have hastened my old age. With regard to the queen, your wife, I advise that you conceal the dissatisfaction she causes you till such time as, restored to your realm, you can quietly deliberate over that and other matters."



AN OFFICER OF THE KING, TWELFTH CENTURY

Louis kept them waiting for him yet a long time. Suger had to fight against the pretensions and plottings of Robert de Dreux and his party. He realised that single-handed he would not be able to hold his own, and boldly summoned to Soissons an assembly of the bishops and principal barons of the realm. This generous appeal to the opinions and the liberties of the times had the result he anticipated: the assembly sided with him and strengthened him against his enemies. Defeated in their purpose in France, they made

an attack on him in Palestine, this time within the mind of the king himself, who, frivolous and credulous, at first believed all their accusations. But on passing through Italy on his return to his dominions Louis received through Pope Eugenius III, friend and admirer of Suger, a completely different impression, in which he was fully confirmed on arriving in France by the good order which he there found established, the resources husbanded for him by Suger, and the eagerness shown by the regent to hand over to the king his rightful authority.

Other ideas were at work in the old man's brain. He had disapproved of his master's crusade as fatal to the interests of the kingdom; but the misfortunes to the Christians in the East, and regret at seeing the Holy Land on the point of once more falling into the hands of the infidels, preoccupied his mind continually. He conceived the idea of himself attempting a fresh expedition to Palestine, of raising an army at his own expense, of devoting all his wealth and influence to the cause, of inducing the leading bishops to follow his example, and of personally heading an undertaking by which he hoped Jerusalem would be saved without imperilling France and his king. In the narrative of William, his biographer, we can see with what ardour and perseverance he threw himself into this project, even after illness forbade him to hope for the glory resulting from it. He had already chosen the leader whom he deemed most competent to replace him and had presented him with the sums of money collected for carrying out the scheme, when death overtook him, January 12th, 1151, at the age of seventy.<sup>h</sup>

#### EMANCIPATORY MOVEMENTS AFTER THE CRUSADES

The grand movement of the crusade having for a while withdrawn men from local servitude, and led them abroad through Europe and Asia, they sought Jerusalem and found freedom. That liberating trumpet of the archangel, which was thought to have been heard in the year 1000, sounded a century later in the preaching of the crusade. The village awoke at the foot of the feudal castle, whose shade hung heavy over it. The pitiless man who descended from his vulture's eyrie only to despoil his vassals, now himself armed them, led them, lived with them, suffered with them. Communion in misery softened his heart. Many a serf could say to the baron, "My lord, I found you a draft of water in the desert; I shielded you with my body at the siege of Antioch, or Jerusalem."

#### *The Communes*

Humanity, then, began again to honour itself, even in its most miserable conditions. The first communal revolutions preceded, or closely followed, the year 1100. They began to think that every man was entitled to dispose of the fruits of his own labour, and to give away his own children in marriage; they emboldened themselves to think that they had a right to come and go, to buy and sell, and they suspected, in their presumption, that it might very possibly be that men were equal.

Until then, that formidable thought of equality had not come forth in a very precise and tangible form. We are told, indeed, that the peasants of Normandy revolted in the year 1000, but they were easily put down; a few knights ravaged the country, dispersed the villeins, cut off their feet and hands, and there was an end of the matter. The peasants, in general, were too much isolated from each other; their *jacqueries* were always unsuc-



[1000-1137 A.D.]

cessful throughout the Middle Ages. Unhappily, too, it must be owned, they were too degraded by slavery, too brutalised by the excess of their woes; their triumph would have been that of barbarism. It was especially in the populous boroughs, grouped round the castles, and, above all, round the churches, that ideas of emancipation fermented. The lay, or ecclesiastical lords had encouraged the population of those boroughs by concessions of land, being desirous of augmenting their own strength and the number of their vassals. These towns were not large and commercial cities, like those of the south of France and Italy, but they had some rude branches of trade, some blacksmiths, many weavers, butchers, and innkeepers, in the towns of transit. Sometimes the lords invited skilful workmen to settle in their towns, such, at least, as could embroider a stole, or forge armour; it was absolutely necessary to leave those men a little liberty, for, otherwise, as they carried their all in their hands, they would have left the country.

The growth of freedom, then, was destined to commence in the central towns of France, which, obtaining their franchises by fair means or by force, received the name of privileged towns, or communes. The occasion of this result was, generally, the defence made by the inhabitants against the oppression and robbery of the feudal lords, and, in particular, the defence of the Île-de-France against Normandy, the feudal country *par excellence*. "At this period," says Ordericus Vitalis,<sup>g</sup> "popular communalty was established by the bishops in such wise that the priests accompanied the king to siege or battle, with the banners of their parishes and all their parishioners." According to the same historian, it was a Montfort (an illustrious family, which was, in the following century, to destroy the liberties of the south of France, and to lay the foundation of those of England), it was Amaury de Montfort, who advised Louis the Fat, after his defeat at Brenneville, to employ against the Normans the men of the communes, marching under the banners of their parishes (1119). But when these communes returned within their own walls, they became more urgent in their demands; it was a mortal blow to their humility, to have once seen the great war-steeds and the noble knights flying before their parochial banners; to have put an end, with Louis the Fat, to the highway robberies of the Rocheforts; to have harried the lair of the De Coucys. They said, with the poet of the twelfth century: "We are men as well as they; our hearts are as great; we are as capable of endurance as they." They all wanted some franchise, some privilege, and for this they offered money—which they contrived to find, indigent and wretched as they were. Poor artisans, blacksmiths, or weavers, allowed, as a matter of favour, to set themselves down at the foot of a castle; fugitive serfs, who had taken refuge round a church, such were the founders of liberty; they stinted themselves of bread to obtain them, and the lords and the king were eager to sell diplomas so well paid for.

This revolution was accomplished everywhere, under a thousand forms, and with little noise; it was only prominently remarked in some towns of Oise and Somme, which, being placed in less favourable circumstances, divided between two lords, lay and ecclesiastical, applied to the king to obtain a solemn guarantee for concessions often violated, and which maintained a precarious liberty at the cost of many centuries of civil war. It was upon these towns that the name of "communes" was more particularly bestowed. These wars are a small, but dramatic incident in the great revolution which was taking place silently, and under various forms, in all the towns of the north of France.

It was in the valiant and choleric Picardy, the communes of which had so well beaten the Normans; it was in the country of Calvin, and so many



other revolutionary spirits, that these explosions took place.<sup>f</sup> Le Mans in 1066, then Cambray in 1076, gave the signal, followed by Noyon, Beauvais, St. Quentin, Laon, Amiens and Soissons. All wrested communal charters from their lords, mostly of the ecclesiastical order. In 1112 the bishop of Laon attempted to repeal the communal charter he had granted, somewhat under compulsion, three years before. His house was surrounded; the nobles who came to his assistance were killed, and the prelate himself fell under the blows of an axe. The king came and the commune was abolished. But before sixteen years had passed the communal party regained the ascendancy. In 1128 the king ratified a new charter granted by the bishop.<sup>c</sup> Great or small, the Picard communes were heroic, and bravely did they fight. They too had their belfry, their tower, not inclined and faced with marble, like the *miranda* of Italy, but furnished with a sonorous bell, that summoned the citizens, not in vain, to battle against the bishop or the lord. Women went forth to these fights, against men. Eighty women insisted on taking part in the attack upon the castle of Amiens, and were wounded there.

So, likewise, Joan Hachette fought afterwards, at the siege of Beauvais. A sprightly and laughter-loving population it was, of impetuous soldiers and merry story-tellers, a country of light manners, of light *fabliaux*, of good songs. It was their delight, in the twelfth century, to see the count of Amiens, mounted upon his big horse, venturing beyond the pont-levis, and caracoling clumsily; thereupon the innkeepers and the butchers planted themselves boldly at their doors, and startled the feudal animal with their loud laughter.

It has been said that the king founded the communes, but the reverse is, rather, the fact — it was the communes that founded the king; without them he could not have repulsed the Normans. Those conquerors of England and of the Two Sicilies would, probably, have conquered France; it was the communes, or, to employ a more general and more exact word, it was the *bourgeoisies* which, under the banner of the parish saint, achieved the security of public peace between the Oise and the Loire; and the king, mounted on horseback, carried the banner of the abbey of St. Denis, at the head of the lords. A vassal, as count of Vexin, abbot of St. Martin de Tours, canon of St. Quentin, defender of the churches, he waged holy war against the brigandage of the lords of Montmorency and Puiset, and against the execrable ferocity of the Coucys. He had upon his side the nascent *bourgeoisie* and the church; feudalism had had all the rest, all the strength and the glory; the poor helpless king was smothered between the vast dominations of his vassals.

### *Philosophy and Thought; Abelard and St. Bernard*

The chain of free-thinkers, broken, it would seem, after Johannes Scotus, had its links reunited by the great Gerbert, who became pope in the year 1000. Educated at Cordova, and admitted a master at Rheims, Gerbert had for disciple Fulbert of Chartres, whose pupil Bérenger [Berengarius] of Tours affrighted the church by the first doubt cast upon the Eucharist. Soon after, the canon Rosselin of Compiègne dared to touch upon the question of the Trinity. He taught, moreover, that general ideas were but words: "The virtuous man is a reality; virtue is but a sound." This bold reform gave a violent shock to all poetry, to all religion; it accustomed men to see nothing but personifications in those ideas that had been regarded as real things; it was nothing less than a transition from poetry to prose.

[1079-1115 A.D.]

This logical heresy inspired the contemporaries of the First Crusade with horror ; nominalism, as it was called, was stifled for a while.

Champions were not wanting to the church against the innovators. The Lombards, Lanfranc and St. Anselm, both of them archbishops of Canterbury, combated Bérenger and Rosselin. St. Anselm, an original genius, anticipated the famous argument of Descartes, for the existence of God : " If God did not exist, I could not conceive him." It was a great delight for him to have made this discovery, after a long fit of sleeplessness. Another conflict of an intellectual kind, and one of a much graver nature, was about to begin, so soon as the question should have come down from politics to theology and morals, and the very morality of Christianity should have been brought in question. Thus, Pelagius came after Arius, and Abelard after Bérenger.

The church seemed at peace ; the school of Laon and that of Paris were occupied by two pupils of St. Anselm of Canterbury, Anselm of Laon, and William of Champeaux. Great signs and tokens, however, were appearing ; the Vaudois had translated the Bible into the vulgar tongue ; the *Institutes* were also translated, and law was taught, simultaneously with theology, at Orleans and at Angers. The mere existence of the school of Paris was an immense innovation and danger. The ideas which, till then, had been dispersed, and exposed to close inspection in the various ecclesiastical schools, were about to converge to a centre. The conquests of the Normans and the First Crusade had carried that potent philosophic idiom everywhere — into England, into Sicily, into Jerusalem. This circumstance alone gave France, especially central France and Paris, an immense attractive force. The French of Paris became gradually proverbial ; feudalism had found its political centre in the royal city, and that city was now about to become the capital of human thought.

He who began this revolution was not a priest ; he was a handsome young man, of brilliant and engaging qualities, and of noble race. No one, like him, could write love verses in the vulgar tongue, and he sang them himself ; then his erudition was extraordinary for the times — he was the only man who knew Greek and Hebrew.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps he had frequented the Jewish schools (there were many of them in the south), or the rabbis of Troyes, Vitry, or Orleans. There were then two principal schools in Paris ; the old episcopal school of Notre Dame, and that of St. Geneviève, on the mountain, where William of Champeaux was in the zenith of his fame. Abelard became one of his pupils, laid his doubts before him, puzzled his master, made sport of him, and put him to silence. He would have done the same with Anselm of Laon, had not the professor, who was a bishop, expelled him from his diocese. Thus did the knight-errant of dialectics go about unhorsing the most famous champions. He says himself that he renounced the other kind of tilting, that of the tournaments, only from his love for the war of words. Thenceforth, victorious and unrivalled, he taught at Paris and at Melun, where Louis the Fat resided, and where the lords were beginning to gather in great numbers. These knights encouraged a man of their own order, who had beaten the priests upon their own ground, and who put the most self-sufficient of the clerks to silence.

The whole body of Christianity was at stake ; it was attacked at its base. If original sin, as Abelard said, was not a sin, but a penalty, that penalty

[<sup>1</sup> She (Heloise) was perfect mistress of Latin and knew enough Greek and Hebrew to form the basis of her future proficiency. He (Abelard) knew nothing of Greek or Hebrew, although all his biographers except M. Rémusat assume that he knew them both. — G. W. LEWES.]

was unjust, and redemption was useless. Abelard defended himself from such a conclusion; but he justified Christianity by means of such feeble arguments, that he rather did it more damage by declaring that he had no better answer to give. He suffered himself to be brought to a stand by means of the *argumentum ad absurdum*, and then he appealed to authority and faith. And so, then, man was no longer guilty; the flesh was justified and restored to honour; all the sufferings with which men had immolated themselves were superfluous. What became of so many voluntary martyrs, so many fastings and mortifications — the vigils of monks, the tribulations of hermits, the countless tears shed before God? All was vanity — mockery. God was an amiable and easy God, who had nothing to do with all this.

The church was then under the sway of a monk, a simple abbot of Clairvaux, St. Bernard. He was of noble birth, like Abelard, a native of Upper Burgundy. He had been brought up in the puissant house of Cîteaux, the sister and rival of Cluny, which sent forth so many illustrious preachers, and which, half a century afterwards, made the crusade against the Albigenses. But St. Bernard thought Cîteaux too splendid and too rich: he went into needy Champagne, and founded the monastery of Clairvaux in the "Valley of Wormwood." There he was free to lead that life of sorrows that was needful to him: nothing could win him from it; never would he hear of being anything else than a monk, though he might have become archbishop and pope. Constrained to reply to all the kings who consulted him, he found himself all-potent in spite of himself, and condemned to govern Europe. A letter from St. Bernard made the army of the king of France withdraw from Champagne. When schism broke out, by the simultaneous elevation of Innocent II and of Anacletus, St. Bernard was appointed by the church of France to choose between them, and he chose Innocent. But these were not his greatest affairs, as his letters inform us; he lent, not gave, himself to the world; his love and his treasure were elsewhere. Living in the inward life, in prayer and sacrifice, no one could make himself more alone in the midst of bustle; the senses no longer spoke to him of the world. He walked a whole day, says his biographer, along the Lake of Lausanne, and in the evening he asked where the lake was. He drank oil for water, and took clotted blood for butter. He could hardly support himself erect, and yet he found strength to preach the crusade to a hundred thousand men. The multitude thought it was a spirit, rather than a man they saw, when he appeared thus before them, with his red and white beard, his fair and hoary hair; meagre and weak, with but a scarcely visible indication of life upon his cheeks. His sermons were terrible; mothers kept their sons away from them, and wives their husbands; they would else have all followed him to the monasteries. As for him, when he had sent forth the breath of life over the multitude, he returned with speed to Clairvaux, reconstructed his little hut of boughs and foliage near the convent, and assuaged a little his love-sick soul in writing the exposition of the "Song of Songs" which employed his whole life.

Imagine with what grief such a man must have heard of Abelard's success — of the usurpations of logic over religion; the prosaic victory of reasoning over faith; the flame of the sacrifice becoming stifled and extinguished in the world. It was robbing him of his God. St. Bernard was not to be compared with his rival as a logician; but the latter himself wrought his own downfall. He undertook to deduce its consequences from his doctrine, and he applied it to his conduct in life. He had reached that excess of prosperity in which the infatuation common to our nature plunges



[1115-1140 A.D.]

us into some great fault. Everything succeeded with him; men held their peace before him; women all regarded with looks of love an engaging, invincible young man, beautiful in face and all-powerful in mind, who had a whole people for his followers. "I had reached such a pass," he says, "that honour what woman I would with my love, I had no refusal to fear." Rousseau says precisely the same thing in his *Confessions* in relating the success of the *Nouvelle Héloïse*.

The Héloïse of the twelfth century was the niece of the canon Fulbert, very young, beautiful, learned, and already celebrated; she was intrusted by her uncle to the teaching of Abelard, who seduced her. This fault had not even love for its excuse; it was deliberately, in cold blood, by way of pastime, that Abelard betrayed the confidence of Fulbert. We know that he was cruelly punished by mutilation for his crime; he renounced the world, and became a Benedictine at St. Denis, about the year 1119. Thither he was pursued by ecclesiastical persecutions, and he found no rest there. The archbishop of Rheims, the friend of St. Bernard, assembled a council against him at Soissons; Abelard was like to have been stoned by the people; he was frightened, shed many tears, burned his books, and said whatever they pleased. He was condemned without inquiry, his enemies alleging that it was enough that he had taught without the authority of the church.

Shut up at St. Médard de Soissons, and afterwards a refugee at St. Denis, he was obliged to fly from that asylum. He had presumed to doubt that St. Denis, the Areopagite, had ever visited France.<sup>1</sup> To impugn that legend was to attack the religion of the monarchy; and from that moment the court withdrew its protection from him. He fled to the dominions of the count of Champagne, and hid himself in a desert place on the Ardusson, two leagues from Nogent. Reduced now to poverty, and having but one clerk with him, he built a hut of reeds and an oratory in honour of that Trinity he was accused of denying, and named his hermitage the Comforter, the Paraclet. But his disciples, having learned where he was, flocked round him; they built them huts, and a town rose in the desert, dedicated to science and to liberty. A little more, and he would once more have appeared as a public teacher; but he was compelled again to hold his peace, and to accept the priory of St. Gildas de Ruys in Brittany, the language of which he did not understand. It was his fate to find no rest; his Breton monks, whose habits he endeavoured to reform, endeavoured to give him poison in the chalice. Thenceforth, the unfortunate man led a wandering life, and even thought, it is said, of taking refuge in some land of the infidels; but first he would once measure his strength against that of the terrible adversary who everywhere pursued him with his zeal and his sanctity. At the instigation of Arnold of Brescia, he challenged St. Bernard to a logical duel before the Council of Sens. The king, the counts of Champagne and Nevers, and a host of bishops were to be present, and to judge of the hits. St. Bernard repaired to the rendezvous reluctantly, conscious as he was of his inferiority. But the threats of the people and the timidity of his rival relieved him from all embarrassment. Abelard durst not defend himself, but contented himself with appealing to the pope. Innocent II owed everything to St. Bernard, and hated Abelard for the sake of his disciple, Arnold of Brescia, who was then roaming over Italy, and summoning the towns to freedom. He ordered Abelard to be shut up; but the latter had anticipated him by voluntarily

[<sup>1</sup> A legend had identified St. Denis who flourished in the third century with Dionysius the Areopagite who was converted by St. Paul.]



taking refuge in the monastery of Cluny. The abbot, Peter the Venerable, answered for Abelard, who died there two years afterwards. Such was the end of the restorer of philosophy in the Middle Ages—the son of Pelagius, the father of Descartes, and a Breton like them. From another point of view, he may be regarded as a precursor of the humane and sentimental school, which was revived in the persons of Fénélon and Rousseau.

There is no memory more popular in France than that of Abelard's mistress. The fall of the man made the grandeur of the woman; but for Abelard's misfortune, Héloïse would have been unknown; she would have remained obscure and in the shade, she would have desired no other glory than that of her spouse. At the period of their separation, he made her take the veil, and built for her the Paraclet, of which she became the abbess. There she held a great school of theology, Greek, and Hebrew. Many similar monasteries rose around the Paraclet, and some years after the death of Abelard, Héloïse was declared head of an order by the pope. But her glory consists in her love, so constant and so disinterested—a love to which Abelard's coldness and hardness of heart give a new lustre. Let us compare the language of the two lovers:

"Fulbert," says Abelard, "gave her up, without reserve, to my control, so that, upon my return from the schools, I should apply myself to her instruction, and, if I found her negligent, should chastise her severely. Was not this giving full license to my desires, so that, if I did not succeed by caresses, I might compass my end by threats and blows?"

This dastardly brutality of a pedant of the twelfth century is in strange contrast with the exalted and disinterested sentiments expressed by Héloïse. "God knows, in thee, I sought but thee; nothing of thee but thyself; such was the sole object of my desire. I was ambitious of no advantage, not even of the bond of wedlock; I thought not, thou well knowest, of satisfying either my own wishes or my own pleasure, but thine. If the name of spouse is more holy, sweeter to me seemed that of thy mistress, that (be not angry) of thy concubine (*concubinæ vel scorti*). The more I humbled myself for thee, the more I hoped to gain in thy heart. Yes, though the master of the world, though the emperor had been willing to honour me with the name of his spouse, I would rather have been called thy mistress than his wife and his empress (*tua dici meretrix, quam illius imperatrix*)." She accounts in a singular manner for her having long refused to be the wife of Abelard: "Would it not have been an unseemly, a deplorable thing, that one woman should appropriate and take for herself alone, him whom nature had created for all mankind? What mind, intent upon the meditations of philosophy or of sacred things, could endure the crying of children, the prating of nurses, the disturbance and tumult of serving-men and women?"

The mere form of the letters that passed between Abelard and Héloïse shows how little the passion of the latter was returned. Abelard divides and subdivides his mistress's letters; he replies to them methodically, and by chapters. He heads his own: "To the spouse of Christ, the slave of Christ"; or "To his dear sister in Christ, Abelard her brother in Christ." Héloïse's tone is very different: "To her master, nay, father; to her husband, nay, brother; his handmaid, his spouse, nay, his daughter, his sister; Héloïse to Abelard."

### *Abelard and the University*

Hasting Rashdall describes the relations between Abelard's influence in Paris and the ultimate development of the University of Paris as follows:

[1100-1150 A.D.]

"The less imaginative historians of the University of Paris have generally been contented with tracing its origin to the teaching of Abelard. And it was undoubtedly to the intellectual movement of which Abelard is the most conspicuous representative that the rise of the university must ultimately be ascribed. But there was nothing in the organisation of the schools wherein Abelard taught to distinguish them from any other cathedral schools which might for a time be rendered famous by the teaching of some illustrious master. In the age of Abelard there were three great churches at Paris more or less famous for their schools. In the first place there was the cathedral (Notre Dame), whose schools were presided over by William of Champeaux. Then, on the left bank of the Seine, there was the collegiate church of St. Geneviève; and there was the church of the Canons Regular of St. Victor's, where a school for external scholars was started by William after his retirement from the world. St. Victor's became the head-quarters of the old traditional or positive theology, and it had ceased to exist, or ceased to attract secular students, before the first traces of a university organisation begin to appear. With both the secular schools of Paris, Abelard was at one time or other connected. Denifle's repudiation of the old view that the university arose from a junction between the arts schools of St. Geneviève and the theological schools of Notre Dame goes slightly beyond the evidence, but in the main he is unquestionably right in contending that it was the cathedral schools which eventually developed into the university.

"It was the fame of Abelard which first drew to the streets of Paris the hordes of students whose presence involved that multiplication of masters by whom the university was ultimately formed. In that sense, and in that sense only the origin of the University of Paris may be connected with the name and age of Abelard. Of a university or a recognised society of masters we hear nothing; nay, the existence of such an institution was impossible at a time when the single master of the cloister school seems to have been as a rule the only recognised master in or around each particular church." *m*

### *The Position of Woman*

Abelard had propounded the ideal of pure and disinterested love in his writings, as the consummation of the religious soul. Woman rose up to it, for the first time, in the writings of Héloïse; but still indeed referring it to man, to her spouse, to her visible God.

The restoration of woman, which had begun with Christianity, took place chiefly in the twelfth century. A slave in the East, even in the Greek gynæceum a recluse, emancipated by imperial jurisprudence, she was recognised by the new religion as man's equal. Still Christianity, but just liberated from pagan sensuality, continued to fear and distrust woman; men knew themselves to be weak and fond, and they repudiated her all the more strongly, the more they felt how they sympathised with her in their hearts. Hence, the harsh, and even contemptuous expressions with which they labour to fortify themselves. Woman is usually designated by the ecclesiastical writers, and in the Capitularies, by that degrading, but most expressive phrase, "the weaker vessel" (*vas infirmius*). When Gregory VII wished to free the clergy from its double bond, woman and land, there was a new outburst of invective against that dangerous Eve whose seduction wrought Adam's ruin, and who evermore pursues him in his sons.

A quite opposite movement began in the twelfth century. Free mysticism undertook to raise up what sacerdotal harshness had trampled under

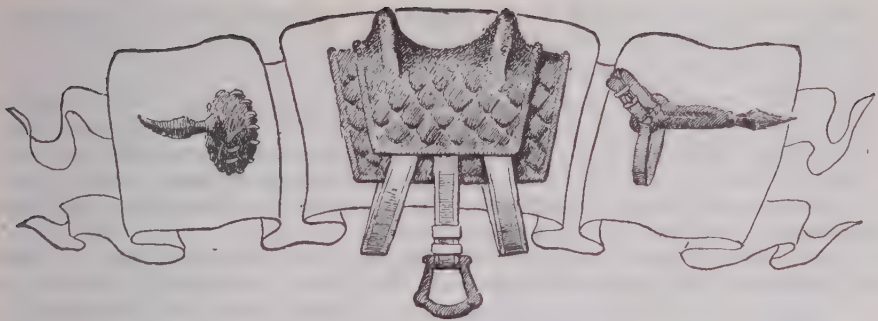
foot. It was especially a Breton, Robert d'Arbrissel, who fulfilled this mission of love. He re-opened the bosom of Christ to women, founded asylums for them, built them Fontevrault, and there were soon Fontevraults all over Christendom. The enterprising charity of Robert applied itself, by preference, to great sinners of the female sex. He taught the clemency of God, and his immeasurable mercy in the vilest haunts. It was a curious thing to see the blessed Robert d'Arbrissel holding forth day and night amidst a crowd of disciples of both sexes, all resting together around him. The bitter sarcasms of his enemies had no effect upon the charitable and courageous Breton, nor even the scandals to which these meetings gave occasion ; he covered all with the wide mantle of grace.

As grace prevailed over the law, a great religious revolution took place. Piety became converted into an enthusiasm of chivalric gallantry ; the mystical church of Lyons celebrated a festival of the Immaculate Conception (1134), thus exalting the ideal of maternal purity precisely at the period when Héloïse was expressing the pure disinterestedness of love in her famous letters. Woman reigned in heaven ; she reigned also upon earth. We see her interfere, and with authority, in the affairs of this world. Bertrade de Montfort ruled at once over her first husband, Fulk of Anjou, and her second, Philip I, king of France. Louis VII dates his acts from the coronation of his wife Adela. Women, natural judges in poetical contests, and in the courts of love, sat also as judges in grave matters, and upon an equality with their husbands. The king of France expressly recognises this right.

In the first half of the twelfth century women were everywhere restored to that right of inheritance from which they had been excluded by feudal barbarism in England, Castile, Aragon, Jerusalem, Burgundy, Flanders, Hainault, Vermandois, Aquitaine, Provence, and Lower Languedoc. The rapid extinction of male heirs, the softening of manners, and the progress of equity, restored the right of inheritance to women. They brought sovereignties with them into foreign houses ; they linked and bound the world together, accelerated the agglomeration of states, and prepared the way for the centralisation of the great monarchies.

One royal house alone, that of the Capets, did not recognise the right of women ; it remained safe from the mutations which transferred the other states from one dynasty to another ; it received and it did not give. Foreign queens might come ; the female, the movable element, might be renewed, but the male element did not come to it from without, it remained always the same, and with it remained an identity of spirit and a perpetuity of system. This fixity of the dynasty is one of those things which have most contributed to insure the unity and the personality of this mobile country. The common characteristic of the period following the crusade, is an attempt at emancipation. The crusade in its immense movement had been an occasion—an impulse ; when the occasion came, the attempt took place, an attempt for the emancipation of the people in the communes, for the emancipation of women, for that of philosophy and of pure thought. This echo of the crusade, like the crusade itself, was to display all its potency and its effect in France, among the most sociable of nations. *f*





### CHAPTER III

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ABSOLUTE MONARCHY

[1180-1270 A.D.]

Almost at the moment that the Crusades broke out, an institution commenced its aggrandisement which has, perhaps, contributed more than any other to the formation of modern society, and to the fusion of all the social elements into two powers, the government and the people, — the institution of Royalty. — GUIZOT.<sup>m</sup>

PHILIP AUGUSTUS, Louis' son and successor, who was about fifteen years of age when he began to reign, was already the nursling of court adulation and homage. His predecessors had not attained dignity sufficient to expose them to this bane of the royal nature. Congratulations, couched in the language of oriental hyperbole, had greeted his birth. He was styled the *Dieu-donné*, "the God-given"; and self-constituted laureates began already to celebrate the majesty of the monarch of the French. Formerly, the surrounding nobles had disdained to dispute court favour or influence; but the first years of Philip's reign were taken up with the rivalry of the houses of Flanders and Champagne, which each sought to be the masters and ministers of the young sovereign. Henry II of England gave his support to the counts of Champagne, and the partisans of Flanders were obliged to retire from Paris. They formed a league, and menaced war; but Philip, with the English monarch's aid, easily overcame the malcontents. Henry showed generosity on this occasion. Instead of profiting by the divisions of the French, and keeping them alive, he frankly supported the young king against his refractory barons. He was king himself, and sympathised with royalty. Philip ill repaid this kindness: he imitated his father's policy in seducing the sons of the English monarch from their allegiance; and their frequent ingratitude at length broke the heart of the sensitive and passionate monarch. Richard, duke of Aquitaine, known as *Cœur de Lion*, and his father's successor on the throne, was the especial friend and ally of Philip in these quarrels; and for a long time the princes shared the same tent and the same bed.

Meantime a third crusade began to be preached. This prevalent enthusiasm, like the rebellions of an oppressed yet brave people, was sure to arouse itself and reawaken as soon as time had elapsed sufficient to allow

the disasters of the past to be forgotten. Saladin had recently taken Jerusalem. Fugitives instantly filled Europe with the dismal tidings. The cry for a crusade became general: it was no longer, however, the church that called a council to debate and decide upon the question; another power had arisen to rob the clergy of their initiative. The king called a parliament (*parlement*) of his barons at Gisors, and there a third crusade was determined upon. Cœur de Lion was the first to assume the cross; and king Philip, only hurt at being anticipated, followed his example. Frederick Barbarossa also took the same resolution.

In June of the year 1190, Philip Augustus received the pilgrim's scrip and staff from the hands of the abbot of St. Denis. Richard received his at



PHILIP AUGUSTUS

Tours; and it was remarked, as an omen, that, as he leaned on the staff, it broke under his weight. In order to avoid the disasters of former crusades, they were to proceed to Palestine by sea. The two kings wintered in Sicily on their voyage thither, and there laid the foundation of their future jealousy and hate. The crusaders found the barons of Syria engaged in the siege of Acre. Their arrival hastened its surrender, and at the same time marked it with crime. Richard caused upwards of two thousand captives to be massacred in cold blood, and Philip was guilty of a similar piece of cruelty. The monarchs, indeed, had some slight breach of stipulations to allege, or might excuse their conduct as a reprisal for that of Saladin, who put to death many of the prisoners whom he made at the battle of Tiberias, more especially all those whose tonsure marked them to belong to the order of the Templars. It was thus that the ferocity of

oriental manners came to alloy the more generous spirit of chivalry. In Palestine the French learned to be merciless towards their religious enemies, and hence it was that the fair page of their history was soon afterwards stained by the massacre of those whom they called heretics at home.

Philip Augustus could not long endure the superior renown and prowess of Cœur de Lion. He seized the pretext of an illness to quit Palestine and abandon the field of glory to his rival. Returning home, he besought the pope to release him from the oath which bound him to respect the rights and territories of a brother crusader. The pontiff refused; but Philip felt himself sufficiently absolved by the Macchiavellian law of monarchical policy: and fortune, in making Richard fall captive to the duke of Austria, on his return from the Holy Land, seemed to favour the envious designs of the French monarch. Philip no sooner was informed of Richard's captivity,

[1194-1202 A.D.]

than he leagued with his brother John, and invaded Normandy. He took several towns and castles, but was repulsed from before Rouen. At length Richard was released, or, as Philip wrote to his confederate, "the devil broke loose." We expect on this occasion to read of a furious war betwixt the sovereigns. And yet no brilliant feat, no general engagement, marked that which ensued. Petty treason and short truce, varied by a skirmish or a marauding party, were all the effects produced by the envy of Philip and the resentment of the lion-hearted king. The death of the latter by an arrow-shot, as he besieged a castle in the Limousin, left a less formidable rival to Philip in the person of King John (1199). The writer of fiction never imagined a baser character than that of John. His cowardice and meanness form a phenomenon and an exception in the feudal ages. The nullity of such a rival converted Philip Augustus from the powerless intriguer to the conqueror and the hero.<sup>b</sup>

## PRINCE ARTHUR OF BRITTANY

Although Richard on his death-bed declared John to be his heir, the crown of England descended by right of primogeniture to the young prince Arthur, son of Geoffrey, duke of Brittany and the elder brother of John; the latter seized it. But Anjou, Poitou, and Touraine, weary of English domination, declared for Arthur, and invoked Philip's protection. The king of France took up Arthur's cause and then abandoned it (1200), after obtaining from John the advantage his political selfish policy was seeking.<sup>c</sup>

But Arthur had been accepted by the Bretons at his birth as a liberator and avenger. Old Eleanor, alone, held out against her grandson, for her son John, and for the unity of the English realm, which the accession of Arthur would have divided. Arthur, in fact, held that unity very cheap. He offered the king of France to cede Normandy to him, provided he might have Brittany, Maine, Touraine, Anjou, Poitou, and Aquitaine. John would have been reduced to the possession of England alone. Philip willingly assented to this, put his own garrisons in Arthur's best fortresses, and demolished them when he had no hope of maintaining his position in them. John's nephew, thus betrayed by his ally, turned once more to his uncle; then he came back to the party of France, invaded Poitou, and besieged his grandmother, Eleanor, in Mirebeau. It was nothing new in that family to see the sons armed against their parents. Meanwhile, John came to the rescue, delivered his mother, defeated Arthur, and took him prisoner with most of the great lords of his party. What became of the captive? This has never been clearly ascertained. Matthew Paris<sup>d</sup> alleges that John treated him well at first, but was afterwards alarmed by the threats and the obstinacy of the young Breton. "Arthur disappeared," he says, "and God grant that it may not have been as malicious rumour reports." But Arthur had excited too many hopes to allow of the popular imagination resigning itself to this uncertainty. It was confidently affirmed that John had caused him to be put to death, and it was soon added that he had killed him with his own hand. The chaplain of Philip Augustus relates, as if he had seen it with his own eyes, that John took Arthur in a boat, stabbed him twice with a dagger, and threw him into the river three miles from the castle of Rouen. The Bretons placed the scene of the tragedy in their own country near Cherbourg, at the foot of those ill-omened cliffs that present a line of precipices all along the ocean. Thus the tradition went on



enlarging in details, and in dramatic interest, and at last Shakespeare makes Arthur a helpless young child, whose gentle and innocent words disarmed the most brutal assassin.<sup>d</sup>

Philip was in the meantime checked in his projects by the court of Rome, which had laid an interdict upon him, on account of his divorce from Ingeborg (Ingeburge) of Denmark. And the preaching of a fifth crusade,<sup>1</sup> which eventually led to the establishment of the Frankish empire of Romania, about the same time took from him the interest and the aid of many nobles and chevaliers. He was, during the same interval, engaged in the conquest of Normandy, which the imbecility and cowardice of John delivered to his arms without defence. Roger de Lasey held the fortress of Les Andelys for several months against the French, and was the only valiant servitor of an unworthy monarch. The barons and warriors of England disdained to fight under his banner. There was as yet none of that rivalry which afterwards sprang up betwixt the nations. The monarchs of both were French princes, speaking the French tongue; and, although subsequent historians have given a national colour to the combats and conquests of Philip, the struggle was almost purely personal. Rouen, the capital of Normandy, surrendered to him (1204), without John's making a single effort to preserve it. And thus a few years of the reign of one weak prince more than counterbalanced the long-established superiority of the monarchs of England.

It has been seen what use the French monarchs made of their courts of peers, and of the judicial supremacy allowed them, in extending their authority over barons heretofore independent. Philip dared to apply the same principle to the dukes of Normandy, which his father had successfully done with regard to the counts of Bourbon and Auvergne. He summoned John before his suzerain court, to answer for the murder of Arthur and other crimes. Henry II, or Richard, would have given fit answer to such a summons. The Norman princes always held their homage to be that by parade or courtesy, not *homage-liege*. But John had neither the sense of his dignity, nor the spirit to maintain it. He allowed the jurisdiction of Philip's court, though he feared to obey his summons; and he thus seemed to allow a legal right to the usurpations of Philip. The latter, indeed, appeared to feel the want of dignity in the assessors of his court. All nobles holding their lands directly of the king were peers in his parliament; and thus the petty lords of the counties of Paris and Orleans ranked equally with the dukes of Burgundy or the counts of Flanders. Philip remedied this, by appointing twelve great peers, or rather by pretending that such a number had always existed since the twelve paladins of Charlemagne. Of these, six were clerics, six laics; the latter being the dukes of Normandy, of Aquitaine, of Burgundy, the counts of Toulouse, of Flanders, and of Champagne. This division of the aristocracy in the high and low nobility, was, however, as yet but nominal; the lesser barons still continued to consider themselves as the peers of the greater, and to have an equal voice in the royal courts. It is important for the reader to mark the rise of this feudal institution, and equally so to mark the difference of its fate and progress in France and in England. In the former country, the parliament became amalgamated with lawyers, and preserved to the last its judicial functions, whilst its legislative authority became but a shadow. In England, on the contrary, it guarded the more precious privilege of legislation, abandoning a considerable portion of its judicial rights.

[<sup>1</sup> This is called by many historians the Fourth Crusade.]

[1204-1208 A.D.]

By the discomfiture of John, Philip Augustus united to the monarchy of France not only Normandy, but the provinces of Maine, Anjou, Touraine, and Poitou. Artois he had acquired as the dowry of his wife, Isabella of Hainault. The counties of the south remained still independent of his sway. They looked to the king of Aragon as their suzerain; and there existed far more congeniality of feelings and habits betwixt the Spaniards and Provençals, than betwixt the Provençals and French. Certain events of the reign of Philip, which we are about to relate, destroyed the independence of the people of the south, as well as their connection with the Aragonese, and extended the authority of the French monarch to the Mediterranean and the Pyrenees.

## THE ALBIGENSIAN CRUSADE

While Philip Augustus adroitly wrested Normandy and its dependencies from the hands of John, a series of events took place in Languedoc which had the effect of destroying its independence, and of bringing that fine region not only nominally, as it had hitherto been, but really under the dominion of the kings of France.<sup>b</sup>

At this period the southern part of France held but distant relations with the north. Two powerful houses, that of Barcelona and that of Toulouse, shared dominion over it, with the exception of Aquitaine, which extended to the Pyrenees. This isolation naturally gave the south a separate existence, character, and interest. The tongue, that of the Limousin or of Provence, resembling more the Aragonese than the French of Paris, had become, thanks to the troubadours, a literary language. The cities contained a large bourgeois element, which had become wealthy through commerce.

It was in the midst of this people, active, ardent, isolated from most of their neighbours by political as well as natural barriers, corrupted moreover by the refinements of an equivocal civilisation and by the enervating literature of the troubadours, that there broke forth, at the end of the twelfth century, the Albigensian heresy, a powerful one, that having long undermined the ground, ended by being a menace to Catholic beliefs, the church, and society itself.

Several heretical sects dating from the early Christian time had not ceased to have their obscure upholders in France. Such were the Manichæans or Paulicians who believed in the co-existence of a principle of good and a principle of evil. It was the Paulicians who were condemned to be burned at Orleans by King Robert (1022). During the time of the crusaders, the sect, revived by frequent intercourse with the Orient where it had originated, spread all over the centre of France. It is thought that this extension was the work of the emigrants who arrived from Bulgaria; at last the heretics received the name of Bulgarians or Boulgres, and it was rumoured that they had a mysterious chief, or, as they said, a resident pope in that country. They were called Albigenses because they were especially numerous in the vicinity of Albi, and by this last name they have been preserved in history.

Some of their doctrines are known: they regarded the devil, or principle of evil, as the first author of the creation; they rejected the sacraments; they interpreted the Scriptures in a different way from the Catholic tradition. Also they possessed a kind of sacerdotal college whose members, called "the perfect ones," performed special rites. It is very difficult to form any idea of their dogmas as a whole, for they had no theologian, no teacher, and they

have left no writings. One can judge the basis of this heresy, and the sects belonging to it, only indirectly by the writings of the authors and teachers who fought them. These writers have attacked above all the strangeness of their practices and the vulgarity of their superstitions.

But the dominant character of all these sects was their hatred of the church. They pretended to re-establish the primitive simplicity of the religion, which the church had corrupted, and among themselves they were known as *cathares*, or "the pure ones."<sup>e</sup>

For a long time the holy see seemed not alive to the importance of this sect. It was Pope Innocent III who first perceived its dangerous

tendency, and who took certain steps for its destruction. He issued interdicts against such princes as should favour them, and offered the spoil of the heretic to whoever should subdue and slay him. The principal lord of the south of France was at that time Raymond VI, count of Toulouse; and he at least tolerated the Albigenses, as those primitive reformers were called, aware of their moral purity and sincere devotion. Peter of Castelnau, the pope's legate, reproached the count of Toulouse with his want of zeal, and was indignant at his forbearance to extirpate the new opinions by fire and sword. The legate used no measured language; he not only excommunicated Raymond, but insulted him in his court, and then took his departure. The count of Toulouse expressed his indignant feelings before his followers as Henry II did after the insolence of Thomas à Becket, and with the same fatal effect. On the day after, Peter of Castelnau fell under the dagger of a gentleman of the count, in a hostelry on the Rhone, where he had stopped.

Pope Innocent was driven to transports of rage on learning the assassination of his legate. He not only excommunicated the count of Toulouse, but promulgated a crusade against him. He called on all the nobles of France, on its princes, and its prelates, to join in the "holy" war, to assume the cross, as being



AN OFFICER OF THE KING'S HOUSEHOLD, THIRTEENTH CENTURY

engaged against infidels. And the same privileges and indulgences were granted to the crusader of this civil war, that previously were bestowed on those who embarked fortune and life in the perilous attempt to rescue the Holy Land from the Saracen. Spoil, wealth, and honour in this world, together with certain salvation in the next, were now offered at too cheap a rate to be refused. Crowds of adventurers flocked to the standard; and a formidable army was assembled at Lyons in the spring of 1209, under the command of the legate commander, Amalric, abbot of Cîteaux. The pope at the same time created a new ecclesiastical militia for the destruction of heresy. The order of St. Dominic, or of the friars inquisitors, was instituted; and these infernal missionaries were let loose in couples upon the hapless Languedoc, like bloodhounds, to scent their prey and then devour it.



[1208-1217 A.D.]

Raymond, count of Toulouse, had neither the force nor the courage to oppose so formidable an invasion. He repaired to the crusaders' army, delivered up his fortresses and cities, and suffered the humiliating penance of a public flogging in the church of St. Giles. The count's relative and feudatory, Raymond Roger, viscount of Béziers and Carcassonne, regions infected with the heresy of the Albigenses, came also to make submission. The abbot of Cîteaux, who was prudent enough to accept that of the count of Toulouse, feared to lose all his prey. He refused to admit the exculpation of the viscount of Béziers, and plainly told him that his only chance was to defend himself to the utmost. The young viscount courageously accepted the advice. He summoned the most faithful of his vassals, abandoned the open country as well as towns of lesser consequence to the enemy, and restricted his efforts to the defence of Béziers and of Carcassonne. He shut himself up in the latter. The fury of the crusaders fell first upon Béziers: they had scarcely sat down before the unfortunate town, when a sally of the garrison was repulsed with such vigour that the besiegers entered the town together with the routed host of the citizens. Word of this unexpected success was instantly brought to the abbot of Cîteaux, and his orders were demanded as to how the innocent were to be distinguished from the guilty. "Slay them all," exclaimed the legate of the vicar of Christ; "the Lord will know his own." The entire population was in consequence put to the sword; nor woman nor infant was spared. Upwards of twenty thousand human beings perished in the massacre—the sanguinary first-fruits of modern persecution. Carcassonne was next invested, bravely attacked, and as valiantly defended; the young viscount distinguishing himself in defence of his rights, while Simon de Montfort, earl of Leicester, was the most prominent warrior of the crusaders. At length the legate grew weary of the viscount's obstinacy, and offered him terms. He gave him a safe-conduct, sanctioned by his own oath and that of the barons of his army. Raymond Roger came with three hundred of his followers to the tent of the legate. "Faith," said the latter, "is not to be kept with those who have no faith"; and he ordered the viscount and his friends to be put in chains. The inhabitants of Carcassonne found means to fly. In a general assembly of the crusaders, the lordships of Béziers and Carcassonne were given to Simon de Montfort, in reward of his zeal and valour; and to make the gift sure, it was accompanied with the person of his rival. The unfortunate viscount, the victim of the legate's perfidy, soon after perished in prison.

The victory of the crusaders was of course followed by executions at the stake and on the scaffold. The friars inquisitors of the order of St. Dominic did not relax their zeal. A general revolt against De Montfort was the consequence, in which the people of Toulouse joined. The Provençal army was headed by Pedro king of Aragon, the uncle of the late viscount of Béziers. It was he who had persuaded the unfortunate viscount to trust himself to the legate, and to him in consequence fell the duty of taking vengeance. The cross, however—the profaned cross—was still successful. The Provençals were routed by Simon de Montfort at the battle of Muret, and the king of Aragon was slain. This victory seemed to establish the power of De Montfort in Languedoc. He took possession of all the provinces of his rival, even of the town of Toulouse; and an assembly of prelates sanctioned the usurpation. But the cruel spirit of De Montfort would not allow him to rest quiet in his new empire. Violence and persecution marked his rule; he sought to destroy the Provençal population by the sword or the stake, nor could he bring himself to tolerate the liberties of the citizens

of Toulouse. In 1217 the Toulousans again revolted, and war once more broke out betwixt Count Raymond and Simon de Montfort. The latter formed the siege of the capital, and was engaged in repelling a sally, when a stone from one of the walls struck him and put an end to his existence. The death of De Montfort was of course considered a martyrdom by the clergy, and his fame in their chronicles far outshines that of Godfrey de Bouillon or of Richard the Lion-hearted.

#### LEAGUE AGAINST PHILIP AUGUSTUS

King Philip was in the meantime pursuing his darling object, the humbling the power of the princes of England. He had already driven John from the west of France. That monarch, at variance with his barons, and at the same time excommunicated by the church, seemed an easy prey to Philip. The French king meditated the conquest of England. He leagued with the malcontents of that country, and formed a powerful army for the purposes of invasion. John, to ward off the blow, not only became reconciled to the Roman see, but made himself and his kingdom feudatory to the pope. A papal legate immediately took John under his protection; and the French monarch, rather than risk a quarrel with the church, turned his armies towards Flanders, which he wasted and plundered impitiously, from hatred to its count.

The emperor Otto, then in alliance with King John against France, came to the relief of the Flemings; and thus, for the first time since the accession of the new dynasty, the armies of France and Germany found themselves arrayed against each other in national hostility, each commanded by its respective monarch. The rival hosts met at Bouvines, in the month of August, 1214. Twenty thousand combatants on either side, together with the presence of two monarchs, gave gravity and importance to the meeting.<sup>b</sup>

#### *The Battle of Bouvines (1214 A.D.)*

The two armies remained for a time a short distance apart, not daring to begin operations; and the French were retreating over the bridge of Bouvines to march upon Hainault, when the enemy, attacking the rearguard, obliged them to turn about.

The chaplain, William le Breton,<sup>k</sup> who during the action remained beside the king singing psalms, says: "Philip was resting under a tree near a chapel, his armour laid aside. At the first sound of combat he entered the church for a short prayer, armed hastily, and mounted his steed with as great enthusiasm as though on his way to a wedding or a feast. Loud shouts resounded from the field: 'To arms, men of war, to arms!' together with the blare of trumpets. The king rode to the front, not waiting for his banner—the oriflamme of St. Denis, a flag of scarlet silk, that day carried by Gallon de Montigny, a brave man. The bishop-elect of Senlis, Guérin, ordered the battle so that the French had the sun behind them, while the enemy fought with the sun in their eyes. Three hundred mounted peasants of Soissons, vassals of the abbot of St. Médard, opened action on the right wing, boldly charging the Flemish cavalry. The latter hesitated to engage with their inferiors, but the cry, 'Death to the French!' raised by one among them proved decisive; and the Burgundians, led by their duke, arriving to reinforce those of Soissons, there was a furious combat. On this side Count Ferrand of Flanders fought."

[1214 A.D.]

When the battle began the militia had already crossed the bridge; they recrossed in haste, rallied under the royal standard, and took position in the centre in front of the king and his guard. The German cavalry, among whom rode the emperor Otto, charged and penetrated their ranks, and had almost reached the king when they were checked by the prompt action of his officers. In the midst of this encounter arrived the German infantry. These dragged Philip from his horse, and before he could recover his feet attempted to thrust at him through the visor of his helmet or a flaw in his armour. Montigny, who carried the colours, waved his banner frantically for assistance; some horse- and foot-soldiers hastened up. These rescued the king, set him on his horse, and he again plunged into the mêlée.

Otto in his turn was near to being captured. William des Barres, the bravest and ablest of the French cavaliers, the fortunate adversary of Richard the Lion-hearted, whom he had twice overcome, had the emperor by the helmet, and was thrusting at him furiously when overwhelmed by a torrent of the enemy. Unable to make him loose his hold or to close with him, they killed his horse under him; but disentangling himself he succeeded, alone and on foot, in clearing with his sword and his poniard an ample space around him. Otto escaped.

On the right Ferrand, count of Flanders, had fallen wounded into the hands of the French; in the centre the emperor and his German princes had taken to flight: but on the left Renaud de Boulogne and the English held firm. They had overcome the men of Dreux, of Perche, of Ponthieu, and of Vimeu. "Whereupon," says the poet-chronicler, "Philip de Dreux, bishop of Beauvais, happening to have in his hand a club, and forgetting in his rage and grief the dignity of his office, struck down the English commander and with him many others, spilling no blood but breaking many bones. He enjoined upon those about him the necessity of taking upon themselves the credit of this deed, that he might not fall under reproach for violating the traditions of his office."

The English were soon completely routed with the exception of Renaud de Boulogne, who had drawn up a double circle of infantry bristling with spears. He charged therefrom as from a fort, and there returned for refuge and to recover breath. At last his horse was wounded; he fell and was captured. Five other counts and twenty-five knights-banneret had been taken.

The return of the king to Paris was a march of triumph. All along the route the churches dispersed indulgences, and the hymns of the choirs mingled with the clash of war implements. The houses were hung with draperies; the roads strewn with branches and fresh flowers. Men and women, children and old people ran to the crossroads to see the count of Flanders who, wounded and in chains, was carried in a litter; some among them crying: "Ferrand, bound and in irons (*ferré*), no longer shalt thou kick against the pricks and hurl defiance at thy masters."

At Paris the townspeople, with a multitude of clerks and students, burst into songs and hymns on the arrival of the king. The day not sufficing for the jubilation, they festooned the dark with innumerable lanterns, so that the night was brilliant as the day. The students kept holiday for a week. In the midst of these rejoicings the troops, which had comported themselves so creditably in the strife, delivered to the provost of Paris the prisoners in their charge. The king left them a certain number to be ransomed and imprisoned the rest. Ferrand was lodged in the new tower of the Louvre, where he remained for thirteen years. Near Senlis was built Victory Abbey, whose ruins are still to be seen.<sup>c</sup>



## LAST YEARS AND INFLUENCE OF PHILIP AUGUSTUS

The brilliant success of Bouvines seems to have contented and allayed the hitherto restless ambition of Philip. In a year or two after, the barons of England, discontented with John, offered their crown to Louis, the son of Philip Augustus. The old monarch hesitated; he dreaded the anathema with which the pope threatened him, if he attacked his vassal, John of England. Prince Louis was obliged to undertake the expedition with but scanty aid from his parent. He was at first successful. Almost all England owned his sovereignty. The castle of Dover alone held out. But the death of John, and the proclaiming of his son, Henry III, soon obliged the French prince to abandon his claim and his conquests in England.

In the south, Philip Augustus showed himself equally dead to enterprise and lost in spirit. Amaury de Montfort, son of Simon, offered to cede to the king all his rights in Languedoc, which he was unable to defend against the old house of Toulouse. Philip hesitated to accept the important cession, and left the rival houses to the continuance of a struggle carried feebly on by either side. He at length expired, in 1223, after a reign of forty-three years. This period of half a century was one of uninterrupted progress to the French monarchy, and to its sovereign power. Though much of this was due to the age, to circumstances, and to the natural development of the country's political system, still much remains due to the personal character of Philip — to his activity, his prudence, foresight, and courage. The mere list of the provinces which he subdued and united to the monarchy forms the fittest monument to his fame. These were Normandy, Maine, Anjou, Touraine, and Poitou, wrested from John; Picardy and Auvergne, won in the commencement of his reign; Artois, acquired by his marriage with Isabella of Hainault; and, finally, the influence over Languedoc which the crusaders brought him, and which nothing but Philip's age and declining strength prevented him from converting into sovereignty. In minor matters the active spirit of Philip Augustus equally displayed itself. He put the police on an efficient footing; he walled and paved Paris and the principal towns under his sway; he built and fortified; he encouraged literature by the foundation of professorships; improved the discipline of the army; and, with all his enterprises and expenses, so ordered his finances as to leave a considerable treasure at his death.

## LOUIS VIII (1223-1226 A.D.)

When Louis VIII succeeded his father Philip on the throne, it was remarked with joy by the lovers of legitimacy that he was descended by his mother, Isabella of Hainault, from Charles of Lorraine, the last prince of Charlemagne's blood, and that he thus united the rights of Carlovingian and Capetian. He was feeble in person, and is said not to have been endowed with much capacity; but the sage policy of Philip Augustus, together with the impulse he had given to affairs, continued to direct them, and to render France triumphant over her enemies. Henry III lost the towns of Niort and La Rochelle, and was driven by Louis from Poitou; yet so little did the English feel the loss of this province, that it is scarcely noticed by the historians of the island. The barons were so much occupied with jealousy of their sovereign and of his power, that Henry could procure or send no aid to his French provinces. A feeble expedition was at length fitted out, which preserved Gascony to England, but recovered nothing.

[1204-1226 A.D.]

A singular cause of contention arose about this time in Flanders. Baldwin, its last count, had been one of the leaders of the Fifth Crusade, which, in the commencement of the century, took Constantinople from the Greeks. He had been elected emperor of Romania, and had been the first of the Latin dynasty which reigned over it. Soon after, in the year 1205, he had been taken prisoner by the Bulgarians, and had not since been heard of. His daughter Joan succeeded to the county of Flanders, and had married Ferdinand (Ferrand), prince of Portugal, who had opposed Philip Augustus, and who was taken prisoner by that monarch at the battle of Bouvines. Joan took no steps to liberate her husband, or to pay his ransom, when an aged man appeared in Flanders, calling himself Count Baldwin, and giving an account of his long captivity and recent escape from the Bulgarians. Joan denied the identity of this person with her father; Louis VIII was of her opinion; while Henry III treated and allied himself with him as the veritable Baldwin. The self-entitled count appeared before King Louis at Péronne, offering proofs of his identity; but unfortunately he could not recall the place where he had done homage to Philip Augustus, nor the place where he had been knighted, nor yet the place and day of his marriage. Whether he really could not make answer to these questions, or whether age had troubled his memory, the old man was condemned as a pretender, and the countess Joan soon after caused him to be hanged. The common people still persisted in giving credit to his identity with Count Baldwin, and looked on Joan as the murderer of her father. Henry III in no way supported this his unfortunate ally.

The sovereignty over Languedoc was still undecided. King Louis was anxious to undertake a crusade in that country, with all the indulgences and advantages of a warlike pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The hostilities with England and the fickleness of the pope delayed the execution of this purpose. Both obstacles were removed at length. Amaury de Montfort being driven from the conquests of his father by the sons of Count Raymond, reanimated the zeal of the pope and the old crusaders. Amaury retired to Paris, and made cession of his claims to King Louis, who, in return, promised him the office of constable. A new crusade was preached against the Albigenses; and Louis marched towards Languedoc at the head of a formidable army in the spring of the year 1226. The town of Avignon had proffered to the crusaders the facilities of crossing the Rhone under her walls, but refused entry within them to such an host. Louis, having arrived



LOUIS VIII

(From an old French print)

[1226-1236 A.D.]

at Avignon, insisted on passing through the town: the Avignonais shut their gates and defied the monarch, who instantly formed the siege. One of the rich municipalities of the south was almost a match for the king of France. He was kept three months under its walls, his army a prey to famine, to disease, and to the assaults of a brave garrison. The crusaders lost twenty thousand men. The people of Avignon at length submitted, but on no dishonourable terms. This was the only resistance that Louis experienced in Languedoc. Raymond VII dared not meet the crusaders in the field, nor durst one of his towns or châteaux remain faithful to him. All submitted. Louis retired from his facile conquest; he himself, and the chiefs of his army, stricken by an epidemy which had prevailed in the conquered regions. The monarch's feeble frame could not resist it: he expired at Montpensier in Auvergne, in November, 1226.<sup>b</sup>

#### LOUIS IX, CALLED ST. LOUIS (1226-1270 A.D.)

Now we come to the true hero of the Middle Ages, a prince pious as he was brave; who was devoted to feudalism and yet struck it the most telling blows; who venerated the church yet knew how to resist its head; who respected law yet placed justice above it; a frank and gentle soul and loving heart filled with Christian charity, yet one that condemned to torture the body of the sinner for the salvation of his soul; who on earth looked only towards heaven and made of his kingly office a magistracy of order and equity. Rome has canonised him, and the people still see him seated under the oak of Vincennes dispensing justice to all comers. This saint, this man of peace, did more in the simplicity of his heart for the advancement of royalty than the most subtle counsellors or ten fighting monarchs, because the king, in after time, appeared to the people as the incarnation of Justice.<sup>1</sup>

For more than a century the sword of royalty, so far as it pertained to France, had been valiantly carried. But the son of Louis VIII was a child of eleven years. A coalition of the most powerful vassals was formed at once to profit by his minority. The regent, his mother, Blanche of Castile, won to her side one of the confederates, Thibaut, the powerful count of Champagne, sent the royal army to save him from the attack of his former allies and obtained from him, when he inherited the kingdom of Navarre, the important counties of Blois, Chartres, and Sancerre. A treaty, signed in 1229, assured to one of the king's brothers the succession of the county of Toulouse and a marriage arranged between a second brother of St. Louis and the heiress of Provence prepared the way, at a future date, for the union of that country with France. Already the royal seneschals were established at Beaucaire and Carcassonne, by which the king found himself master, through himself or his brothers, of a large part of southern France. The king's majority was proclaimed in 1236, but the wise regent still held the greatest influence over her son and the direction of affairs.

The great pontificate of Innocent III had given new energy to the church and to religious sentiment. The spirit of the Crusades which had been

[<sup>1</sup> "St. Louis," says Guizot, "was above all a conscientious man, a man who before acting weighed the question to himself of the moral good or evil, the question as to whether what he was about to do was good or evil in itself, independently of all utility, of all consequences. Such men are rarely seen and still more rarely remain upon the throne. Truly speaking, there are hardly more than two examples in history, one in antiquity, the other in modern times: Marcus Aurelius and St. Louis. These are, perhaps, the only two princes who, on every occasion, have formed the first rule of their conduct from their moral creeds — Marcus Aurelius, a stoic, St. Louis, a Christian."]



[1235-1259 A.D.]

extinguished during the rivalry of Philip Augustus with Richard Cœur de Lion and John Lackland was rekindled. In 1235 preaching the "holy war" was recommenced in France, and, as on too many other occasions, the movement was begun by the massacre of those whose ancestors had nailed the sainted victim to the cross of Golgotha. Everywhere the Jews were slaughtered, until the Council of Tours was obliged to take these unhappy people under their protection. Heretics found even less mercy. Thibaut of Champagne burned 183 of them on Mount Aimé near Vertus. This crusade, in which Thibaut himself, the dukes of Burgundy and Brittany took part, was not successful. The crusaders were beaten at Gaza in Palestine, and those who returned brought back with them nothing but the honour of having broken a few lances in the Holy Land.

Up to his war with England St. Louis gave little sign of activity; but in 1241 the emperor Frederick II detained the French prelates who had gone to Rome to attend a council, and Louis demanded with great firmness that they be set at liberty.

"Since the prelates of our realm have for no reason deserved their detention," he writes the emperor, "may it please your grace to set them at liberty. You will thus appease us, for we regard their detention as an insult, and our royal majesty would lose respect if we could keep quiet under such circumstances. May your imperial prudence not go so far as to allege your power or your will, since the kingdom of France is not so weak that it will resign itself to be trampled under your feet." The emperor released his prisoners. Some time before Louis, on behalf of himself and one of his brothers, refused the imperial crown of Frederick II which the pope had offered him, and he had also refused the pontiff's request to modify a royal ordinance of 1234 restraining the jurisdiction of ecclesiastical tribunals—a necessary measure, since these courts had come to judge many more civil cases than the lay tribunals.

This man who spoke so firmly acted in the same manner when forced to take up arms. Attacked in 1242 by the English, who sustained several of his rebellious barons, St. Louis beat them at Taillebourg and at Saintes. Perhaps he would have been able to drive them out of France, but he refused to push his victory. Acquisitions made in the last half century had tripled the extent of the royal domain, but they seemed to him tainted with violence because they were the gain of two confiscations. Through conscientious scruples he left the king of England, in a treaty which he did not sign until his return from the crusade in 1259 [The Treaty of Abbeville], the duchy of Guienne, that is to say Bordeaux, Limoges, Périgueux, Cahors, Agen, Saintonge to the south of the Charente, and Gascony, on condition of homage to the crown. And to prevent perjury he obliged the lords who held fiefs from both crowns to choose between the two sovereigns. The limits of the kingdom were equally uncertain on the south; he fixed them at a convention with the king of Aragon, and the county of Barcelona ceased to be dependent on the French crown.

In 1245, Pope Innocent IV, driven out of Italy by the emperor Frederick II, took refuge at Lyons and there held in the cathedral church of St. John of that city the thirteenth ecumenical council at which 140 bishops assisted. The pope solemnly deposed the emperor and exhorted all Christian princes to march to the deliverance of the Holy Sepulchre.

The spirit of the Crusades, which had been extinguished during the rivalry of Philip Augustus and Richard Cœur de Lion, was rekindled. The Spaniards had their crusade against the Moors, the Germans against the Slavs,

and the knights of Italy fought against the cities; but in France, in spite of the great satiety of war from the Albigensian troubles, there remained sufficient martial spirit to undertake new crusades. In 1239 many had gone; we know with what success. Jerusalem, which Frederick II had bought back from the hands of the infidels (1229) had now come again under the power of Khwarismian barbarians (1239).

*First Crusade of St. Louis (1248-1254 A.D.)*

St. Louis had not listened to the appeal of the Fathers of the Council of Lyons to assume the cross, but during an illness which, in 1244, brought him to the edge of the grave, he made a vow to go to the Holy Land. His



A FRENCH KNIGHT, THIRTEENTH CENTURY

mother and counsellors struggled in vain against this imprudent resolution. Louis left his power again in the hands of Queen Blanche and embarked at Aigues-Mortes, a little city which at that time was joined to the Mediterranean by a canal across the swamps and salt marshes. The king bought it from the monks of Psalmodi Abbey in order to have a port of his own upon that sea, for Marseilles belonged to his brother the count of Provence. Many crusaders embarked at the latter city, among them the king's friend the seneschal of Champagne and the sire de Joinville, who, with Villehardouin, is the first in point of date, as in merit, of the old French prose writers. It was not without many misgivings that he determined to follow his master. In setting out to join him he passed near his own castle, "but," he said, "I dare not turn my face towards Joinville, for fear that my heart would fail me in leaving my two children and my fine castle which are so dear to me." On the

banks of the Rhone he saw the ruins of a castle which the king had had destroyed because its lord had a bad name for stripping and robbing all the merchants and pilgrims who passed by.

St. Louis had been collecting for two years a large store of provisions on the island of Cyprus. The army left there in eighteen hundred ships, large and small, for Egypt. Damietta, at one of the mouths of the Nile, was captured (June 7th, 1249), but precious time was lost before marching upon Cairo. Five months and a half of delay stoutened the hearts of the mame-lukes. The crusaders took a month to cover the five leagues which separated them from the town of Mansurah. A badly directed fight at the same place cost the lives of a large number of knights and of St. Louis' brother the count

[1249-1270 A.D.]

of Artois. When the prior of the Hospital, says Joinville,<sup>i</sup> came to ask of St. Louis if he had any news of his brother, the king replied that he had, that he knew his brother was in heaven. The prior tried to comfort him in praising the valour the prince had always shown and the glory he had gained that day, and the good king replied that God was adored in all that he had done. And then he began to shed great tears, at which many people who were looking on were oppressed by grief and compassion (February, 1250).

Soon the army was surrounded by enemies and decimated by pest. Joinville was stricken down, and equally so his poor chaplain. One day it happened that he was chanting mass before the seneschal's bedside; when the priest was at the sacrament Joinville perceived him to be so ill that with his own eyes he saw him faint. The seneschal got up and ran to raise him and then he managed to finish the mass, but never said it again, and died. The retreat was disastrous and finally they had to surrender. "The good, saintly man, the king," did honour to his captivity by his courage and inspired even his enemies with respect for his virtues. They released him for a large ransom. Once free he made his way to Palestine and stayed there three years, employing his influence and zeal in maintaining harmony among the Christians and his resources in repairing the fortifications of the places they still occupied.

The news of these disasters only served to increase the king's popularity in France. The people would not see his faults and thought only of the virtues he had shown. The prelates and lords had deserted and betrayed him, they said; it would take the humble people to rescue him, and an immense crowd of serfs and peasants gathered together to cross the sea and go to the king's help. This was the Shepherds' Crusade. These people lived, on the way, by pillage — even murders were committed. It was necessary to deal harshly with them, and they were scattered like wild beasts.

The news of the regent's death (December, 1252) recalled Louis at last to France. In passing Cyprus the king's galley grazed a rock, which carried away fully eighteen feet of her keel. Louis was advised to change ships, and according to Joinville<sup>i</sup> said, "If I leave the ship, five or six hundred people who are on it and who value their life as I do mine will be afraid to stay behind and will land at Cyprus with no hope or means of ever returning to their own country. I prefer to place myself, my wife, and children in danger under the protection of God, than to bring such misfortune on so many people."

### *Last Years and Death of St. Louis*

It was after his return to France that St. Louis made treaties with England and Aragon to determine definitely the boundaries of the three kingdoms. He hoped in making substantial sacrifices to strengthen his hold on the provinces he kept for himself and to prevent the war so frequently provoked by uncertainty with regard to frontiers. This solicitude to do justice to all caused him to be chosen as arbitrator between the king of England and his barons in the controversy over the provisions of Oxford (1264). Louis pronounced in favour of the king, and this time was not successful, for the barons did not hold to his decision, and deposed Henry III. More fortunate elsewhere, he settled a dispute of succession which delivered Flanders from civil war. In the year 1270 St. Louis undertook another crusade in which his faithful Joinville this time refused to engage.<sup>f</sup>

A pacific expedition which should merely intimidate the king of Tunis and induce him to become a convert was not what suited the Genoese in



whose vessels St. Louis was making his passage. Most of the crusaders preferred violence; it was said that Tunis was a rich town, the pillage of which might indemnify them for their dangerous expedition. The Genoese, regardless of the voice of St. Louis, began hostilities by seizing the vessels they found before Carthage. The landing took place without obstacle. The Moors only showed themselves to provoke the Christians, and make them waste their strength in fruitless pursuits. After spending some weary days on the burning shore, the Christians advanced towards the castle of Carthage. All that remained of the great rival of Rome was a fort guarded by two hundred soldiers, and the Saracens who had retreated into the vaults or subterranean chambers were butchered or suffocated by smoke and flames. The king found the ruins full of corpses, which he had removed, that he might take up his quarters there with his followers. He had to wait at Carthage for his brother, Charles of Anjou, before marching on Tunis.

The greater part of the army remained under the African sun, tormented by the thick dust swept from the desert by the winds, and surrounded by the festering remains of the dead. The Moors prowled all around, continually cutting off some stragglers. There were no trees, no vegetable food; for water there was nothing but fetid marshes and cisterns full of disgusting insects. In eight days the plague had broken out. The counts of Vendôme, de la Marche and Viane, Walter de Nemours, marshal of France, the sires de Montmorency, Piennes, Brissac, St. Briçon, and d'Apremont were already dead.

The legate soon followed them. The survivors being no longer able to bury them, they were thrown into the canal, till they covered the whole surface of the water. Meanwhile, the king and his sons were attacked by the-malady; the youngest died in his vessel, and it was not till eight days afterwards that the confessor of St. Louis took on himself to acquaint him with the mournful event. The deceased was the most beloved of his children, and his death announced to a dying father was, to the latter, one tie less to earth, a call from God, a temptation to die. Accordingly, without perturbation or regret, he accomplished that last work of a Christian life, making the responses to the litanies and the psalms, dictating a noble and affecting instruction for his son, and receiving even the ambassadors of the Greeks, who came to entreat his intervention in their favour with his brother Charles of Anjou, whose ambition menaced them. He spoke to them with kindness, and promised to exert himself with zeal, if he lived, to keep them in peace; but the next day he himself entered into the peace of God.

That last night of his life he desired them to raise him from his bed and lay him on ashes; and so he died, with his arms constantly folded in the form of a cross. "And on Monday the blessed king stretched his folded hands towards heaven, and said, 'Good Lord God, have mercy on this people that here remaineth, and lead it into its country, that it fall not into the hand of its enemies, and that it be not constrained to renounce thy holy name!'" In the night before he deceased, whilst he was reposing, he sighed, and said in a low voice, 'O Jerusalem! O Jerusalem!'"<sup>d</sup>

In his life-time the contemporaries of St. Louis suspected in their simplicity that he was already a saint, and more saintly than the priests. Says the king's confessor, Geoffrey de Beaulieu: "Whilst he lived a word might be said of him which is said of St. Hilary, 'O most perfect layman whose life priests even desire to imitate.' For many priests and laymen desired to be like the blessed king in his virtues and his morals; for it is even thought that he was a saint in his life-time."<sup>d</sup>

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The French during this reign accomplished a great achievement without the help of royalty. Charles of Anjou, count of Provence, summoned by the pope against King Manfred, son of the emperor Frederick II, conquered the kingdom of Naples in 1266. But the Latins had five years before lost Constantinople which the Greeks had taken possession of. It was to the interested advice of Charles of Anjou that was due the direction taken by the last crusade, since the submission of the king of Tunis would free Sicily from the constant attempts of the Saracens upon that island.*f*

*Hallam's Estimate of St. Louis*

Louis IX had methods of preserving his ascendancy very different from military prowess. That excellent prince was perhaps the most eminent pattern of unswerving probity and Christian strictness of conscience that ever held the sceptre in any country. There is a peculiar beauty in the reign of St. Louis, because it shows the inestimable benefit which a virtuous king may confer on his people, without possessing any distinguished genius. For nearly half a century that he governed France, there is not the smallest want of moderation or disinterestedness in his actions; and yet he raised the influence of the monarchy to a much higher point than the most ambitious of his predecessors.

To the surprise of his own and later times, he restored great part of his conquests to Henry III, whom he might naturally hope to have expelled from France. It would indeed have been a tedious work to conquer Guienne, which was full of strong places, and the subjugation of such a province might have alarmed the other vassals of his crown. But it is the privilege only of virtuous minds to perceive that wisdom resides in moderate counsels; no sagacity ever taught a selfish and ambitious sovereign to forego the sweetness of immediate power. An ordinary king, in the circumstances of the French monarchy, would have fomented, or at least have rejoiced in the dissensions which broke out among the principal vassals; Louis constantly employed himself to reconcile them. In this, too, his benevolence had all the effects of far-sighted policy. It had been the practice of his last three predecessors to interpose their mediation in behalf of the less powerful classes—the clergy, the inferior nobility, and the inhabitants of chartered towns. Thus the supremacy of the crown became a familiar idea; but the perfect integrity of St. Louis wore away all distrust, and accustomed even the most jealous feudatories to look upon him as their judge and legislator. And as the royal authority was hitherto shown only in its most amiable prerogatives, the dispensation of favour, and the redress of wrong, few were watchful enough to remark the transition of the French constitution from a feudal league to an absolute monarchy.

It was perhaps fortunate for the display of St. Louis' virtues that the throne had already been strengthened by the less innocent exertions of Philip Augustus and Louis VIII. A century earlier, his mild and scrupulous character, unsustained by great actual power, might not have inspired sufficient awe. But the crown was now grown so formidable, and Louis was so eminent for his firmness and bravery, qualities without which every other virtue would have been ineffectual, that no one thought it safe to run wantonly into rebellion, while his disinterested administration gave no one a pretext for it. Not satisfied with the justice of his own conduct, Louis aimed at that act of virtue which is rarely practised by private men, and had perhaps no example among kings—restitution. Commissaries were appointed

to inquire what possessions had been unjustly annexed to the royal domain during the last two reigns. These were restored to the proprietors, or, where length of time had made it difficult to ascertain the claimant, their value was distributed among the poor.

It has been hinted already that all this excellence of heart in Louis IX was not attended with that strength of understanding which is necessary, we must allow, to complete the usefulness of a sovereign. During his minority, Blanche of Castile, his mother, had filled the office of regent with great courage and firmness. But after he grew up to manhood, her influence seems to have passed the limit which gratitude and piety would have assigned to it; and, as her temper was not very meek or popular, it exposed the king to some degree of contempt. He submitted even to be restrained from the society of his wife Marguerite, daughter of Raymond, count of Provence, a princess of great virtue and conjugal affection.

But the principal weakness of this king, which almost effaced all the good effects of his virtues, was superstition. It would be idle to sneer at those habits of abstemiousness and mortification which were part to the religion of his age, and, at the worst, were only injurious to his own comfort. But he had other prejudices, which, though they may be forgiven, must never be defended. No man was ever more impressed than St. Louis with a belief in the duty of exterminating all enemies to his own faith. With these he thought no layman ought to risk himself in the perilous ways of reasoning, but to



A FRENCH PAGE, TIME OF LOUIS IX

make answer with his sword as stoutly as a strong arm and a fiery zeal could carry that argument. Though, fortunately for his fame, the persecution against the Albigenses, which had been the disgrace of his father's short reign, was at an end before he reached manhood, he suffered a hypocritical monk to establish a tribunal at Paris for the suppression of heresy, where many innocent persons suffered death.

### *Piety and Christianity of St. Louis*

The natural piety of St. Louis but strengthened with his growth. His Christian life, or to reduce the statement to its simplest terms, his daily Christianity, which edified his own century, might very easily fill ours with a sense of shock. But whatever it may leave of such an impression, the history would be incomplete which passed over in silence, or only vaguely



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indicated, that which filled so large a part in his life. Let us not, therefore, endeavour to build up for ourselves a St. Louis in accordance with our present-day tastes. Nothing is beautiful but the true, and that truth which the saintly king sought in all things is alone worthy to retrace the likeness of him which should endure.

According to those of his historians who were most intimate with him — the chaplain who accompanied him on one and another of the Crusades, the confessor whom he kept beside him for twenty years, the confessor of his wife Marguerite — he seemed to live for God alone. The offices were read in the king's chapel; almost it might have been the chapel of a monastery or the choir of a cathedral. There he had the Hours sung to him, the Office for the Dead being added by his command. He heard two masses, sometimes three or four; and when the grandes grumbled at his wasting so much time on masses and sermons, he retorted that if he were to lose twice as much time over gaming and hunting no one would complain: a remark which scarcely silenced the murmurs; the barons made no complaint against thus wasting their time with him.

The holy Scriptures and the Fathers were his study. Marguerite's confessor tells us that he caused a candle three feet or thereabouts in height to be lighted, and so long as it lasted read the Bible. He remained for so long a time upon his knees that sometimes his sight and his wits became confused, and, rising up quite dazed, he would ask: "Where am I?" Led back to his room, he would go to bed, but at midnight he was up again and had matins sung by his chaplains (it was no sinecure being king's chaplain in those days!). He would, however, grant to his attendants the repose he refused for himself. So softly did he rise that on several occasions they did not hear him, or, awakened too late, ran after him barefoot.

Every Friday he made his confession, after which he made his confessor administer "the discipline" to him. This discipline was composed of five small iron chains, which he enclosed in an ivory box and carried about with him. He had similar boxes made, with similar contents, and presented them to his children and his friends, counselling them to make use of them. When his confessor struck him too lightly, he urged him to use more force. This advice was not always needed. He had one confessor so full of zeal (*solicitus sibi*) who struck the king in such a manner as to terribly lacerate his flesh, which was extremely delicate. St. Louis, however, held his peace; he never mentioned the matter so long as the confessor lived, but afterwards he spoke of it laughingly to another. His confessors, one should add, were not commonly so zealous, and they reprimanded him for austerities which threatened his delicate health, and urged him to substitute for them alms, which, as a fact, the king did not stint; and they ended by forcing him to renounce the hair-shirt which he wore during Advent and Lent and on the vigils of certain feasts. He renounced it only to wear occasionally a girdle of horse-hair next his skin.

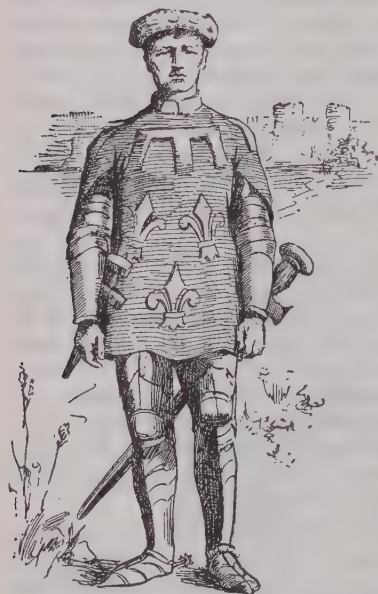
On Good Friday he would visit all the churches barefoot; to keep up appearances he wore shoes from which the soles had been removed. For the adoration of the cross he removed his upper garments, retaining only his vest and coat. With bare feet and uncovered head he advanced a short distance on his knees, bowed himself in prayer, then advanced a little further, and the third time arrived at the cross, prostrated himself as though he too were crucified, and kissed it, bathed in tears. Fervently did he desire the gift of tears. When in singing the litanies the verse was reached: "Grant us a fountain of tears" (*Ut fontem lacrymarum nobis dones*), he used

to say: "Lord, I dare not ask of thee a fount of tears, but only a few drops to refresh my parched and sterile heart."

Are all these details, which have perhaps provoked the pitying smiles of more than one reader, the marks of a feeble intelligence, or do they rather bear witness to a powerful mind that has perfected self-control by keeping the senses in sternest bondage? One can only truly judge of things by their results. His singleness of speech and his aversion to coarse or equivocal language bore eloquent witness to the

purity of his heart. Not only did he detest the licentiousness of contemporary poetry, he was also filled with loathing for the popular songs, and innocently recommended one of his equerries who sang them to learn instead the *Ave Maris Stella*. His modesty was excessive. The purity of his youth had never been shadowed by the slightest hint of license, and marriage only served to throw his chastity into higher relief. He demanded moral uprightness from all in his household, and banished without mercy whoso offended against a virtue so dear to his heart.

On feast days he would bid to his palace two hundred beggars, and himself serve them at table. On the Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays of Advent and Lent, and every Wednesday and Friday throughout the year, he would send for thirteen of them into his own or a neighbouring room and give them food with his own hand, without disgust at their dirtiness. If one among the number was blind the king would give the piece of bread into one of his hands, and guide the other to the bowl containing his portion. If



A FRENCH KNIGHT OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

this consisted of fish, he would remove the bones, dip it in the sauce and place the morsel in the blind man's mouth. Before the meal he gave to each person twelve deniers or more according to his need; and if a mother was there with her child, he added more for the little one. On Saturdays he would choose three of the most decrepit, most miserable among the poor, and leading them into his dressing-room, where towels and three basins of water were in readiness, he washed their feet. With reverence he would dry and kiss those feet, whatever their deformity, however hardened by daily contact with the ground; then, kneeling, he would offer them water to wash their hands, give to each forty deniers, and kiss their hands. Nor was this all. Every day, in all weathers, he sent for thirteen other beggars and from among them chose out the three most repulsive, whom he seated at a table drawn up close beside his own.

On many of these points he would not to-day have won the same universal approbation. It is, however, difficult for us to reinvest his figure with the atmosphere by which it must be surrounded before we can form a just judgment; it is far more difficult to place ourselves at the necessary point of view from which we can see him clearly. The modern historian is oftentimes reduced to pleading extenuating circumstances for the saints; for the saints, and St. Louis among them, have this much in common with the

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Saviour, that in more than one case they could say with him: "Blessed is he whosever shall not be offended in me."<sup>h</sup>

St. Louis built the asylum of the *Quinze Vingts* for the blind, several hospitals, and the church of Vincennes. To provide a place for the crown of thorns which the Venetians had turned over to his keeping, he had built by Pierre de Montereau within the precinct of his palace, now the Palais de Justice, the Sainte Chapelle, a shrine of open-work stone. His confessor Robert de Sorbon founded a community under the title of *Congrégation des pauvres maîtres étudiants en théologie*. This congregation became the Sorbonne, the theological faculty so famous throughout the entire Christian world that Mézeray calls it "the permanent council of the Gauls."

### *Progress of the Monarchy under St. Louis*

The house of Capet had made such progress that no lord now dared say to his vassal, "Come fight under my banner against the lord, our king," much as this anarchial privilege was still recognised in the so-called "Establishments" of St. Louis, a compilation of customs in vogue in Orleans. The counts of Flanders and of Brittany and the duke of Guienne, were about the only ones who had not degenerated to the condition of docile vassals; yet feudalism still preserved some immense prerogatives and St. Louis attacked these in the name of justice and religion.

In holding to a strict execution of the ordinances of *quarantaine-le-roi*<sup>1</sup> and *asseurement* (inviolability) he suppressed nearly all private wars. As a Christian he did not approve of these wars which sent to God so many souls ill-prepared to appear before him. As a prince he wished to stop the devastation throughout the country, "the fires and the obstacles placed in the ways of tilling the fields." He forbade in his domains the *duel judiciaire* which gave over the settlement and right to the chances of skill and strength. The king's justice usurped the place of individual violence, and proof by witnesses and procedure by writ replaced justice by battle, for "battle is not the path of right."

The lords still dispensed justice throughout their domains. The villein could not escape this judgment, but the vassal had the rights of appeal to the sovereign from the judgment of his lord "in default of right," when the lord refused to render justice; for "false judgments" when the condemned believed himself to have been injured by an unjust sentence. Now the king favoured the custom of direct appeal to his court, which subordinated the lord's justice to that of his own which was final; "for," says Beaumanoir,<sup>j</sup> "since he is sovereign, his court is sovereign"; and the "Establishments" explain why there could be no appeal from the royal decision: "There is no one who can have this right, since the king gets his power from no one but God and himself." The duke of Brittany also retained the final appeal. When a case brought to the justice of the lords interested the king, in whatever way it may be, the bailiff raised the "conflict" as we would

[<sup>1</sup> Custom had permitted that when anyone had murdered, wounded, or beaten another the victim or his relatives might immediately avenge themselves by killing, wounding, or beating the offender or any of his relatives, even if the latter were ignorant of what had occurred. The ordinance of *quarantaine-le-roi*, forbade the injured to attack any of the offender's family until after the lapse of forty days (*une quarantaine*). During the interval the offender himself was alone held answerable for his action. Furthermore, if either victim or offender chose to submit his cause to his suzerain he could secure inviolability (*asseurement*), for his goods and person, until a judicial decision had been given. When this inviolability had been demanded its breach was punishable by death.]



say nowadays and laid claim to the judgment, the king not being under the jurisdiction of a lord. These cases were the "royal cases." Legists were most careful to define them so as not to deprive the king's officials of any pretexts for interfering in trials before the feudal courts. It was easy to multiply these at that time and the officials did not fail to do so — taking as much as possible from the province of the lord's justice and adding it to the king's.

At the same time the king's *bourgeoisie* was established. An inhabitant of a piece of seigniorial land might under certain conditions of establishment and residence in a royal city acquire the condition of "king's bourgeois." "I am a king's bourgeois" was equivalent to "I am a Roman citizen." The Roman citizen could only be judged at Rome. The king's bourgeois could not be tried except by the king's officials.

The king's court was on this account much more occupied than formerly. It continued to accumulate every possible prerogative. It was a court of exchequer, and, if it pleased the king, a political council; but it was above all things, in the days of St. Louis, a court of justice. The royal finances were always of a very simple nature; in case of crusades, captivity of the king, knighthood conferred upon the king's eldest son or his marriage, feudal aid was demanded. The revenues of the domain, if well administered, were quite sufficient for royalty to live upon. When it had greater needs and it was necessary to increase revenues of all sorts, the financial prerogatives of the court became more important. The office of the exchequer was detached from it; but in the time of St. Louis justice was the court's business.

But even in this court considerable changes were taking place. The rôle of the great vassals and the crown officials was diminishing, that of the legists was beginning. Now, since judgment was pronounced on written procedures, it was not the knights who had sufficient knowledge and application of mind to deal with the stability of proof and the obscurities of the black-book. The lawyer was necessary to them. At first the barons disdainfully made these plebeian personages sit at their feet, on stools. But in the meeting of ignorance and knowledge the latter quickly asserted its sovereignty. The baron, who had nothing but nonsense to talk, kept quiet before the learned counsellors, and upon these latter soon devolved the direction of judgment; and the fate of the guilty, even of the noblest station, lay in their hands. The king's court, which was always held at Paris, had regular sessions, usually four times a year; and it kept a record of its deliberations which under the name of "*Olim*" was the beginning of royal jurisprudence.

In the administration of the provinces, St. Louis protected his own power and that of his subjects against any abuses his officials might practice. He forbade bailiffs and seneschals to make presents to the members of the council or receive money from those dependent on them or to loan such any, or to take part in sales, markets, or leases held in the king's name. They were forbidden to purchase any property within their jurisdiction or to marry their sons and daughters without the king's permission. If they disobeyed they were punished both in their property and their persons. When going out of office they were obliged to live forty days within their territory, in order to reply to their successors or to royal inquiries in any charge of misconduct that might be brought against them.

St. Louis sent into the provinces commissioners or royal inquirers, a custom adopted from Charlemagne. These inquirers defended the king's rights and those of his subjects as well. The care which they took to protect the latter against exaction, won them the name of *enquêteurs aux restitutions*.

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In all these measures can be recognised the influence of the legists and echoes of Roman administration.

We have noted the organisation of provostships. That of Paris demanded large funds. Therefore several officials joined together to farm it out, and these provosts, according to Joinville, trampled upon the people, sustained their families by the "outrages" they committed, let themselves be corrupted by the rich, and took no notice whatever of the robbers and malefactors who infested Paris and its vicinity.

The king resolved to give in the future "great and high wages to those who should look after his provostship," and sought for someone "who would give good and stiff justice." He chose Étienne Boileau who maintained so well the provostship that no malefactor, robber, or cut-throat dared come to Paris but he was at once hanged and exterminated; and neither lineage, gold, nor silver could save him. Justice and policing were the principal functions of the provost of Paris, who commanded the watch and presided at the tribunal of the Châtelet.

St. Louis struck hard blows at feudalism by the suppression of judiciary duels, the interdiction of private wars, and the establishment of appeal; but he was not for all this a revolutionary king in the sense of Philip the Fair. He repeated constantly that none must "take away any one's rights; but it is," so he said at the head of an ordinance, "the duty of royal power to assure peace and happiness to our subjects." Besides he had that same spirit of justice that is found in Roman law, and which united so well with the principles of Christianity. When he condemns, for example, the duel, he does it because "battle is not the way to determine right"—here is the Roman spirit; and because it "criminally tempts God"—here is the spirit of Christ.

He expected that all would submit to what it seemed to him he was charged by God to establish. His brother the count of Anjou, had, on trial, condemned a knight; and the latter, on appealing to the king's court, was imprisoned by the count. The king let his brother know that there was but one king in France and although Charles was his brother, he would not be treated in any different ways as regarded justice. The count of Anjou had to release his prisoner and came in person to oppose the appeal at the king's court, which, however, was decided in favour of the knight.

One of the most powerful lords of the realm, the lord of Coucy, caused three young men to be hanged for offence against the hunting laws, and although all the barons pleaded for him he was ordered a heavy fine. A lord cried with irony, "If I were king I would hang all the barons; for the first step taken, the second costs nothing." The king heard and called him back. "How, Jean, you say that I should hang all my barons. Certainly I shall not do it, but I will punish them if they do wrong." We have seen how the reputation for equity of the good king was so well established that the English barons in revolt against their king chose Louis as arbitrator, an example followed by the counts of Bar and Luxemburg.

The right of coinage belonged to more than eighty lords who sometimes made bad money. St. Louis decided that his own should have circulation throughout the entire kingdom and alone should be legal tender in the royal domain and those whose lords had not the right of coinage; that the seigniorial coinage should only be legal in the province of the lord who issued it and that this lord could only strike off the *tournois*, and *parisis*,<sup>1</sup> and

[<sup>1</sup> The livres of Tours and of Paris; their values being 20 and 25 sous respectively.]

other coins whose legal value was fixed by relation to the *tournois* in the ordinance. Thus the king ruled, in absolute power, in his own domain. He recognised elsewhere seigniorial rights, but limited them in the interest of the subjects whose protector he was. His money circulated everywhere.

It only remained for the king to coin better *parisis* and better *tournois* than those of the lords; which he did. His money, like his justice, was worth more than his vassal's. Another measure was extremely useful to commerce. It made the lords responsible for the policing of the roads through their domains. In Paris he established the royal watch and had drawn up by the provost, Étienne Boileau, the ancient rules concerning the hundred trades which existed in the town, in order to infuse peace and order into industry as he had done in the country. These trades grouped themselves into great corporations; in the fifteenth century all the Parisian merchants formed six bodies of "arts and trades."

St. Louis showed a respectful firmness towards papal authority; we have seen that he did not recognise the pope's right to dispose of crowns. There has even been attributed to him a pragmatic sanction, the foundation of the liberties of the Gallican church, which would have confirmed the liberty of canonical elections, restrained to the most urgent necessities the impositions which the court of Rome could levy upon the French churches and contained the king's vow that they should be established. This ordinance is not authentic, but its principles are those of the government. When the bishops demanded that the king force the excommunicated to submit, he declared that he could not do so without knowing the reasons for excommunication, which made him a judge of the bishops.

St. Louis' lively faith assured him against all fear of the church's wrath; and led him besides to severe practices which seem to us of to-day barbaric. "No one," he said, "unless he be learned clerk or perfect theologian, should dispute with the Jews, but may do so with the layman who is heard to slander the Christian faith, and defend it not only with words but with his good drawn sword, striking the miscreant across the body or even letting it cut him." He punished blasphemers by running red-hot irons through their tongues.

He loved to recall that on one occasion during his minority, when pursued up to the very walls of Paris by rebel vassals, he had been saved by the city soldiers who came to his rescue. He always took great interest in the welfare of the large towns, but without sacrificing to them the new needs of society. He conferred a number of charters, and amended others. Communal independence never seemed to him better than feudal liberties, and he favoured the transformation of the communes into royal cities which were dependent on and watched over by the supreme power, while their internal affairs were attended to by officials chosen in free election. An ordinance of 1256 prescribes that the communes name four candidates among themselves from whom the king shall choose a mayor who shall come to Paris once a year to give account of his stewardship.

Thus little by little was established the principle that it was the king's prerogative to deal with the communes and that all owed him allegiance above everyone else. Thus the communes gradually disappeared and with them the proud sentiments, the strong ideas of right and liberty which sustained the men who had founded and defended them. The "third estate" was beginning.

Through his undermining of feudal and communal independence, and through his strong ruling with regard to the church, St. Louis pointed the



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way of absolute power to French royalty. He rendered it still another service. The remembrance of his virtues did not perish with him. Venerated in his life-time as a saint, he was canonised after death. He put the seal of sanctification, so to speak, upon French royalty, and his descendants were fond of invoking at the head of their decrees the name and example of "Monsieur St. Louis."<sup>f</sup>

## ASPECTS OF THIRTEENTH CENTURY CIVILISATION

In proportion as the Middle Ages advanced, national individuality took more definite shape. Intellectual life had been during a protracted period confined almost exclusively to religious circles, and had been given expression in the universal language—Latin. Accordingly the beginning of the thirteenth century saw only three active established literatures—in Germany, in the north and in the south of France; the last having preceded the others and served them as models. This was the literature of the *langue d'oc*, also called Provençal, which overflowed the Pyrenean borders into Christian Europe, passed over the Alps into the whole of Italy, and awakened the muse that lay sleeping on the banks of the Ebro, as on those of the Po and the Arno. Brilliant, sonorous, harmonious, full of imagery and movement, it was unexcelled as the language of love and battle songs. Bernard de Ventadour, Bertram de Born, and Richard Cœur de Lion moulded it with a skill and ardour worthy of Tyrtæus. The songs of Bertram de Born, above all, were like swords, dazzling and penetrating; the passion of war flamed in them like fire. This language of the south, into which something of the Arabian accent has passed, lent itself gracefully to the requirements of the courts of love presided over by ingenious tribunals of noble dames.

But the continued development of the north of France gave the preponderance to its idiom. The Normans carried it into Italy, where it failed to establish itself; and to England, where it prevailed during three centuries. By the crusaders it was everywhere disseminated. While the intellectual fame of Paris attracted there the eminent minds of the whole Catholic world, the vulgar tongue which the doctors disdained extended its empire well beyond the frontiers. We must add also that French genius, so often accused of epic sterility, poured over into the adjacent countries a flood of great poetry. The troubadours had been mute since the Albigensian crusade had drowned in blood the civilisation of the *langue d'oc*; and no more were heard the virile accents of Bernard de Ventadour or of Bertram de Born, nor the melodious lyrics of the *jeux partis*.<sup>1</sup> But north of the Loire the *trouvères* still composed heroic songs—veritable epics, which were translated or imitated in Italy, England, and Germany.

But these epic cycles were exhausted: the heroic ode disappeared. Robert Wace, "clerk of Caen," composed about 1155 the *Roman de Brut*, a legendary history of Britain. Christian de Troyes, who wrote after 1160, spun out a diluted version of the Arthurian legend in a long poem in lines of eight syllables, while the same tale was given a religious twist by another school of poets by adding the history of the Holy Grail. The aspect of the times was mirrored in the poem with its double face—chivalry and piety. The naïve inspiration of the song of Roland was lost; the new school

<sup>1</sup> The disquisitions of the *troubadours* or the *trouvères* on questions of gallantry were called *jeux partis*; whence grew those "courts of love" in which were tried, before tribunals of noble ladies, complicated cases and subtle questions. These "courts of love" were of course but a poetical fiction, never a serious or permanent institution.

subtilised, ran after novelties, or rummaged among the classics. The story of Ulysses and that of the Argonauts, borrowed from *The Thebaid* of Statius, furnished tales which could not fail to please those Christian Ulysseses whom the Crusades had sent wandering in Asia. The Trojan War, the sorceress Medea, and Alexander, attracted the *trouvères* of this period. They had already begun to imitate the style of the ancients. Thus the nature of the epic was altered and a transition took place from primitive composition to the diverse styles of advanced civilisation. The epic was divided: the elements dealing with the passions were blended into allegorical romance; the narrative elements, into prose history. Analysis and realism took the place of spontaneous and poetic inspiration.

Guillaume de Lorris, who died in 1260, began the famous *Roman de la Rose*, whose personages were abstract qualities — Reason, Good-will, Danger, Treason, Baseness, Avarice. Jean de Meun continued it later, after another transformation had given birth to satire. The fable flourished already, having derived its origin from that very romance: animals played the rôles of passions, of social conditions; and the tale of *Renard*, developed in its turn from the others, made its appearance, in 1236, as the comedy of the period. Rutebœuf offers the first example of the professional poet, ill remunerated, perishing with cold, agape with hunger; yet, in the depths of this misery, gay, daring, caustic, he wrote upon all sorts of subjects in the frank, open style which heralded Villon. Language acquires in his hands skill and power; it is more mellow and more tender than that of Guillaume de Lorris or from the lips of the famous count of Champagne or of Marie of France.

The most noteworthy event in French literature in the thirteenth century was the appearance of prose. The first prose writers were not, be it understood, professional historians, but two noblemen, both involved in the events they depicted. Geoffroy de Villehardouin, marshal of Champagne, has left us the history of the Fourth Crusade in the *Conquête de Constantinople*, in which he himself figured. He writes as a soldier, his style being firm and brief, not without a touch of military stiffness; he invents little, goes straight ahead, from one attack to the next, with a brief exclamation when encountering some object which astonishes him. The lord of Joinville, also seneschal of Champagne, exhibits in his *Mémoires* a greater suppleness of style, a more marked refinement of mind; he observes, reflects, and talks upon all subjects, discussing his personal sentiments as freely as the events of war. He was the foreshadowing of Froissart, as only the councillor and friend of the pious and excellent Louis IX could be. "In point of time," says Villemain, "the narrative of Joinville is perhaps the first monument of genius in the French language, — a work of genius being, as I understand it, one having a high degree of originality of diction; a characteristic and expressive physiognomy; in short, a work that has been done by one man and that could not have been done by another. Such is the book of Joinville."

France was indebted to St. Louis for the multiplication of manuscripts. It is remarkable that he should first, while in the East, have resolved to establish a library at Paris. Hearing that the soldan of Egypt was indefatigably collecting from all parts, and causing to be transcribed or translated, the works of the ancient philosophers, "he was afflicted," says a chronicler of the times, "to perceive more wisdom in the sons of darkness than in the children of light." He began to collect manuscripts of the Old and New Testaments, and of the fathers, which he caused to be multiplied by transcription; all these he placed in the royal chapel at Paris, making them

[1100-1270 A.D.]

accessible to professors and students. The same liberality was shown by the Dominicans of Toulouse, by the bishops of Beauvais and Paris, by the archbishop of Narbonne, by many chapters, and by more monasteries. The professors of the University of Paris, too, were eminent enough to draw students from all parts of Europe : in fact, such names as Alexander de Hales, Albertus Magnus, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Buonaventura, would have conferred splendour on any establishment. With inferior fame, but probably with equal utility, the universities of Bourges, Toulouse, Orleans, and Angers — foundations of this century — imitated the example of the capital.<sup>a</sup>

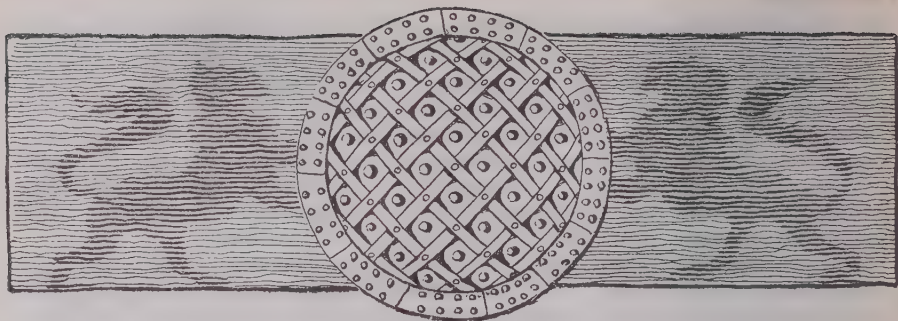
The thirteenth century marks the triumph of the style of architecture so improperly called Gothic. Its characteristic is the arch. This form, at no other time and in no other country employed with such profusion and prominence as in Western Europe during the Middle Ages, has been attributed primarily to the Goths, whence its name ; afterwards, with as little justification, to the Arabs. Undoubtedly pilgrims to the Orient, among them many ecclesiastics, brought back from their travels impressions and souvenirs which left their traces upon Christian edifices ; numerous churches were built after the pattern of the Holy Sepulchre. Mosaic and colour alternation appear also to be importations from the East. As to the arch, if it is much in evidence in the Arabian style, it is also prominent in that of the Byzantines ; it is of all times and all countries, from the tomb of Atreus and the gates of the Pelasgian cities in Italy to the constructions of the savages of Nubia and America. It is simply an elementary form and easy to construct in building vaulted roofs, which require more precision than science.

Vulgar and irregular at first, the arch became monumental little by little — by natural progression, by a gradual refinement of line, by a greater diversity of ornament, by the ribs and columns which began to adorn it. It lent itself marvellously, moreover, as a delineation of the celestial vault, to the mysticism of the Christians and to the passionate soaring of their souls toward heaven : thus soared the mass of Gothic columns, straight, bold, fearfully light, and appearing higher in proportion as the vaulted roof was less open. It was not in the formal Roman *Midi*, it was in the mystic North that the Gothic spread and attained perfection.

The new style, born north of the Loire, crossed the Channel, the Rhine, and the Alps ; and the colonies of French artists transplanted it to Canterbury, to Utrecht, to Milan, to Cologne, to Strasburg, to Ratisbon — even into Sweden. A crude but ingenuous statuary adorned portals, galleries, and cloisters ; and the art of glass-painting possessed, for the production of magic effects on glazed windows, secrets which we are only just beginning to recover. Miniature paintings adorned the missals, and the books of Hours have preserved to us some exquisite masterpieces.

Astrology was one of the fads of this period ; it reached its highest development in the sixteenth century, and was not wholly extinguished till the seventeenth. The astrologers pretended to read in the stars the destiny of human lives. Another folly was the search of the alchemists for the philosopher's stone — that is to say, the method of creating gold by the transmutation of metals. These dreams, however, led to happy results : the astrologers from much star-gazing discovered the laws that governed the movements of those bodies ; the alchemists found in their crucibles — not gold, indeed, but new substances, or new properties of those already known. So were discovered the process of forming salts by distillation, powerful acids, enamels, and convex glasses leading to the making of spectacles.<sup>c</sup>





## CHAPTER IV

### PHILIP III TO THE HOUSE OF VALOIS

[1270-1328 A.D.]

Of all epochs of French history, the second half of the thirteenth century appears to be that in which the subordination (of the people to the crown) was most complete. — DARESTE.<sup>6</sup>

#### PHILIP (III) THE BOLD (1270-1285 A.D.)

LITTLE is known of the reign of St. Louis' eldest son in spite of its length of fifteen years. It began under the walls of Tunis whence Philip III brought home his father's body, after forcing a treaty upon the Moham-medans in which they recognised themselves tributary to the king of Sicily and agreed to pay the costs of the war. One can, however, still follow the ascending march of royalty under this prince, who, without any new war, and by extinction of several feudal lineages, reunited to his domain Valois, Poitou, and the counties of Toulouse and Venaissin. But Philip gave up to the pope this last fief and half of Avignon. The count of Foix, vanquished and a prisoner in his own capital, was compelled to promise faithful obedience and cede a portion of his territory. The dominion of the king of France thus approached the Pyrenees; and it finally crossed them. Philip made a match between his eldest son and the heiress of Navarre and if he did not succeed in placing on the throne of Castile a prince subservient to his influence, or in setting the crown of Aragon on the head of his second son Charles, at least he showed his arms in Catalonia where he took the stronghold of Gerona. Thus the Capetian dynasty, triumphant at home since the days of Louis VI, tried to become so abroad. But the time for this was not ripe.

The expedition to Catalonia, which turned out badly, had no other motive than that of family interest. Philip wished to punish Don Pedro, king of Aragon, for his support of the rebellious Sicilians against Charles of Anjou after the massacre of all the French citizens in the island, which had taken place during vespers on Easter Monday. ("The Sicilian Vespers," 1282.)

An ordinance of Philip III, drawn up in 1274, obliged the advocates in the royal courts to take oath each year that they would defend none but just cases. The first example of a commoner made noble by the king will be found in the letters of ennoblement issued by Philip III to his silversmith Raoul, in 1272, if the fact is absolutely certain.

[1285-1300 A.D.]

PHILIP (IV) THE FAIR (1285-1314 A.D.)

Philip IV, surnamed the Fair, was but seventeen when he succeeded his father in 1285. He ridded himself, as far as possible by treaties, of futile wars, and occupied himself in place of conquest with increasing his domains by acquisitions within his reach. His marriage with the heiress of Navarre and Champagne had only been worth two great provinces to him. A decree of parliament which despoiled the heirs of Hugh de Lusignan secured him La Marche and Angoumois. Then his second son married the heiress of Franche-Comté; thus through marriage, escheat, or conquest all France came little by little into the royal domain. But powerful vassals still remained—the duke of Brittany, the count of Flanders, and especially the duke of Guienne. Philip began by attacking the last. He was a formidable adversary since he was at the same time king of England.

Fortunately Edward I, who had just subdued the Welsh and was now threatening the independence of Scotland, was too much occupied in his own island to come over to the continent, and owing to this the royal army was able to make rapid progress in Guienne. A French fleet went to pillage Dover; and another army led by the king in person made its way into Flanders, where the count had declared for the king of England, and beat the Flemings at Furnes (Veurne) (1297). The intervention of Pope Boniface VIII established a peace between the two kings which was sealed by a marriage. A daughter of Philip the Fair wedded the son of Edward I and gave the English house rights to the throne of France which Edward III in due time asserted (1299). By this peace the two kings gave up their allies, Philip the Scotch, and Edward the count of Flanders. The latter in terror hastened to place himself under the protection of Philip and Flanders was reunited to the domain (1300).

The whole French court went to visit the new acquisition. It was received with great pomp; the Flemings, to do honour to their noble visitors, donned their best attire and displayed all their riches. The entrance into Bruges was especially magnificent. The bourgeois wives showed such gold and jewels in their toilets that the queen felt her woman's vanity wounded. "I thought," she said, "there was but one queen of France; now I see six hundred." Flanders was in truth the richest country in Europe because it was there that the people worked hardest. In that fruitful land men had sprung up like crops, towns were numerous, and the population active and industrious, devoted, like the Guienne towns—especially Bordeaux, because the English bought their wines—to England, whence came the wool necessary to their manufactures. Flemish cloth sold throughout the whole of Christendom as far as Constantinople, and the towns of the Low Countries formed the market where the productions of the north from the Baltic were



PHILIP III

exchanged for those of the south brought from Venice and the east of Italy down the Rhine.

On a soil which it had taken a thousand canals to rescue from the sea, among the scores of stoutly walled cities, with a population accustomed to hard work, but none the less proud of its numbers, strength, and wealth, chivalry had had small chance to play its game, and there was little feudalism in Flanders. Every town had its privileges and it was not safe to tamper with them.

*New War with Flanders (1302-1304 A.D.)*

Philip had appointed James de Châtillon governor of Flanders — a man who did not know how to treat a conquered people, especially such a rich one. The people, rather intolerant and accustomed to more consideration from their counts, rebelled. In Bruges alone three thousand French were put to death. Philip sent Robert of Artois with a large army to avenge this deed. Twenty thousand Flemings awaited it bravely behind a canal near Courtrai. Before the fight the Flemings confessed their sins, the priest said high mass, and all, bowing down, took some earth and put it in their mouths, swearing thus to fight to the death for their country's freedom. This gathering of a whole army usually augurs badly for its assailants. The latter advanced in bad order, sure of victory and not giving those common people the credit of believing that they would dare look them in the face. In vain the constable Raoul de Nesle cautioned prudence. He was asked if he was afraid. "Sir," he replied to Count Robert, "if you come where I go, you will be well in the front," and he spurred his horse forward at all speed. They did not even take the precaution to reconnoitre the Flemings' position. The first ranks of the heavy columns of knights, advancing at full speed, had no sooner fallen into the canal that covered the enemy's lines than those just behind pressed by the rear were precipitated upon them, and then the Flemings had only to plunge their long lances into the confused mass of men and horses to kill with perfect safety to themselves. A sortie which they made from the two ends of the canal completed the rout. Two hundred nobles of high degree and six thousand soldiers perished. And what was most humiliating was that the duke of Burgundy, the counts of Saint-Pol and Clermont, with two thousand hauberts, fled, leaving the constable, count of Artois, and so many noble warriors, beaten, maimed, and killed in the hands of the common people (1302).

The battle of Mansurah had already shown the undisciplined impetuosity and military incapacity of the knights, but this occurred in the Orient and distance had helped to preserve the reputation of the vanquished; but the battle of Courtrai, lost by the flower of French chivalry to the common people, made a great sensation without, however, curing the nobility of their mad presumption. The defeats of Crécy, Poitiers, and Agincourt came from the same causes. Stripped by royalty of its privileges, the feudal nobility lost on the battle-field the prestige with which it had long been surrounded and saw, to complete its own ruin, arise at its very side another army — that of the king and the people.

Philip the Fair took energetic measures to repair the disaster of Courtrai. He forced nobles and bourgeois to bring to the royal mint their gold and silver plate, for which he paid in debased coinage. He ordered each property yielding 100 livres of rent to provide one horseman, every one hundred villein families to provide six foot-sergeants, and every commoner having 25 livres income to serve in person. He sold many serfs their freedom and



[1296-1304 A.D.]

many commoners titles of nobility. By this means he collected in two months ten thousand mounted and sixty thousand men on foot. It was a royal effort and it was a great one, but that of the people was greater still. From the Flemish towns there issued this time eighty thousand fighters. With two such opposing armies the contest must be terrible and decisive; they felt this and not wishing to take any risks, the year 1302 was spent in trying to get thoroughly acquainted with the situation. Philip was then at the height of his quarrel with Boniface VIII and a new defeat would be fatal to him; he even let the Flemings take the offensive the following year (1303). But the pope died the same year and Philip attacked Flanders by land and sea. His fleet defeated the Flemish at Zieriksee and he himself avenged at Mons-en-Pévèle, or Mons-en-Puelle, the defeat of Courtrai. He thought the enemy exterminated, but in a few days they were back as numerous as ever, asking a new battle. "But it rains Flemings," cried the king. He preferred to treat rather than fight again. They promised him money and ceded Douai, Lille, Béthune, Orchies with all Walloon—that is to say French-speaking Flanders between the Lys and the Schelde. To this the king gave them back their count, who promised nothing more than feudal homage.

Thus French royalty receded before Flemish democracy as did German royalty almost at the same period before Swiss democracy. The communes of France remained isolated, and succumbed; in Flanders and in Switzerland they united and triumphed.<sup>b</sup>

### *The Quarrel between Philip and Boniface VIII*

The complaints made by a certain section of the French clergy to the holy see in 1296, against what they designated as the exactions of Philip the Fair, met with a far better reception than did similar complaints from England, where Edward was employing much more vigorous methods than those of his rival to obtain subsidies from the clergy.

It was a great opportunity for Pope Boniface VIII, and he did not let it slip. The bull, *Clericis laicos* (1296), was familiar throughout Christendom. This bull, forbidding the clergy to pay taxes to temporal rulers, was too sweeping to be enforced. Boniface realised that, and forestalled the objections that it could not fail to raise. All that was too peremptory in the preceding bull was corrected in the one beginning *Ineffabilis amor*. The king might raise subsidies among the clergy, with the pope's consent, who, if the kingdom were menaced, would order them to contribute to its defence even unto the selling of the sacred vessels. In the same bull Boniface demanded an explanation of the prohibition recently made by the king against exporting gold, silver, and merchandise out of the kingdom, a prohibition which threatened to dry up one of the principal sources of revenue of Rome.

The edict which is universally regarded as Philip's retort to the bull *Clericis laicos*, was not aimed at the pope, for it was issued in the month of April, a few days after the drawing up of the bull and before its contents could possibly have become known to the king of France. It did not apply solely to money, but forbade also the exportation of arms, horses, and other things, its object being to damage England and Flanders with which Philip was at war. Similar edicts were issued on several occasions during this reign. In this same bull Boniface threatened Philip with excommunication. The king and his councillors were furious at this liberty.

In 1297, came a fresh prohibition to export gold and silver, fresh fears on the part of the pope, fresh explanations from Philip. In the midst of all

this the French bishops wrote to Boniface praying him to grant the king a tithe on all the churches. The clergy began to realise that they could not abstain from contributing to the defence of the country. Abandoned by a portion of the French clergy, Boniface made fresh concessions. In the bull beginning *Romana mater ecclesia* he even granted permission to raise, in cases of necessity, ecclesiastical tithes, with the consent of the clergy but without consulting the holy see. The bull *Noveritis nos* went still farther: it handed over to the king, if he had attained his majority, and to his council if he were still a minor, the responsibility of deciding as to which were cases of necessity, and the right of taxing the clergy even though the pope had not first been consulted. It concluded by declaring that the holy see had never had any intention of making an attempt upon the rights, liberties, freedoms, and customs of the kingdom, the king, or the barons. This compliance on the part of Boniface VIII, his sudden sweetness, must not be attributed altogether to feelings of benevolence towards Philip the Fair; they are explained principally by the difficult position in which the pope found himself in his own states.

Harmonious relations continued between the king and the pope; nevertheless certain incidents occurred to mar them. Boniface had summoned the bishop of Laon to Rome to give account of his administration; the king thereupon affected to consider his benefice as vacant and proceeded to appropriate to himself the revenues according to the royal prerogative. A fresh cause for reciprocal discontent was found in the complaints made by the bishops against the collection of the first-fruits granted to the king.

One event to which no one attached any importance took place about that time, changing the already unsettled feelings of Boniface into hostility. This was the alliance formed at Vaucouleurs in 1299 between Philip and Albert, king of the Romans, who had been excommunicated for having dethroned Adolphus of Nassau — a very threatening alliance for the papacy. The news of the negotiations between Philip and Albert spread consternation in Rome; a false rumour announcing a rupture between them was received with joy. Boniface conceived the idea of holding a conference with the kings of France and England and the count of Flanders — the only means, in his eyes, by which to establish peace on a solid basis. He did not dream of summoning them to Rome. He knew Philip and Edward well enough to be aware that they would regard it simply as officious interference on his part. So he determined to go himself to some neutral territory. He had even got so far as to make overtures to Philip the Fair under these conditions when a serious malady, which caused him excessive pain, coupled with his great age, compelled him to renounce the scheme.

The Flemish ambassadors judged this moment to be a favourable one for making themselves heard, by flattering the pope's notions of supremacy and exciting his suspicions against Philip the Fair. They forwarded to Boniface a memorial in which they prayed his support and intervention, and sought to reassure him as to the mightiness of this sovereign power which they attributed to him by appeals to the holy Scriptures. Boniface was only too ready to listen to insinuations which fell in with his own hopes and ambitions.

However, causes of complaint against Philip continued to accumulate, among others being his usurpation of the county of Melgueil, which belonged to the bishop of Maguelonne, and the refusal of the viscount of Narbonne to do homage to the archbishop who was his over-lord. The pope let drop some severe remarks, and despatched Bernard de Saisset, bishop of

[1301 A.D.]

Pamiers, to invite the king to restore the consecrated land. Philip, exasperated by the bishop of Pamiers, allowed him to return to his diocese; but he instituted a secret inquiry about him to which evidence was contributed by the bishops and barons of the south. He was accused of having purloined Languedoc from the crown for the purpose of re-uniting it to Aragon; his real offence was his hatred of the king. Bernard was arrested at Pamiers by the vidame of Amiens, and arraigned before the king and an assembly of barons at Senlis, October 14th, 1301. So haughty was his defence that the whole assembly rose to its feet and clamoured for his death. Within an ace of being massacred, he flung himself on the compassion of the archbishop of Narbonne, his metropolitan, who was present, as well as the bishops of Béziers and Maguelonne. The archbishop took him under his protection and made himself answerable for him. This proceeding of Philip was contrary to the laws of the church: a bishop cannot be brought up for judgment before a lay court; in the same way, the councils have not the right to judge him without the intervention of the pope, who must authorise the proceedings.

Philip despatched Peter de Flotte to Rome to demand the punishment of Saisset. The ambassador declared that his master did not wish to avail himself of his right to punish a man whose crimes rendered him unworthy of the priesthood and of the protection accorded to the clergy; but that he desired to show the pope a token of deference and respect by handing over to him the charge of avenging the insult offered to God as the author of all legitimate authority, to the king as a son of the church, and to the kingdom as a very considerable portion of Christendom. He further requested Boniface to declare Bernard stripped of his episcopal dignity and of all clerical privileges. It was in vain that Flotte urged and demanded a reply; he received none, and returned raging to France.

Boniface suspended the privileges accorded by himself and his predecessors to the crown of France, and convoked, for November 1st, 1302, a general council at Rome, in order to put an end to the oppressions endured by the French clergy. The king was invited either to attend in person or to send someone to defend him. The bull *Ausculta fili* indicated the superiority claimed by Boniface over Philip. "God, in laying upon us the yoke of apostolic servitude, has placed us above kings and empires, to uproot, destroy, annihilate, disperse, build and plant in his name; dearly beloved son, do not allow yourself to be persuaded that you are not subject to the supreme head of the church, for such an opinion would be folly." He further accused the king of tyrannising over his subjects, oppressing the church, and offending the nobles. In conclusion he invites him to turn his attention to the



ANCIENT CHURCH NEAR ROUEN, BUILT IN THE ROCK



deplorable condition of the Holy Land and to prepare a crusade. Another bull, *Secundum divina*, enjoined Philip to set Saisset at liberty and let him return to Rome. The king drove him out of France, and prepared to obtain a great demonstration in his own favour, in opposition to the pretensions of Boniface, by summoning the first states-general. By acting in this manner Philip was only defending his crown: his right was obvious, he needed but to claim it and exercise it with dignity. His cause was good, but he had the misfortune to sully it by falsehood and violence; in this, doubtless, following the advice of the lawyers who surrounded him.

The Sunday after Candlemas (February, 1302) the king solemnly burned the bull *Ausculda fili*. The defeat of the French army at Courtrai, in the month of July, gave confidence to Boniface without disheartening Philip. In the month of December Philip sent the bishop of Auxerre to Rome to signify to Boniface that, in conjunction with the king of England, he had renounced his arbitration. Outwardly Philip was most deferential towards the pope. While all this was going on grave news came from Rome. The council summoned by Boniface had met on All Saints' Day, 1302, several French bishops having responded to the pope's summons, despite the king's prohibitions. Philip had seized all their worldly goods, and a decree issued November 18th, doubtless at the instigation of the council, ratified the doctrine of the papal superiority.

Boniface directed those French bishops who had not taken part in the council to present themselves at Rome within three months' time. Philip forbade them to leave the kingdom, and set guards at all the passes into Germany and Italy. By the king's wish Cardinal de Saint-Marcellin (the pope's legate) summoned a council in France. Boniface recapitulated all his grievances against Philip, and called upon him to clear himself. He accused him among other things of coining false money and of burning the bull *Ausculda fili*. Philip's answer was moderate and conciliatory. He expressed his wish to maintain, as his ancestors had done, the union between France and the holy see, and concluded by entreating Boniface not to meddle with him in the legitimate exercise of his rights; he offered to refer the matter to the decision of the duke of Brittany or of the duke of Burgundy, who were particularly agreeable to him. The pope declared this answer to be insufficient, and complained bitterly of it to the bishop of Auxerre and to the king's brother, Charles of Valois, who for nearly two years had lived in Italy with the title "champion of the holy see," and whom Philip had lately recalled.

On the 12th of March, 1303, an assembly of barons, prelates, and lawyers was held at the Louvre in the presence of the king. William de Plasian (or, according to Dareste<sup>k</sup> and Martin,<sup>c</sup> the chancellor, William de Nogaret) read aloud a document in which were set forth accusations against Boniface:

"He is a heretic; he does not believe in the immortality of the soul or in the life everlasting: he has said that he would sooner be a dog than a Frenchman; he does not believe in the real presence in the Eucharist. He has approved of a book by Armand de Villeneuve, which book has been condemned and burned; he has set up images of himself in the churches to the end that he may be worshipped; he has a familiar spirit who advises him; he consults sorcerers; he has openly preached that the pope cannot be guilty of simony; he traffics in benefices; he sows strifes everywhere; he has said that the French are of the Patarins (Albigenses); he has ordered murders; he has forced priests to reveal confessions; he has nourished a bitter hatred of the king of France. Before his election he was heard to say

[1303 A.D.]

that if he did become pope he would destroy Christianity or lower the French pride; he has prevented peace between England and France; he has urged the king of Sicily to massacre all French; he strengthened the king of Germany on condition of his humbling the arrogance of the French, who, he pretended, boasted that they recognised no superior in temporal matters, in which they lied in their throats; that if an angel from heaven were to tell him that France was not subject to him, he would shriek curses against both him and the emperor. He has brought about the ruin of the Holy Land, having confiscated all the money intended for its aid, that he might give it to his relatives, of whom he has made marquises, counts, and barons, and for whom he has built castles; he has driven out the nobility of Rome; he has broken up marriages; he has made a cardinal of one of his nephews who is but an ignorant fellow and who was married, and has forced the wife to take the veil in a convent; he has done Celestine, his predecessor, to death in prison."

On the 13th of April Boniface declared Philip to be excommunicate if he persisted in not submitting himself to the holy see. He commissioned Nicholas de Bienfaite, archdeacon of Coutances, to bear to Cardinal de Saint-Marcellin the bull which cut off the king from communion with the church. But the king, warned of the archdeacon's mission, had him arrested at Troyes and thrown into prison. His bull was taken from him; in point of fact it was not to have been fulminated except in the case of Philip's remaining deaf to a final summons. In vain the legate protested; no one listened to him; the goods of all prelates absent from the kingdom were sequestered. Realising that he compromised himself uselessly by remaining any longer, he quitted France.

On the 31st of May Boniface, who had pardoned Albert of Austria and had recognised him as king of the Romans, launched a bull in which the nobles, churches, and *communes* of the metropolises of Lyons, Tarantaise, Embrun, Besançon, Aix, Arles, and Vienne, of Burgundy, Barrois, Dauphiné, Provence, of the county of Forcalquier, the principality of Orange, and the kingdom of Arles, provinces held of the kingdom, were ordered to break such ties of vassalage and obedience as they had been able to contract prejudicial to the emperor, and to release themselves from such oaths of obedience as they had sworn.

It was almost equivalent to dismembering France. On the 13th of June a great assembly took place at the Louvre at which the king was present. The counts of Evreux, Saint-Pol, and Dreux, and William de Plasian, demanded that the church should be governed by a legitimate pope. Boniface was charged anew with all the old crimes and infamies. The king was entreated, in his capacity as "defender of the faith," to work for the convoking of a general council. To this he consented. On the 24th of June, St. John Baptist's Day, an immense crowd of people gathered in the palace gardens; there the king's challenge to the future council was read.

At last, on September 8th, Boniface, in the bull *Petri solio excelso*, pronounced against Philip the excommunication he had courted. All the world knows how, in defiance of public liberties, Boniface was arrested at Anagni, on the evening before the very day on which the excommunication of the French king was to have been publicly posted.<sup>d</sup>

One of Philip's agents, William (Guillaume) de Nogaret whose grandfather had been burned as an Albigensian, had been sent to Italy. He came to an understanding with Sciarra Colonna, a Roman noble and the pope's mortal enemy. Boniface was at that time in his native city of Anagni. By

dint of money Nogaret won over the chief of the military forces of Anagni, and one morning entered the place with four hundred mounted armed men and some hundreds of foot-soldiers. At the noise they made in the town and the cries of "Death to the pope!" "Long live the king of France!" Boniface believed his last hour had come. But showing in spite of his age (he was eighty-six years old) an uncommon degree of agility, he got into his pontifical robes, and seated himself on his throne, the tiara on his head, the cross in one hand and the keys of St. Peter in the other. Thus he awaited his assassins. The latter called upon him to abdicate. "Here is my neck and here is my head," he replied; "betrayed like Jesus Christ, if I must die like him at least I shall die a pope." A story ran that Sciarra Colonna dragged him from his throne, struck him across the face with his gauntlet, and would have killed him had not Nogaret interfered, saying: "Oh thou wretched pope, witness and consider the goodness of my lord, the king of France, who, far from thee as is his kingdom, guards and defends thee through me." [But the story of Colonna's violence seems quite unfounded.]

Nogaret hesitated, however, about dragging the old man out of Anagni. The people had time to recover from their astonishment. The townspeople armed themselves, the peasants rushed in, and the French were driven from the town. The pope, fearing they had put poison in his food, remained three days without eating. A short time after, he died of shame and anger, at the humiliating insults he had received. His successor, Benedict XI, tried to avenge him by excommunicating Nogaret, Colonna, and all those who had helped them. The excommunication reached up to the king. A month after the publication of the bull, Benedict died, perhaps poisoned. This time Philip took measures to make himself master of the election of the new pontiff. Bertrand d'Agoust (de Goth), archbishop of Bordeaux, was elected after he had promised the king to comply with the royal wishes. The new pope, who took the name of Clement V, caused himself to be consecrated at Lyons, and abandoning Rome, fixed his residence in 1308 at Avignon, a possession of the holy see beyond the Alps, where he soon found himself under the hand and will of the king of France. His successors remained there until 1376. The sojourn of the popes at Avignon, which so upset the church, has been called the Babylonish Captivity. This sojourn was memorable in connection with the history of Philip IV.

[<sup>1</sup> Boutaric,<sup>d</sup> who has made a special study of the reign of Philip the Fair, bases his account of the remarkable events at Anagni on the narratives of Rinaldo de Supino and of Nogaret<sup>f</sup> himself rather than on those of Giovanni Villani<sup>m</sup> and Walsingham,<sup>n</sup> the source of most modern historians. Nogaret's alleged speech is from the chronicle of St. Denis.<sup>(o)</sup>

Nogaret says that Philip had sent him to Rome to demand the summoning of a council, but Boniface in fear of the hostile population had retired to his native Anagni. Nogaret learned of the impending excommunication of his master and determined to prevent it at all costs. The Ghibellines of Romagna listened to his plan, and Rinaldo de Supino, their leader and his friend, agreed to accompany Nogaret to Anagni and bring Boniface to terms.

But Nogaret was compelled to take full leadership and promise the protection of France, from all consequences, temporal or spiritual, to his allies. Sciarra Colonna, the pope's mortal enemy, now joined the scheme. All of this would indicate that Nogaret acted on his own responsibility in the matter of the descent on Anagni, wishing only to protect the king of France from the curse of excommunication, and that the latter was in no way connected with the conception of the affair. As to the events at Anagni, Boutaric says:

"There are fables that Colonna struck the pope in the face with his gauntlet; that he was tied to a donkey with his face toward its tail and paraded through Anagni in the midst of insults; but all these stories should be rejected. It seems certain that the person of Boniface was respected. Nogaret contented himself with holding him captive and pestering him to consent to the convoking of the council. Boniface was immovable; Nogaret was at his wits' end. After a lapse of three days the people, ashamed of their treachery, came to demand Boniface. Nogaret was obliged to flee." Dareste<sup>k</sup> holds Colonna guiltless of violence but thinks that others might have injured the pope but for Nogaret.]



[1307 A.D.]

*Sentence of the Templars (1307 A.D.)*

Villani relates a mournful scene—the ominous interview between pope and king in the forest of St. Jean d'Angély where one sold his tiara and the other bought it. This meeting did not take place, but conditions were certainly proposed and accepted. One of them was nothing less than the destruction of the military order of the Templars. The wealth of these warrior monks, now of no use to them since it was no longer expended in armament against the infidel, had tempted the king's greed, always keen-scented for money, and their powers stood in the way of his despotism. There were 15,500 knights with a great multitude of servant knights, brothers and their dependents, so that if gathered together they could defy all the royal armies of Europe; and their strong organisation, under the hand of the grand-master, made them seem more formidable than did their numbers and their wealth.

They possessed throughout Christendom more than ten thousand establishments, and a number of fortresses, among them the temple at Paris where Philip had once found a safe asylum from a riot which stormed and raged in vain around its thick walls. In the treasury of the order there were 150,000 gold florins not counting silver or precious vessels. The world never knew what went on in their houses. Everything was secret, but there were vague rumours of orgies, scandals, and impieties, and no profane eye had ever penetrated the mysteries. Knights had disappeared, because, it was said, they had threatened compromising revelations. The pride of the order irritated the people, who charged it with the most odious crimes; but they were guilty only of great laxity of morals, and their religious ceremonies were perhaps mingled in the East with some impure alloy and strange customs.



A TEMPLAR

The 14th of September, 1307, the seneschals and bailiffs were given notice to hold themselves in arms for the 12th of October, and they received at the same time sealed letters not to be opened until the night of the 12th and 13th of October. The surprised knights had no time to resist or gather together. Torture drew from them such statements as torture always draws. It was Philip's desire to associate the whole nation with this great trial, as he had associated it with his dispute with Boniface VIII. The states-general assembled at Tours; the accusations and statements were put before it and the deputies pronounced the knights deserving of death. Provincial councils likewise condemned them. That of Paris consigned to the flames in one day, in the faubourg St. Antoine, fifty-four Templars, who retracted what they had avowed under torture. Nine were burned at Senlis and there certainly were other executions. The pope pronounced at the Council of Vienne the dissolution of the order throughout all Christendom, and ordered their great

wealth turned over to the Hospitallers (knights of Rhodes). But the royal fist did not readily release what it held. All the money found in the temples, two-thirds of the personal property, credits, and a considerable amount of lands remained in the hands of the king. In Italy, England, Spain, and Germany, the order of the Temple was abolished and its wealth in part confiscated by the princes. But there were no executions except in France. The memory of Philip IV must alone bear the burden of these atrocities.

This same Council of Vienne condemned several errors, born within the Franciscan order—the heresy of the “Spirituels” who regarded St. Francis almost as a new reincarnation of Jesus; that of the “Beguins” or “Beguards,” who exempted mankind, perfect according to their ideas, from any judgment by human standards. And finally that of the Fraticelli who [inquisitors tell us] abolished property and declared that everything should be in common, family as well as property. We see these wild doctrines are very old.<sup>b</sup>

### *Philip's Fiscal Policy*

Nothing satiated the royal exchequer, neither the spoils of the Templars, nor the tithes collected under pretext of the “holy war,” nor the taxes levied for the knighting of the king's sons and the marriage of his daughter—that fatal marriage, from which sprang Edward III. Even the *maltôtes* did not suffice.

The *maltôte*, an illegal exaction, which, to a certain extent placed all subjects in the position of serfs taxable at their owner's will and pleasure, was at least openly arbitrary and illegal; but the “mutable currencies” were treacherously sprung upon the citizens in the midst of their transactions and money exchanges, and brought dismay upon society at every turn, doing his subjects a wrong out of all proportion to the benefit gained by their ruler. In all of this there was as much ignorance as perversity, and one has difficulty in conceiving the ineptitude shown in the government financial business by legal men, ordinarily so clever. Philip the Fair's statutes regarding the currency are a genuine chaos: sometimes the king takes the paternal tone, and pretends to so contrive the rate of exchange that his subjects shall suffer as little as possible; sometimes he throws off the mask, and prohibits the testing and weighing of the royal moneys issued, on pain of forfeiting the coins submitted to the test and of “being both body and goods at the king's disposal.” No one could obtain either silver or copper but at the royal mints. The importation of the Florentine golden florin and other foreign coins was forbidden under the same penalty (for fear of comparison). Next Philip withdrew from circulation half of his own current coins, under the pretext of their having been counterfeited and tampered with by others—coiners, Lombards, etc. The Jews and the Lombards were always convenient scapegoats for the royal iniquities. They were again expelled in 1311-1312, with the usual confiscations. In 1310 there was a grand re-coining of all the moneys; everyone was forced to give in all he possessed to the directors of the royal mints, who gave out in exchange new money, much inferior in weight and purchasing power to the value attributed to it. The king was anxious to gain popularity at the expense of the money-lenders, and issued orders that all liabilities should be discharged in the new money, in spite of every previous stipulation to the contrary. To the same end, after having fixed a maximum (15 to 20 per cent. per annum!) for the exorbitant interest charged on silver, he ended by prohibiting all usury, which is to say all interest. If the rates of usury were

[1312-1314 A.D.]

scandalous, one must lay the blame of them on the king's persecution of capitalists, Jews, and Italian bankers: naturally the rate of interest increased in proportion to the chances of loss incurred by the lender. By these means Philip raised fresh barriers to trade and swelled the public discontent.

A statute enacted in June, 1313, surpassed in audacity all others that had preceded it. The king was no longer satisfied with managing his own money as he would; he wished to handle that of the barons also, and asserted himself to be the only coiner of the realm. By friendly transactions, by usurpations, by every possible means, he had already reduced by more than half their number the nobles who minted money. In the preamble to his statute he now announced his intention of restoring all French moneys "to their ancient currency and status" (of the time of St. Louis, apparently), and forbade all prelates and barons to mint fresh money until further orders. He was acting, he said, under the advice of "the whole company of decent people in every decent town in his kingdom," and he looked to the *bourgeoisie* to uphold him against the resentment of the nobles. As a matter of fact, at another time the bourgeoisie would have been only too pleased to see the nobles deprived of the right of coining money, a right which they grossly abused; but under Philip the Fair, would they gain much by it? This very statute of June, 1313, introduced mutations more disastrous than any heretofore. It hit all classes of society, and all were equally irritated, with the exception of the lawyers and certain large tradesmen who constituted themselves overseers, farmers, or coiners on the king's account.

*Execution of Jacques de Molay (1314 A.D.)*

Philip defied public discontent by redoubling his brutalities. The smallest murmur was reported to the king's spies, and punished by his tyrants. One saw everywhere people flogged and pilloried; every lay and ecclesiastical court robbed itself in pitiless severity. In the Place de Grève they burned, in 1313, a nun of Hainault, Marguerite de la Porette, the Mystic. Shortly after a more celebrated execution startled Paris and the whole of France. For more than six years the foremost members of the order of the Temple, the grand-master, the "visitor" of France, and the masters of Aquitaine and Normandy, had languished in the king's dungeons; they could not be left to die unjudged in darksome cells. At last the pope, who had reserved the decision of their fate to himself, appointed a commission consisting of the cardinal D'Albano and two other cardinals. The archbishop of Sens and various doctors of divinity and of canonical law joined them. Brought before their judges, the four captives reiterated, it is said, the confessions made by themselves and their comrades. It was wished to mark their arrest with great solemnity and to "read a lesson" to the public, as the saying is. The court therefore held its sitting in the open space before Notre Dame de Paris, upon a scaffold draped in scarlet. The four accused were led to the foot of the scaffold, where they repeated their confession before all the people. Their sentence was then pronounced—they were to be immured for life. "But just when," says the continuator of Nangis,<sup>g</sup> "the cardinals believed they had ended the affair, the grand-master, Jacques de Molay, and the master from Normandy, Guy, brother of the dauphin of Auvergne, suddenly retracted their confession, denying it in toto, and stubbornly defended themselves against the cardinal who had 'pointed the moral' and the archbishop of Sens, to the immense surprise of everybody."



The commission, struck dumb with astonishment and a sort of fear by this unlooked-for incident, did not know how to decide. They adjourned till the morrow to deliberate at their leisure, and handed over the grand-master and his companions to the guardianship of the royal warder of Paris till the next day. The news of what had taken place outside Notre Dame was promptly carried to the king, who was at that time at the Palais de la Cité. Philip, seized with a dread only equalled by his anger, sent in haste for his most trusty advisers, "without summoning the scholars" (*i.e.*, the commission). The determination he had arrived at was the boldest and most atrocious that can be imagined. At night-fall he had the two Templars conveyed to a small island in the Seine, "between the garden of the Palais de la Cité and the church of the Frères-Hermites," and there had them burned together. "They helped," says the continuator of Nangis,<sup>g</sup> "to prepare the fagots with so stout and resolute a heart, persisting to the end in their denials with so great steadfastness, that they left those who witnessed their torment filled with admiration and stupefaction." (March 11th, 1314.)

The ecclesiastical powers swallowed this outrage as many another, demanding from the king no account for the double murder of two offenders who did not come within his jurisdiction, and whose backsliding he had dealt with on his own authority alone. Indeed Clement V was already failing, and did not long survive the unfortunates whom he had sold to their persecutor. He died on April 20th. An Italian historian, Ferretus or Fereti of Vicenza, asserts that Jacques de Molay, from the midst of his fagots, cited the king and the pope to appear before the tribunal of God, Clement within forty days and Philip within a year.

Philip was in truth nearing the end of his sinister career. The last year of his reign will be seen to be the most bloody. France was horrified by more hideous scenes than any she had hitherto witnessed, more hideous even than the murder of the Templars, and this time the tragedy was enacted at the foot of the throne among the royal family. Philip's three sons, Louis Hutin, king of Navarre, and count of Champagne and of Brie, Philip, count of Poitiers, and Charles, count of La Marche, had married — the first Marguerite, sister of Hugh V, duke of Burgundy; and the other two Joan and Blanche, daughters of Otto or Othelin, count of Burgundy or of Franche-Comté. In the spring of 1314 the young wives of the king's three sons were suddenly arrested on a charge of scandalous conduct. Marguerite, queen of Navarre, and Blanche, countess of La Marche, were accused of frequent acts of adultery, "even on the most holy days," with Philip and Walter d'Aulnai, young Norman knights in their service. The Aulnai brothers were not allowed to challenge to a duel in defence of their innocence and that of their mistresses; confession of guilt was wrung from them by torture, and the princesses, "stripped," says the continuator of Nangis,<sup>g</sup> "of all temporal honours, after receiving the tonsure, were imprisoned, Marguerite in Château Gaillard d'Andely, and Blanche in the abbey of Maubuisson, where, after strict seclusion, and deprived of all human consolation, they ended their days in despair."

The fate of their lovers was even more terrible. They were conducted to the place du Martroi St. Jean, in Paris, and there flayed alive and mutilated; they were not beheaded until every means had been exhausted that an infernal science could devise to prolong the victim's sufferings without actually killing him.

Joan of Burgundy, countess of Poitiers, more fortunate than her sisters Blanche and Marguerite of Navarre, was declared chaste and not guilty by

[1285-1314 A.D.]

a parliament in which sat the king's brothers and the great nobles: she was "reconciled to her husband." Joan of Burgundy was heiress to Franche-Comté: it was not possible to condemn her as an adulteress and annul her marriage without renouncing the wealth she had brought to the royal house; perhaps her riches had something to say as to her innocence.<sup>c</sup>

The general oppression nearly caused an insurrection when Philip ordered a new tax on the sale of all merchandise. There was, from the first, a union between the nobles and the bourgeoisie similar to the league which in England laid the foundations of the people's liberty and imposed the Magna Charta on John Lackland. Philip, this time, withdrew, and cancelling the obnoxious tax he summoned representatives of forty of the largest towns to a conference at Paris at which he promised to coin henceforth nothing but honest money.

But this ill-starred man, this king, the harshest France had had up to this time, although but forty-six years of age, had already reached the end of his days. He expired November 29th, 1314.<sup>b</sup> The exact cause of Philip's early demise has never been perfectly understood. The commonly accepted account is that it resulted from an accident that occurred during a stag hunt. "He saw the stag coming and drew his sword, and clapped spurs to his horse and thought to strike the stag; but his horse carried him so violently against a tree that the good king fell to the ground, and was very severely hurt in the heart, and was carried to Corbeil. There his malady grew very sore."<sup>f</sup> But this narrative bears the date 1572. "The contemporary French historian" [the continuator of William de Nangis<sup>g</sup>] says Michelet<sup>e</sup> "does not speak of this accident. He says that Philip sank without fever or visible malady, to the great astonishment of the physicians." Nevertheless there was a contemporary rumour of an accident during a hunt of the wild boar, for Dante<sup>h</sup> writing exactly at the time of Philip's death speaks contemptuously of him as "The false coiner who died of a blow from a pig's skin" (*i.e.*, a boar).<sup>a</sup>

### *Political Progress in Philip's Reign*

Whether or not Philip the Fair was a wicked man or a bad king, there is no denying that his reign is the grand era from which we date civil order in France and the foundation of the modern monarchy.<sup>e</sup> Under this reign the royal domain made important acquisitions, some of which, unfortunately, were not lasting; the counties of La Marche, Angoumois, Champagne, Franche-Comté, Lectoure, a portion of Flanders (Lille, Douai, and Orchies), Quercy, the great city of Lyons and a part of Montpellier. The count of Bar had been compelled to do homage to the French crown for all his land situated west of the Maas.

Vassals were bound to serve their sovereign, in his court, by their advice and justice. The king's feudal court had a double character, for in it the king called upon his barons for advice and sentences. With the further evolution of royalty the functions of the king's court developed, and a division became necessary; there was the political court or grand council, and the judiciary court or parliament. Under St. Louis the functions of the parliament were not yet clearly defined. Philip the Fair perfected its organisation. He caused this court to be held at Paris twice a year for two months in the Palais de la Cité, which later bore the name of the Palais de Justice (1303). This sovereign court of justice which claimed to exercise its jurisdiction over the entire kingdom was destined to be the great instrument employed by future kings to bring the whole of France under their

absolute authority. Philip also established two *échiquiers*<sup>1</sup> at Rouen and two *grands jours* at Troyes and placed these provincial courts under the control of the parliament. The office of public prosecutor (*ministère public*) charged with defending in all causes the rights of the king and society, seems to date from the time of Philip the Fair.

As the king had formed the parliament from the grand council, so he formed the chamber of accounts (*chambre des comptes*) from the parliament of which it first was a part but later became a separate institution. Thus there were three great divisions in the high administrative department of the country — the judiciary parliament; the financial, chamber of accounts; and the political, the grand council.

The many ordinances of Philip which have been preserved prove his activity in organising the new administration, which was the debt of royalty to the country, since it had substituted its own powers for those of the feudal lords. If these laws often bear the stamp of a despotic and taxing spirit, they sometimes show a knowledge of the true principles of government. One of them prohibited private war and judicial duels during wars of the crown. This was done to disarm feudalism.

A most important event of Philip's administration was the convocation in 1302 of the first states-general. Brought by his violences face to face with a great peril, and ruined by his constant disastrous undertakings, the most despotic of the French kings was compelled [as we have seen] to call around him the deputies of the nation, in order to obtain the assistance of which he stood in need and to fortify himself in his quarrel with the pope, with the assent of France. But in discussing before them the prerogatives of his crown and of the tiara, he recognised by implication the ancient right of national sovereignty so deeply obscured for centuries. Philip doubtless asked nothing but what he was sure of obtaining, but the men who, in 1302, fought for the king against the pope and in 1326 disposed of the crown, would later on be emboldened to the attempt to lay hands on the crown itself.<sup>b</sup>

The states-general consisted of a strictly national assembly which the barons, bishops, abbey, provosts, and deans of chapters were invited to attend in person, and to which each city of the realm was invited to send two or three deputies or representatives. This was not the first time that the crown had consulted the nobles and the prelates; but it does not appear that until now the deputies of the third estate had taken part in such a council. If they had been previously consulted on rare occasions, it was in regard to special matters such as the regulation of the currency, and even then certain determinate cities were represented.

The states-general thus called together by Philip the Fair, and which assembled the 12th of April, 1302, in the church of Notre Dame at Paris, was convoked, to be sure, with a specific aim and under extraordinary circumstances. Its unique object was to show the pope that the country upheld the king (see p. 80). But none the less does this meeting stamp the year 1302 as an important date in French history.<sup>2</sup> Through this representative

<sup>1</sup> The *échiquier* of Rouen was the ancient feudal court of the dukes of Normandy; it was held alternately at Rouen, Falaise, and Caen. Philip the Fair put royal magistrates at its head and fixed it at Rouen, where it met twice a year at Easter and Michaelmas, whence the expression *les deux échiquiers*. The *grands jours* were presided over by a judicial commission appointed by the king, but like the *échiquier* of Rouen it was a local institution that had already long existed.

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps Guizot's *p* slightly dissenting view is worth quoting. He says: "It has often been asserted that Philip the Fair was the first who called the third estate to the states-general of the kingdom. The phrase is too grand, and the fact was not new. Under St. Louis deputies of



[1314-1316 A.D.]

assembly France, as such, takes part for the first time in its own government; an intervention already necessary, and which is destined soon to become consistent and regular.<sup>k</sup>

LOUIS (X) THE QUARRELSOME (1314-1316 A.D.)

Philip the Fair had mingled little with the chivalry of his time. He forbade tournaments, and, after the fashion of oriental despots, kept his sons secluded. The eldest, known as Louis X, called Hutin or the Quarrelsome, was fond of rude pastimes. In 1305 he had been crowned king of Navarre at Pamplona, and succeeded at the same time to the county of Champagne. His uncle Charles, count of Valois, had much influence over him, a prince who had shown eagerness, but not perseverance, to tread in the adventurous and ambitious path of Charles of Anjou.

Charles entertained an aversion for all his brother's councillors. He accused his chancellor Latilly, bishop of Châlons, with having caused the death of the king by means of sorcery. Latilly's obvious interest had been to keep Philip alive; but Charles caused him, nevertheless, to be imprisoned and tortured under the accusation. Raoul de Presle, another of Philip's legists, was implicated in the same crime, and underwent similar persecution.

But Enguerrand de Marigny, Philip's prime minister, was the chief object of hatred to the king's uncle. Charles blamed Marigny for the depreciation of the coin; but for this crime, even if considered guilty, Louis Hutin thought him not worthy of punishment more severe than banishment to the isle of Cyprus. Charles seemed unable to bring against Marigny himself the accusation of sorcery; he however accused his wife of employing others to make the terrible images of wax. All of those thus implicated were brought, not before parliament, but in the presence of the king, of Charles, and of some barons at Vincennes. The councillors of Philip had set the example of creating courts of justice in whatever way suited their convenience. It was now the turn of the barons, and they condemned Marigny to be hanged on a gibbet; the king, on hearing of sorcery, abandoning his previous efforts to save him (1315).

Another murder was that of Marguerite, wife of Louis, who had been sent to seclusion in the château Gaillard.

The young king was beset with difficulties which required a wise head and towns were called around the king to deliberate upon certain legislative acts. There are other examples of this. Philip the Fair, then, had not the honour of the first call; and, with regard to assemblies of this kind which occur under his reign, far too great an idea of them is formed. These meetings were very brief, almost accidental, without influence upon the general government of the kingdom, and deputies of towns held but a very inferior place in them. Nevertheless under Philip the Fair they became more frequent than before.”]



LOUIS X

(From an old French print)

an established authority to deal with them. A war threatened him already. Count Robert of Flanders hesitated and refused to render the homage due to the king of France on his accession. Philip would have avenged such forwardness by sequestrating the county of Nevers, held by the eldest son of the count of Flanders. But the prince appeared at the French court, and was well received. The war could only be carried on by feudal levies; when these were summoned, the noblesse of the different provinces sent in their grievances in lieu of their contingents. His legists would have counselled Philip the Fair to resist such demands; but his son had surrounded his person, not with legists, but with barons, and these remained acquiescent with the demands of their brother nobles. Of course what was granted to one could not be refused to another. But under the date of this one year, 1315, the French statute book is filled with ordinances regranting their old privileges to the noblesse, and rescinding a large portion of the voluminous legislation [such as abandoning the ancient courts of justice, abolishing the judiciary duel, the right of private war, and procedure by written deposition which had made lawyers necessary] of the French monarchs during the preceding century.<sup>i</sup> The general demand was that the king should hold no relations with the barons' men. But at the same time Louis, in order to get money, made a solemn statement that "according to the law of nature every man should be born free"; from which he concluded that all Frenchmen being by nature free, the serfs of the royal domain could ransom themselves.

Serfdom began to decline from this moment, in contrast with the state of affairs in preceding centuries; freedom now became the prevailing condition amongst rural populations, as it had long been among the inhabitants of the towns—while serfdom was the exception.<sup>b</sup>

Whilst the monarch made these large concessions to his noblesse, he seems to have derived from them no efficient aid in the prosecution of the war with Flanders. To raise money for this purpose, he was obliged to compound with the Lombard merchants of Paris; they consented to pay so much a pound on their importations. The Jews, too, were again permitted to reside in certain cities on the payment of a tax. Louis Hutin was the first king who formally borrowed money on the credit of the state, his successors being obliged to devote to the purpose of repayment all the sums that might accrue from forfeiture and confiscation.

With an army raised at these pains and costs, Louis marched into Flanders. The Flemings were in the neighbourhood of Lille, and the French king encamped opposite to them, with a river running between the armies. The monarch had not an opportunity of putting his own valour and that of his soldiers to the proof. For the elements put a stop to hostilities, the rain pouring down in unusual torrents, flooding the camps, and destroying provisions and crops. This unsuccessful campaign flung the country into anarchy, the barons levying war wherever they could foresee profit from it; and those who had right of coinage, Charles of Valois included, making exorbitant use of it to enrich themselves at the expense of the country. The king suspended this right, but his order was set at naught; and he then strove to regulate the nature and fineness of the coin which each grandee might issue.

Whilst Charles of Valois was thus employed, the king despatched his brother, Philip, count of Poitiers, to Avignon, to hasten the election of the pope. He was there when tidings reached him that Louis Hutin had expired at Vincennes on the 5th of July, 1316. After heating himself at ball-playing, the king had descended to the cellar to quench his thirst, an imprudence that proved fatal.

[1316-1322 A.D.]

PHILIP (V) THE TALL (1316-1322 A.D.)

Philip immediately hastened to Paris, and took possession of the royal palace. Charles of Valois thought at first of disputing the regency ; but the armed citizens of Paris, whom Louis had enrolled for the Flemish war, with the constable at their head, drove Charles' followers out of the Louvre. Clemence, the young widow of Louis Hutin, now announced her pregnancy. In addition to this posthumous child, Louis had left a daughter, Joan, by Marguerite of Burgundy. The duke of Burgundy, although he had been unable or unwilling to protect Marguerite, maintained the rights of her daughter, and pleaded that Philip the Fair had acknowledged her legitimacy.

Soon afterwards the queen gave birth to a son, who was christened John ; but the child lived only a few days. Philip lost no time in at once claiming the rank of king, and appointing no distant day in January, 1317, for his coronation at Rheims. Charles of Valois, who was at the head of the noblesse, already began to entertain well-founded hopes of the royal succession accruing to his own family. The duke of Burgundy was pacified by obtaining one of Philip's daughters in marriage, with a considerable sum of money in dowry, as well as Franche-Comté. Joan, daughter of Louis Hutin, whose claims the duke thus abandoned, was affianced to the only son of the count of Évreux.

The grounds for this exclusion of females from the throne of France are not to be found in any law, but in the circumstance of Joan's mother having been stricken with infamy, with no staunch friend to defend her, whilst Philip was in possession of the royal authority, of which it would have required a civil war to dispossess him. With respect to the old Salic law afterwards invoked, it related but to fiefs and military service, and yet in fiefs it had been so generally set aside, that women succeeded to lands and to noble property in all the provinces of France. It must have been evident to the noblesse, as to others, that the descent of a fief, much more of the crown, to females weakened it for a time, and eventually rendered it liable to become the prey of personages, perhaps foreigners, who had not the interest of the kingdom at heart. The accession of Philip the Tall, therefore, and the exclusion of the daughters of Louis Hutin, were popular with the citizens, not displeasing to the noblesse, and not against the interest of the princes of the blood. And thus was it decided that the kingdom of France, instead of being considered as a patrimony that descended to direct heirs, even if female, was a high function which it required a prince to fill.

The reign of Philip the Tall was marked by no chivalrous enterprise or military feat. French and Flemings were disposed more to negotiate than fight. The chief object of Philip the Tall's efforts and edicts was to organise a regular administration. He ordered, first, that a certain number of the members of the great council should be always with the king, a provision afterwards repeated in the order that the small or privy council (*l'estroit conseil*) should meet every month. [In this council cruel persecutions of the Jews and lepers were organised.] He established the chamber of accounts, and regulated the issues of the treasury, no payment to be made without the king's own signature. The abuses of Philip's predecessors are chiefly known by his efforts to amend them. Philip regulated parliaments, their number and their sitting. No prelate was to sit in that of Paris unless he belonged also to the king's council. Parliament should always be attended by a baron or two. It was empowered to send commissioners into the provinces to judge



causes instead of bringing the parties to Paris and thereby creating expenses. The king forbade (1316) nobles to sell fiefs or feudal property to non-nobles.<sup>i</sup>

Like his grandfather Philip III, Philip the Tall gave titles of nobility to people of common origin, an innovation which, by renewing the aristocratic body, assured its longevity, but at the same time altered its character. In the beginning, nobility was a personal matter; feudalism had made it an attribute of the military fief; here were the kings separating it. It is a serious change; for one day these letters of nobility will be bought, and there will be no real nobility when all the world may be noble with the power of money.

Thus threatened from above by the kings, feudalism was also threatened from below by the people. The development of the towns continued: that of the country began; the bourgeois obtained from Philip V permission to have their own military organisations; each town had a captain for its citizen companies, each bailiwick a captain-general; and it was in this century, if not in this reign, that the ecclesiastical parishes became civil communities. The country people, formerly completely isolated, were being brought more and more together, at first around the church and the castle under the surveillance of the seigniorial intendant, later under a syndic or mayor always appointed by the lord and who brought the people together to discuss their common interests.

This was the beginning of municipal organisation in country places.<sup>b</sup>

One of the latest schemes of Philip, much too advanced for his time, was to establish but one measure and one money throughout the kingdom. He calculated that this could not be done without great expense, and he proposed taking the fifth part of the goods of all his subjects for the purpose. But the townsfolk objected to the tax, whilst the nobles who had the right of coinage persisted in retaining so profitable a privilege. Philip was seized in the same year with dysentery and intermittent fever, which terminated in languor and confined him for months to his couch. The people did not fail to attribute his disease to the unheard-of exactions and extortions that he meditated. Philip the Tall did not live to accomplish them; he expired in January, 1322.

#### CHARLES (IV) THE FAIR (1322-1328 A.D.)

No one put forward any claim on the part of the daughters of Philip the Tall to the regal succession. Charles, the youngest son of Philip the Fair, was at once hailed as king; and so incontestably, that he seems to have dispensed with the ceremony of coronation. The first object with Charles, called, like his father, the Handsome or the Fair, was to leave an heir to the throne. Less cruel than Louis Hutin, he obtained a papal dispensation or divorce from his wife Blanche, not on account of the adultery of which she had been convicted, but on the plea of consanguinity. Charles immediately married Mary of Luxemburg, daughter of the late emperor Henry VII. This queen produced no heir, dying in premature childbirth within two years, when Charles married his cousin Joan, daughter of the count d'Évreux.

The first years of the reign of Charles the Fair were chiefly marked by a trial in which severity was at least warranted by justice, and in which the king and court were above sparing culprits even of the highest connection. Jourdan de Lille, lord of Casaubon, in Gascony, having married the niece of Pope John XXII, considered himself above restraint. Accused of eighteen

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crimes each worthy of death, the king had spared him, out of consideration for the pope; but Casaubon resumed his old habits. No traveller or merchant was safe from his rapine, nor damsel nor even man from his violence. Summoned to appear before the court of parliament to answer some of these acts, the Gascon lord beat with his own mace the royal sergeant who bore the summons. He came to Paris, nevertheless, with a noble suite, bravely reckoning on impunity. He was, however, committed to prison, tried, condemned to death, and hanged.<sup>i</sup>

Contemporary writers tell us little of the life of Charles IV, or of his government. We know that he paid visits to various parts of his realm, and that while so doing he confirmed the charters of certain cities of the south of France. We know, too, that in his earlier years Charles aspired to the crown of the Holy Roman Empire, and that for a time circumstances seemed to favour his ambition. He had the support of the pope and of the two most powerful German houses, those of Austria and of Luxemburg. But the Germans as a nation were opposed to the idea of a French emperor, and the negotiations to this end were abandoned on the death of Leopold of Austria in 1326.<sup>k</sup>

It would appear from the ordinances and other acts of Charles the Fair that the party of the noblesse, dominant under Louis Hutin, but repressed under Philip the Tall, recovered full authority under Charles. The Valois, who put themselves forward as the representatives of the chivalry of the age and as the enemy of the legists, appear dominant. They led an expedition against Guienne, threatened Flanders, and aided Mortimer and Isabella in the struggle which terminated in the murder of Edward II. The ordinances of Charles the Fair do not interfere with the noblesse, except to shield them from the encroachments of the king's *baillis*: the lords of Auvergne and Brittany obtained especial immunities of this kind. Although armies were raised from Flemish and for Gascon war, the nobles were apparently not called upon to contribute to them except by feudal service; whilst the Parisians were called upon to keep up a body of two hundred men-at-arms, and to levy a tax on sales to meet this expenditure. Towns which had not the privileges of *communes*, and were without mayors or sheriffs, were ordered not to pay *taille*, but, instead of it, the tax on sales, of one denier in the livre, which tax was not to be levied on the produce sent to market by either nobles or clergy. Money continued to be the great trouble and principal anxiety of government, the middle and civic classes being singled out as the only ones which could regularly furnish it, except when some rich and privileged body offered itself to the greed of the spoiler.

The same fate which had carried off his brother at so young an age awaited Charles. Taken ill at Christmas, he expired at the end of January, 1328. "Thus was the entire progeny of Philip the Fair, and finer was not to be found in the kingdom of France, completely exterminated in the space of fourteen years."<sup>l</sup>

#### ASPECTS OF CIVILISATION

The Middle Ages themselves at this moment, at least in France, were near their end, for the things they were attached to—the Crusades, chivalry, feudalism—were gone, or fast passing away; the papacy, scoffed at in the days of Boniface VIII, was captive at Avignon; the successor of Hugh Capet was a despot, and the sons of villeins were sitting in the states-general of the realm, opposite the nobles and the clergy.<sup>b</sup>

Two or three centuries before, France had seen a great movement accomplished in her midst, called the communal revolution. The greater part of

the cities had acquired—be it pacifically, be it at the cost of struggles against the land-owners, or by dissensions and intestine wars—municipal rights combined with independent jurisdiction. Some of them had acquired a veritable sovereignty. At present, under King John, this sovereignty existed no longer. The cities had gradually returned to the royal administration, although each retained its charter; it may be said, in a general way, that they had again become dependent, since St. Louis in regard to finance, since Philip the Fair in regard to tribunals, and for the levying of militia since Philip the Tall. But, in spite of this change which took from them the character of independent republics, to make them members of a great state, they had retained considerable liberty and power of action. Their citizens formed a third order, having like the clergy or the nobility their own peculiar privileges and correlative obligations. They possessed a great and fruitful initiative for their commercial interests and their industries. They aspired to exercise a rightful influence over the government, and the states-general offered them an obvious means.

The bourgeoisie was not hostile to seigneurial aristocracy as several historians have represented, but it had different interests and different aims, since it owed its wealth and power to industry and commerce. As for industry, it is well known that the corporations of crafts assured a monopoly more or less extensive to their members, of more or less regular revenues, and the perpetuity of hereditary influence. Nevertheless, it is necessary to recall how the development of these corporations was hampered by their own laws, and if there were already some of great wealth, like those of the butchers of Paris, they were the exception. Industries were restricted in their nature in proportion as they were reduced to the usual crafts, and this was generally the case. They employed only the raw materials produced in the country, like flax, wool, or hides. They worked in iron and other metals, but having no knowledge of large machinery they had little use for coal, the principal agent of metallic production. In general, also, they produced only enough for home consumption. Exportations were confined principally to the textiles manufactured in the south which had a market in the Levant, to the woollen stuffs, serges, and tapestries of Arras, to the linens of Rheims and Picardy. Thanks to this circumstance the towns of the latter province began to rival the large industrial cities of the Netherlands.

The progress of industry was genuine, but would only follow that of commerce. Now it was principally the progress of commerce which amazed the fourteenth century. The use of the compass, of which no traces can be found before St. Louis, in permitting longer voyages, established connections, used more than formerly, between the coasts of the Mediterranean and those of the ocean and the English Channel. The commerce of the two seas, by the straits of Gibraltar, rare enough before the year 1300, took, at the beginning of that epoch, a rapid stride forward. On the other hand the triumph of Christianity and civilisation in the northern districts along the tributaries of the Baltic, accompanied by the establishment of German settlements along the coasts of that sea in Prussia and Livonia, opened to the merchants northern Europe, long infested by pirates and long difficult of access. Now began a regular exchange of the products of the north and those of the south. Amiens, whose ordinary commerce had long been restricted to Flanders, England, Scotland, and Ireland, now extended the circumference of her commerce to the Hanseatic countries and their towns, to the Scandinavian kingdoms and those of the Spanish peninsula. All these towns prospered, and following more or less the movement of the Flemish cities became storehouses for the



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products of northern or southern Europe and even of the merchandise of the Orient.

Bruges and Antwerp were at that period markets of great importance. The whole world seemed to gather there ; the influx of strangers was unceasing. The Hanseatics, the Venetians, the Genoese elbowed the English and the merchants of all the states of the continent. This favoured that commercial movement begun in the thirteenth century, and largely increased during the first years of the fourteenth, when the cloth industry of Flanders took such a rapid stride and became powerful enough to lay down the law to the governments, a thing which has hardly been seen before. In effect it gained thereby numerous markets for the sale of its products, and abundant capital to increase its operations.

The commercial movement which had its centre in Flanders extended to a certain distance, and made itself felt in the towns of northern France. All these towns had treaties with the Flemish cities. Paris was even affiliated with the Hanseatic League, of which Bruges was the principal warehouse. The safety of navigation and maritime commerce preoccupied the French government in the fourteenth century. In order that the ownership of cargoes might be guaranteed to the ship-owners, Philip the Fair created special tribunals of *commissionaires examineurs*, charged with judging the questions of flotsam and jetsam on the coasts; these tribunals were the originals of the admiralties. The government also undertook to fight piracy and restrain the usage of letters of marque. It was customary for the proprietors of a vessel robbed by pirates, if they could not obtain satisfaction from the town to which the pirates belonged, to indemnify themselves by selling for their own profit the property of foreigners of the same nation established in the realm. International conventions alone could destroy this barbarous custom. The maritime wars against England were far from being favourable to its suppression; but they helped to restrain and submit its exercise to regulations. Treaties to that effect were signed with several foreign rulers. One council, assembled in Paris in 1314, proscribed letters of marque, as contrary to religion and morals.

Certain ports were opened to foreigners. Harfleur to the merchants of Aragon, of Majorca, Castile, and Portugal who had also free entrance into the Seine; Le Crotoy and Abbeville were opened to those of Castile who had the entrée to the Somme. Philip of Valois made the agreement to maintain these ports, to suppress the taxes which hindered commerce, and to accord various privileges to foreigners, among others that of having consuls and judges of their own nationality. At Harfleur the Spaniards were included among the inhabitants, and participated in the rights of the bourgeoisie. At Rouen they occupied a particular quarter. The Italians received, in 1315, definite privileges from Louis X, in four cities — Paris, St. Omer, La Rochelle, and Nîmes. The Venetian fleet, which came annually to the port of Bruges, stopped generally at Dieppe.

### *The Great Fairs*

The fourteenth century is the epoch of the prosperity of the great fairs. The fairs were then to the towns of considerable importance and for certain parts of France what they still are to the villages. At these fairs were bought and sold all such articles as were not common; these purchases and sales could be made only there and at certain times of the year. Since individual commerce offered a great deal of difficulty, and lacked the most indispensable

elements of security, it became necessary for the merchants to agree upon the transportation of their merchandise, and to unite in order to insure the fairness, often even the simple possibility, of transactions.

The most important fairs in the fourteenth century were those of St. Denis, and the Lendit, of which the origin was in Merovingian times; those of Champagne, held at Troyes, Provins, Lagny, Rheims, and Bar-sur-Aube, protected by the regulations of Philip the Fair and Philip of Valois, those of Beaucaire in the south. They served as marts for the principal foreign productions, the linens of Holland, which were still an object of luxury; the woollens of England; the silks of Italy; the hides and leathers of Spain; the cloths of Flanders, whose superiority was recognised everywhere; the Italian stuffs, ornamented with embroidery and woven with gold; the wines of Spain, Portugal, and Greece. At Troyes were to be met the merchants of Germany and the countries of the north. To Beaucaire came those of the southern countries, Italians, Spaniards, Portuguese, Greeks, Berbers, Egyptians; the Genoese came to Beaucaire to buy the cloths woven at Narbonne, Perpignan, and Toulouse, and destined for exportation. Ordinarily the merchants of the same nation, sometimes those of the same town, formed a syndicate. At the fair of the Lendit every town had for its negotiations its particular place, as is the custom to-day in our great expositions.

All the kings, from Philip the Bold, strove to attract foreign merchants by giving them new privileges, that is to say, in multiplying the guarantees which they needed. They were exempted from certain tolls. International treaties were made to assure the free land passage of merchandise transported from one realm to another. We have a remarkable example of this sort of treaty. It was a stipulation, signed in 1327 by the kings of France, England, Spain, Aragon, Sicily, and Majorca.

The fairs of Champagne were the objects of regulations which it was aimed to make as definite and at the same time as favourable as possible. The tariff was fixed for the taxes which were collected there. Royal commissioners were chosen for the police, for brokers, and notaries, in order to assume the sincerity of transactions and of guards to certify to the quality of the merchandise sold. To the merchants of each nation was conceded the right to elect their national judges, and to submit to these judges the regulation of their disputes, except in case of appeal, which could be carried to the tribunal of fairs as a first resort, and as a second resort to the chamber of accounts. Guarantees were also accorded to foreign merchants against deterioration of money and arbitrary confiscations. In order to define the point where usury began, which the laws continued to fight, interest on commercial matter was fixed at fifteen per cent., and the stipulations of private persons were tolerated up to this figure. The importance of the fairs, and the pains taken by the government to make them popular, could not but be favourable to public wealth. A rich and enlightened bourgeoisie was founded in the large cities, at Rouen, Amiens, Rheims, Troyes, Orleans. All these towns and others enlarged their areas, raised façades of cut stone in their principal streets, constructed arcades, galleries, porticoes, and municipal buildings; but Paris already dominated them all. Her population rose to two or three hundred thousand souls. She already possessed some sort of a monopoly for the fabrication of articles of luxury.

Paris had grown with the monarchy. To the advantage of a very considerable commerce, of extended and special industries, were joined others not less important. It was an ecclesiastical and literary centre. A whole quarter was occupied by the population of the schools. Her universities, at

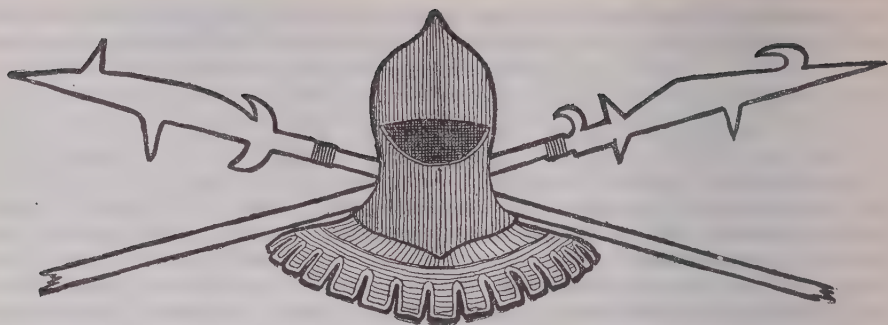
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the same time French and European, could not fail to play an important rôle in the revolutions of the country and in the discussion of the great interests of the church. Finally, Paris was the seat of parliament, that of the highest administration, the centre of government, and the residence of the court. The greater part of the provinces possessed in the quarter of the Louvre or the quarter of St. Paul, hôtels, where they lived surrounded by guards and numerous servitors, which very often occupied vast spaces with their gardens and out-houses. Ever since then the merchants from the interior or from foreign countries, able workmen, clerks, writers, the nobility, have thronged into the great capital. The bourgeoisie of Paris had more learning, more wealth, and also more pretensions than those of other towns. Their chief and natural representative, the provost of merchants, was one of the powers of the state.

The idea of a national representation, with fixed conditions and attributes, is a modern one, and was almost unknown in the Middle Ages. There were no written constitutions in existence, except civic charters, which had a purely local character. The government on its part, without being absolute, admitted of no binding control. In the meantime, public opinion was being consulted, as it became necessary to reckon with it, and the independence which asserted itself everywhere. In the thirteenth century deputies from the cities were convoked and consulted separately; in the fourteenth they were combined with those of the clergy or the nobility of the provincial estates or the states-general. But no fixed rule was followed. It was the king and his officers who determined each time the conditions and the forms of the election.<sup>k</sup>







## CHAPTER V

### THE OPENING OF THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

[1328-1350 A.D.]

Great enterprises and deeds of arms were achieved in these wars ; since the time of good Charlemagne, king of France, never were such feats performed. — FROISSART.<sup>e</sup>

ALTHOUGH France was little prepared for a great national war, a king mounted its throne who was almost certain to provoke one. The princes of the family of Valois had always represented the ideas and the interests of the noblesse during the preceding reigns, when reasons of state, maxims of law, and necessities of finance had led the government to look to other counsellors and undergo other influence. With the accession of Philip of Valois, the noblesse recovered that ascendancy of which they had been so long deprived. And this influence they displayed with a petulance and a pride which could not but provoke what they most loved, a war.

“Charles the Fair having expired, the barons assembled to take into consideration the government of the kingdom. The queen was pregnant, and until the sex of her issue was known, the title of king could not be assumed. The only question was to whom, as nearest in blood, the government of the kingdom should be committed, especially as in France a female could not succeed to the crown. The English said that their king, the son of Philip the Fair’s daughter, and consequently nephew of the late monarch, was, as nearest of kin, more entitled to the regency and to the throne, if the queen did not bring forth a prince, than Philip of Valois, who was but the cousin of the deceased monarch. Many learned in the civil and canon law were of this opinion. Isabella, the daughter of Philip the Fair, might, they alleged, be set aside on account of her sex ; but one of the right sex, and of the nearest affinity, ought to succeed. The men of France, incapable of suffering the idea of becoming subjects of an English prince, replied, that Edward could only succeed by the right of his mother ; and when the mother had no right, the son could have none. This opinion being accepted as the most sensible, was approved by the barons, and the government delivered to

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Philip of Valois. He accordingly received the homage due to the crown of France, but not that due to the crown of Navarre, which the count of Évreux claimed by right of his wife, daughter of Louis Hutin."

This narrative, by the continuator of Nangis,<sup>c</sup> is sufficiently correct. Navarre was given to the count of Évreux, he consenting to receive pecuniary compensation for the counties of Champagne and Brie. In April the queen was confined of a daughter; Philip instantly assumed the title of king, and gave orders for his coronation at Rheims. At the same time, by a letter dated Northampton, the 16th day of May, 1328, Edward appointed two bishops as procurators to make good his claim to the kingdom of France. At the close of the same month Philip was solemnly crowned at Rheims.

The first act of the new king as regent seems to have been to order the treasurer of the late monarch, Peter Remi, to be tortured — thus compelled to confess treason, and finally hanged. He also summoned his barons to support him in a military expedition into Flanders. Count Louis was obstructed in his government, and especially in his levy of taxes, by the people of Bruges, Ypres, and other cities; those of Ghent alone remaining true to him and to France. Louis demanded aid of Philip. The greater part of the barons were of opinion that the season was too far advanced to admit of an expedition that year; but Philip, anxious to signalise his reign, turned to the constable, Walter de Châtillon, and asked his advice. "The brave heart finds all times opportune for fighting," replied the constable. The king accordingly summoned his lieges to meet him at the feast of the Madeleine in July, at Arras. "But the good towns," says the chronicle of St. Denis,<sup>h</sup> "did not attend, giving their money instead, and staying at home to mind their cities."

The king's army was most numerous, divided into ten divisions or battles, the nobles from every quarter hastening to evince their loyalty by attending the first summons of a new and chivalrous king.

The citizens of West Flanders alone mustered to oppose the French, and not more than twelve thousand of them, according to Froissart, took post under Colas Zannequin on the hill of Cassel. They were confident, however, and hung out a flag with a cock painted on it, and an inscription saying, that this cock would crow, ere the upstart king, the *roi trowé*, would find his way into Cassel.

The Flemings remained tranquil for several days, with the French encamped before them. At last at the hour of vespers when the latter were preparing supper, the Flemings marched out in three bodies, fell upon them, and penetrated into their camp. Philip, like his namesake at Mons-en-Pévêlle, was obliged to withdraw, and it was his chaplains who helped him to put on his armour. When the king showed himself with the *oriflamme*, the knights rallied round him from all quarters, the foot, who were more numerous, continuing their flight. The Flemings had failed in mastering



PHILIP VI

(From an old French print)

as well as surprising Philip's camp, and now assailed by the French cavalry (having none of their own), they stood firm and fought for a long time a defensive battle. At last a charge made a breach in their solid phalanx, the French knights poured in, and the Flemings were routed and slaughtered. One of the divisions regained the hill of Cassel, but all alike perished. The king estimated the loss of his enemies at twenty thousand.

He entered the several towns one after the other in triumph, took a thousand citizens of Bruges as hostages, tore down the bells, levelled the walls, and proscribed municipal liberties. When Philip delivered the county of Flanders, thus humbled and mutilated, to its lord, he addressed him, as the continuator of Nangis's records, in the following words: "Count, I come hither at your request, and in all probability because you were too negligent in executing justice. I could not have come, as you know, without great expense; yet, out of my liberality, I restore you your land quiet and pacified, and I forgive you the expense. But another time take care. Let me not be obliged to return by your over-clemency, for if I do, it shall be for my own profit."

Thus exhorted, adds the chronicler, Count Louis so exerted himself that, within three months, he had put ten thousand persons to various kinds of death. In this manner was signalled the triumph of the French noblesse over the citizens of West Flanders.

Meantime, in England, affairs were somewhat unsettled. Edward III cannot be considered to have undertaken the government of that country until the death of Mortimer and the imprisonment of the queen-mother in October, 1330. In the first year after Philip's accession, Isabella seemed inclined to dispute his title, and steps were taken to conclude alliances against France. But the success of Philip in the Flemish war, and the hostile attitude of the English barons, as well as the discontent of the English people with the concessions made to Scotland, precluded the idea of prosecuting the quarrel with France.

Edward, therefore, at his mother's bidding, proceeded to Amiens in the spring of 1329, and did homage to Philip, maintaining his rights to those portions of his possessions in the south of France which the French king still retained. But this act of submission led to disputes, one monarch pretending that it was homage *simple*, the other that it was homage *liège*. Philip thought the opportunity favourable for invading Guienne, the power of Isabella and Mortimer being paralysed by their many enemies. The king levied an *aide* upon his barons for the expedition. So far had these hostile intentions proceeded, that the count of Alençon, Philip's brother, attacked the English in Saintonge, and took and burned the castle of Saintes. On the death of Mortimer, however, and the assumption of full power by Edward, Philip returned to more amicable sentiments, and promised to make amends for the affair of Saintes, as well as for several other grievances. The monarchs seemed to be on the most friendly terms; they spoke of proceeding to the Holy Land together, and even of contracting a marriage between their children.

The subsequent coolness and enmity between them is universally, and apparently with justice, attributed to the malice of Robert of Artois, who for some years had been a pretender to the lordship of that county. Robert had undoubtedly been wronged in the judgment which took Artois from him, the direct heir, and gave it to a female and a collateral, merely because she was more closely allied to the reigning king of France. When Robert asserted his rights in arms, Philip the Tall was unable to reduce him; and if Robert submitted, and even constituted himself a prisoner, it was on the



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understanding that the unjust sentence against him should be revoked, and the county restored to him. On this understanding, Robert married the daughter of Charles of Valois.

Nevertheless Philip the Tall and Charles the Fair evaded the demands and expectations of Robert, who reckoned on having his rights at last from his brother-in-law, Philip of Valois. Robert accordingly served the crown with zeal, and was one of the principal supporters of this prince's claims to the throne. "Thus, on Philip's accession, Robert became everything in France," says Froissart.<sup>e</sup> There having been two sentences of the court of parliament against Robert's claim, it was difficult to rescind them, at least without some new plea, some yet unproduced documents in his favour. Such, probably, was the remark with which Philip and his law officers met the demands of Robert.

If a document existed likely to prove favourable for his claim, it must have fallen into the hands of those who had robbed him of the county. The countess Mahaut, to whom Philip the Fair had adjudged Artois, died soon after the accession of Philip of Valois. Her chief counsellor and confidant had been the bishop of Arras. He also dying, left voluminous papers, some of which had been secreted and carried off from Arras by a woman named Divion, mistress of the prelate. The countess lived long enough to endeavour, by law or vengeance, to get back the papers from Divion.

Aware of these circumstances, Joan, the countess of Artois, set to work and procured from this woman, or caused to be forged by her, certain documents. One was a letter from the bishop of Arras to Robert of Artois, craving pardon for having purloined the documents. Another was a charter of Robert, count of Artois, the grandfather, settling Artois upon his son, the father of Robert. Michelet<sup>f</sup> declares the documents, which still exist, to be forgeries. Robert of Artois boldly produced them, claimed by virtue of them to be restored to the possession of his county; and, as a proof of what value was men's testimony in those days, he brought upwards of fifty witnesses in support of his false documents. Had the king been prosecutor, these, no doubt, would have been found authentic enough for the parliament. But Robert of Artois was no friend of the legists, and parliament remained firm to its first decision. The king's *procureur* objected to the documents, and Robert, summoned to say whether he would stand by them, hesitated. The woman, Divion, was seized, put to the torture, and acknowledged her forgery. The parliament ordered her to be burned. Robert of Artois being proved so far culpable as to have plotted with her, was accused, moreover, of aiding her to poison the countess Mahaut of Artois. Robert fled to Brabant. The king caused him to be condemned for forgery, and deprived of his estates and honours. His wife, his sons, and relatives were imprisoned, and the legists accusing him of attempting to murder and to kill the king by sorcery, drove Robert altogether from the continent, and compelled him to take refuge in England. The fugitive was well received by Edward, appointed of his council, and endowed with ample domains.

Philip of Valois knew not what use to make of that absolute power, which the efforts of so many kings had built up. Policy, he evidently had none. He liked the splendour, magnificence, and pride of a court; and, consequently, preferred his noblesse to any other class of society. Still he showed, in the case of Robert of Artois, his determination not to allow any of them to dictate or impose upon him. He consulted his lawyers as in the case of church encroachments, but shrunk from ordinance or legislation in their favour. Abroad, Philip was generally uncertain in purpose.

The monarch's incertitude was, however, soon relieved. Edward III became more and more irritated at the support which the French and Flemings gave to the Scots : in June, 1335, he issued an order from Newcastle to the Cinque Ports to arm, and intercept a naval expedition fitting out at Calais for Scotland. In February, 1336, an edict appeared ordering all Englishmen, from sixteen to sixty, to be prepared to repel invasion. Still negotiations continued ; and it was not till August of the same year that Edward announced to his subjects the refusal of the French king to cease rendering active assistance to the Scottish foe. At the same time the count of Flanders threw off the mask by arresting all the English traders in his dominions, and Edward was obliged to respond to it by a similar act.

The following year was spent by both monarchs in preparing alliances, and by Edward in making the most active and unusual preparations for war. Philip hired large bodies of Germans, both men-at-arms and light troops. By marrying the heiress of the duke of Brittany to one of his relatives, he hoped to have secured the allegiance of that prince and family ; but Philip's attention was chiefly turned towards the south and the conquest of Guienne, for which enterprise he had the succour of the nobles of the Pyrenees as well as of Languedoc. He seemed not to expect to be seriously attacked on the side of Flanders.

Yet it was in that direction that Edward principally turned his efforts, spending the year 1337 in negotiations with the princes whose territories extended from Antwerp to Cologne. The English king had married the daughter of the count of Hainault, who was the first that he gained, or hoped to have gained ; the duke of Brabant, the duke of Gelderland, and the archbishop of Cologne also listened to Edward's proposals, and willingly received his subsidies. They might bring into the field a thousand knights. But Edward pushed his quest for allies still further : he engaged the duke of Austria to invade Burgundy, he concluded an agreement with the count palatine for a subsidiary force, and even obtained a promise from the emperor Ludwig of Bavaria that he would aid in the war against France with an army of two thousand knights ; for this his imperial majesty was to be paid 300,000 florins.

These counts and knights observed to the envoy of Edward that, notwithstanding their own prowess, the Flemish artisans would prove far more potent auxiliaries against France than any number of lordly chivalry. Edward approved of the idea ; and the bishop of Lincoln and other envoys proceeded to Ghent, "not sparing their money by the way." The subjection of Flanders had been caused by the rich citizens of Ghent proving false to the national cause, supported solely by the men of Bruges and West Flanders. This enabled the democracy of Ghent to triumph over them, and to become organised under the lead of a brewer of that city, named Artevelde. The envoys of Edward addressed themselves to this new king or popular sovereign, and were well received by him. He summoned consuls or deputies from the other towns, and these soon came to an accord that trade should be carried on as usual, and wool imported from England, notwithstanding the prohibitions of France and the count of Flanders.

To Edward wool was at once money and alliance. Whilst the working and manufacturing class of Flemings thus profited by the English, the chiefs and Artevelde himself received money for the occasion. Still, however easy to win over the Flemings to neutrality, it was difficult to induce them to enter upon active war with France. The French, however, and the Flemish aristocracy did all in their power to provoke the civic democracy ;

[1337-1339 A.D.]

they enticed from Ghent almost the only personage of birth who favoured the popular party, and had entertained the envoys of Edward. This was a knight of Courtrai, father-in-law of Artevelde; when he fell into their hands, they decapitated him, to the great irritation of the men of Ghent. The Flemish knights, in order to intercept the frequent communication and envoys passing between England and the Low Countries, took possession of the isle of Cadsand, close to Walcheren, and lying in wait there for the English, obliged them in going or in returning home, to take the route of Dordrecht, instead of sailing direct from Antwerp. Edward no sooner learned this, than he fitted out an expedition in the Thames under Lord Derby and Sir Walter Manny, of six hundred knights and two thousand archers. These assailed Cadsand, defeated the Flemish knights, and captured Guy of Flanders, who, after some delay, joined the English party.

## EDWARD III CLAIMS THE THRONE OF FRANCE

In October, 1337, Edward took the important step of laying claim to the throne of France by right of his mother, sister of Philip the Fair, and of declaring Philip of Valois, descended from a brother of that monarch, a wrongful usurper. This he announced in letters from Edward, king of France and England, to his allies in the Low Countries; and he at the same time appointed the duke of Brabant his vicar-general in the kingdom of France. The king's allies received this solemn announcement, but do not seem to have acted upon it; the duke of Brabant, far from assuming the office of vicar-general, on the contrary assured Philip of Valois of his friendship.

In the spring of 1338, Edward embarked for Antwerp with what forces he could muster, hoping to make a brilliant campaign with the princes of the Low Countries. They showed very little alacrity, and though willing to receive large sums, prepared to prove themselves as little hostile to the French king as was consistent with their receiving the money from the English. The emperor, though he had promised to be ready by St. Andrew's day was too anxious for a reconciliation with the pope to defeat his purpose by aiding in an invasion of France; and Edward was reduced to recommence the task of negotiation.

It was late in 1339 before Edward was joined by his German allies. Some time was passed in solemnly declaring war, and then the English advanced to Cambray, which was garrisoned by French troops. But as it did not belong to the king of France, there was no profit in capturing it; Edward, therefore, pursued his march, against the advice of many of his allies, into France, upon which his relative, the count of Hainault, formally quitted his banner for that of Philip. Edward nevertheless advanced towards St. Quentin, at the head of about forty thousand men. Philip of Valois had mustered an army nearly double in number that of his enemy, there being forty thousand infantry raised by the money of the towns, and twenty thousand more Genoese and Italian foot; three divisions of men-at-arms were each fifteen thousand strong. When the armies were in presence, Edward sent to request the king of France to appoint a day for the battle. Philip eagerly fixed a day, but with all his chivalry, the monarch hesitated. King Robert of Sicily, skilled in the science of astrology, had written to warn the king of France not to engage in combat with the English whilst Edward was with them in person. The French monarch in consequence showed reluctance to engage, and the auxiliaries of both armies took the pretext to



separate. Edward's German allies withdrew, and Philip distributed his men-at-arms amongst the garrisons of the frontier.

It was subsequent to this bootless campaign that Froissart fixes the time of Edward's assuming habitually the title, and quartering the arms, of king of France with his own. This assumption of the crown of France, which seemed not only drawing the sword, but flinging away the scabbard, was a promise to the Flemings that he would wage the "great war" and chiefly through their means and in behalf of their interests. For this purpose he prepared a great expedition, whilst his Queen Philippa spent the winter at Ghent among the good citizens, in order to encourage and attach them to England. But while Edward won the Flemings, his German allies grew lukewarm. He had learned in the last campaign to mistrust their sincerity: they now offered to make peace with France; but Philip rejected their offer, and sent troops to ravage Hainault.

In 1340, Edward had collected a formidable army on board a navy equally numerous. Philip directed his efforts to intercept this expedition, and to muster a fleet capable of performing so important a service. He took into pay great numbers of Genoese officers and seamen; granted the Normans several boons and privileges to induce them to fit out ships, and with these they surprised and burned Southampton, whilst the English visited Eu with equal severity. But on the other hand, the French captured two of their largest vessels, called the *Christopher* and *Edouarda*, in a naval engagement that lasted all day, and cost the lives of a thousand men. In June, Edward sailed from the Thames with his army for the Schelde, not expecting, indeed, to fight a naval combat, for there was a number of the ladies of his court on board.<sup>b</sup>

#### THE BATTLE OF SLUYS OR L'ÉCLUSE

King Edward embarked on the 22nd of June with the élite of the English knights and archers, and went down the Thames towards Sluys. The French fleet, 140 strong in large ships, "without counting the smaller ones," and carrying more than forty thousand men, awaited them between Blankenberghe and Sluys. This naval army, under the command of Admiral Hugh Quiéret, the treasurer Nicholas Béhuchet, and the Ligurian corsair Barbavara, had for two years wrought much damage to English commerce, taking ships, massacring crews, and making descents on Plymouth, Dover, Southampton, Sandwich, and Rye. England breathed out vengeance, but would not have obtained it if the French fleet had been well commanded. This fleet, thanks to the Genoese auxiliaries, had a great numerical superiority, but the three commanders were at variance.

Béhuchet was a rough bourgeois who had served his naval apprenticeship in the king's exchequer, and whom Philip had been foolish enough to associate with the admirals; this man actually tried to teach an old sea-dog like "Barbevaire." Hugh Quiéret, the titular admiral, was hardly more skilful than Béhuchet. They massed the fleet in a narrow creek off the coast of Flanders, as if the great thing for a navy was to choose a "sure and easily defensible" position.

King Edward and his men, who came along with a fair wind, looked and beheld before Sluys so large a number of vessels that the masts seemed like a wood. The king was very much astonished and asked whose they could be. "Sire," they said, "it is the Norman army kept by the king of France at sea, and which has done you so much damage and burned the good town

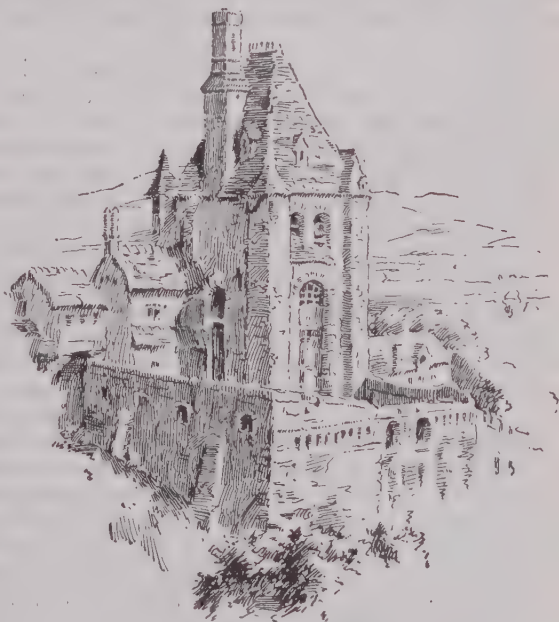
[1340 A.D.]

of Hantonne (Southampton), and conquered the *Christopher*, your large ship, and slain those who manned her." "Oh," said the king, "I have wanted to fight them for a long time, and please God and St. George, we will; for of a truth they have caused me so much vexation that I would avenge myself." After so saying, he wisely and skilfully set out his ships, putting the strongest in front, and giving the best places to his soldiers and archers. And he manœuvred and wheeled about so as to get the wind and sun on the poop. The Normans thought he was tacking about so as to flee, but the leader of the Genoese auxiliaries was not so deceived.

"When 'Barbevaire' (Barbavara) saw the English ships approaching, he said to the admiral and Nicholas Béhuchet: 'My lords, here is the king of England and all his navy coming upon us; if you take my advice you will steer for the open sea, for, if you stay here, while they have sun, wind, and wave in their favour, they will hem you in so closely that you will be helpless and unable to manœuvre.' To this Nicholas Béhuchet, who understood accounts better than naval warfare, answered, 'Let him be hanged who goes away, for here we will stay, and take our chance.' 'My lord,' replied Barbevaire, 'since you will not believe me, I will not stay to be destroyed and I shall get myself and my ships out of this hole.'" [St. Denis.] And he went off out of the creek with all his Italian galleys and gave all his care to his own fleet.

Edward immediately attacked and began by boarding the great *Christopher*, the ship taken from him a year ago by the Normans. The crew were seized, killed, or thrown into the sea, while the fight became general all along the haven. "The battle was hard and fierce on both sides, archers and crossbow-men shot stubbornly at one another, while soldiers closed and fought hand to hand. That they might fight at better advantage they had large hooks with iron chains which they threw from one ship to another and attached them together."

Right bitterly from six in the morning till three in the afternoon did they fight, Béhuchet himself behaving as a true knight, but all the courage in the world could not repair his error. "The French ships were so entangled in their moorings that they were helpless." Their numbers availed not at all; one after the other they were boarded by the English. Nevertheless the resistance was so fierce that the fate of the day could yet have been changed by the aid of Barbavara, who was manœuvring on the enemy's



CHÂTEAU OF DIEPPE

flanks, but a considerable reinforcement of Flemings arriving from Bruges and neighbouring districts by the port of Sluys, decided the fate of the French fleet.

"In short, King Edward and his men gained all along the line ; the Normans and all the other French were discomfited, dead, or drowned, none escaping, for if they tried to take refuge on land, the Flemings awaited them on the sands."

The English gave almost no quarter. Hugh Quiéret was, they say, slaughtered in cold blood after he had given himself up. Béhuchet was hanged from the mast of his own ship, "to spite the king of France." Barbavara managed to make good his retreat and regained the open with his forty Genoese galleys, but the French were exterminated. It has been made out that their loss amounted to thirty thousand men. The English bought their victory dearly, but it was complete. The French navy was annihilated. That 24th of June, 1340, marks the naval début of the Valois dynasty.<sup>d</sup>

This first naval battle between the two nations very much raised the confidence of the English and the alacrity of the Flemings. Edward had not only a larger army of his own than in the previous campaign, together with the troops of the German allies, but, in addition, forty thousand Flemings under Artevelde, besides those of West Flanders, who proceeded in the direction of St. Omer. This immense host, instead of marching to meet and overwhelm the French king, sat down before Tournay.

Edward sent from thence a challenge to Philip of Valois, as he styled him, to decide their quarrel by single combat, or by an encounter of a hundred knights on either side. Philip replied, on the last day of July, that such a title could not be addressed to him ; that the writer was his liege, and had no right to enter his dominions. He promised to cast the intruder out of the kingdom without loss of time ; and that, as to the Flemings, he was confident they would rally to their own lord. Philip marched to the neighbourhood of Tournay with an army as formidable as that which he brought in the preceding year ; but neither party were prepared to engage in a general action. The French hesitated to attack, and eleven weeks' siege made no impression upon Tournay. Robert of Artois, who commanded the armed citizens of West Flanders, led them against St. Omer, not with the hope of capturing that important town, but for purposes of pillage and devastation. The Flemings were thus engaged in plundering one of the suburbs, when the French within, issuing by another gate, came round and surprised them in the rear, routing and slaying them as they fled, to the number of four thousand. This disaster made such an impression on the army of West Flanders, that a panic seized it on the following morning, and all fled and dispersed to their homes.

If the campaign of the preceding year had taught Edward how little was to be expected from the Walloon or the German, he learned this year that even the redoubtable Flemings would not enable him either to conquer France or to reduce Philip to just and reasonable terms. He therefore consented that Joan de Valois, sister of Philip and countess of Hainault, should seek to bring about an accommodation. Her efforts led to a six months' truce, consented to in order that plenipotentiaries from both monarchs might treat for the conclusion of a more definite peace.<sup>b</sup>

Thus ended the campaign of 1340, "a year of misery and calamity," says the continuator of Nangis ; "although for two or three years past, the common people had been oppressed with very hard exactions, our misfortunes were much greater this time."<sup>c</sup>



[1340-1342 A.D.]

## THE WAR IN BRITTANY

The belligerents had scarcely suspended hostilities on the northern frontier of France, when a quarrel arose in another quarter, giving equal facilities for English interference, and offering to Edward more sincere, zealous, and martial allies than the Flemings had proved, whether knights or artisans.<sup>b</sup> It also brought the English king much hope.

In 1341 hostilities were revived in Brittany where the two kings each sustained a different claimant for the ducal throne. The duke John III had just died, leaving no children. Should the duchy fall to the daughter of his eldest brother — whose death had preceded his own — Joan de Penthièvre, who had married Charles of Blois, or to his own younger brother, John de Montfort? The two pretendants set forth the Mosaic law, the edicts of the Roman empire, the Salic law, and tradition; the lawyers piled up innumerable authorities: but politics decided the question.

Charles of Blois was nephew to Philip VI; with him Brittany would be in closer dependence upon the crown. A parliamentary act pronounced at the château of Conflans decided the matter in his favour. John de Montfort hastened to England, and agreed to recognise Edward III as king of France. In view of his promise as vassal loyally to aid and defend the English king, he was to possess Brittany in fief.

Thus began one of those wars — marked by “engagements, sallies, gallant rescues, surprising feats of arms, and brave adventures” — so delightfully depicted by Froissart,<sup>c</sup> so grindingly oppressive to the people. Charles of Blois, supported by a numerous French army, among whom was the son of the king, besieged his adversary in the city of Nantes. Thirty Breton knights had been taken in a neighbouring castle. Charles, despite the piety which gained for him the name of “saint,” and Duke John, who was later to glory in the title “the good,” had these thirty knights decapitated and their heads thrown into the market-place by the ballistas. The terrified citizens capitulated; John de Montfort was imprisoned at Paris in the tower of the Louvre.<sup>d</sup>

The countess Joan de Montfort was at Rennes when she heard that her husband had been taken. With a heart full of grief she yet bravely consoled her friends and supporters; and showed them her little son, named also John like his father, saying, “Ah, my friends, be not bowed down for my lord whom we have lost; he is but one man. Behold my son who shall be, if God so wills it, his avenger and your benefactor. I will give you of my wealth and will provide for you a captain who shall bring you consolation.”<sup>e</sup>

She then journeyed from Rennes to all the fortresses and towns, taking her son with her; she encouraged her men, reinforced her garrisons with troops and supplies; and came at length to Hennebont, where she wintered. She had chosen this place, situated as it was on the Blavet, not far from the sea, to have facile communication with England. With the advent of spring, officers and troops swarmed to Nantes to join Charles of Blois; and the siege of Rennes was begun. The city was taken after a valiant defence; and the French marched on Hennebont, which they bombarded with showers of stones and enormous rocks.<sup>f</sup>

[<sup>1</sup> Charles intrusted the siege to Louis of Spain, a descendant of Ferdinand de la Cerda — eldest son of Alfonso the Learned. Ferdinand's sons had been set aside in favour of their uncle. Some of this family took up their residence in France. This Louis de la Cerda was Ferdinand's grandson. In 1341 he received the title of “Admiral of France.”]

*Joan de Montfort defends Hennebon*

The countess, who had clothed herself in armour, was mounted on a war-horse, and galloped up and down the streets of the town, entreating and encouraging the inhabitants to defend themselves honourably. She ordered the ladies and other women to unpave the streets,<sup>1</sup> carry the stones to the ramparts, and throw them on their enemies. She had pots of quicklime brought to her for the same purpose. That same day, the countess performed a very gallant deed; she ascended a high tower to see how her people behaved; and, having observed that all the lords and others of the army had quitted their tents, and were come to the assault, she immediately descended, mounted her horse, armed as she was, collected three hundred horsemen, sallied out at their head by another gate that was not attacked, and, galloping up to the tents of her enemies, cut them down, and set them on fire, without any loss, for there were only servants and boys, who fled upon her approach. As soon as the French saw their camp on fire, and heard the cries, they immediately hastened thither, bawling out, "Treason! Treason!" so that none remained at the assault. The countess, seeing this, got her men together, and, finding that she could not re-enter Hennebon without great risk, took another road, leading to the castle of Brest, which is situated near. The lord Louis of Spain, who was marshal of the army, had gone to his tents, which were on fire; and, seeing the countess and her company galloping off as fast as they could, he immediately pursued them with a large body of men-at-arms. He gained so fast upon them, that he came up with them, and wounded or slew all that were not well mounted; but the countess, and part of her company, made such speed that they arrived at the castle of Brest, where they were received with great joy.

On the morrow, the lords of France, who had lost their tents and provisions, took counsel, if they should not make huts of the branches and leaves of trees near to the town, and were thunder-struck when they heard that the countess had herself planned and executed this enterprise; whilst those of the town, not knowing what was become of her, were very uneasy; for they were full five days without gaining any intelligence of her. The countess, in the meanwhile, was so active that she assembled from five to six hundred men, well armed and mounted; and with them set out about midnight from Brest, and came straight to Hennebon about sunrise, riding along one of the sides of the enemy's host, until she came to the gates of the castle, which were opened to her; she entered with great triumph and sounds of trumpets and other warlike instruments, to the astonishment of the French, who began arming themselves, to make another assault upon the town, while those within mounted the walls to defend it. This attack was very severe, and lasted till past noon. The French lost more than their opponents; and then the lords of France put a stop to it, for their men were killed and wounded to no purpose. They next retreated, and held a council whether the lord Charles should not go to besiege the castle of Auray, which King Arthur had built and enclosed. It was determined he should march thither, accompanied by the duke de Bourbon, the earl of Blois, Sir Robert Bertrand, marshal of France; and that Sir Hervé de Léon was to remain before Hennebon with a

<sup>1</sup> Lord Berners reads, "She caused damoselles and other women to cut shorte their kyrtels," instead of "to unpave the streets," as Mr. Johnes translates it. The words in D. Sauvage's edition are "*dépecer les chaussées*," to tear up the *causeways*, but when we consider that the streets of cities were very rarely paved at this period, Lord Berners' version appears the more probable, and may be reconciled to the text if we read "*chausses*" for "*chaussées*," which is not unlikely to be an error in transcribing.

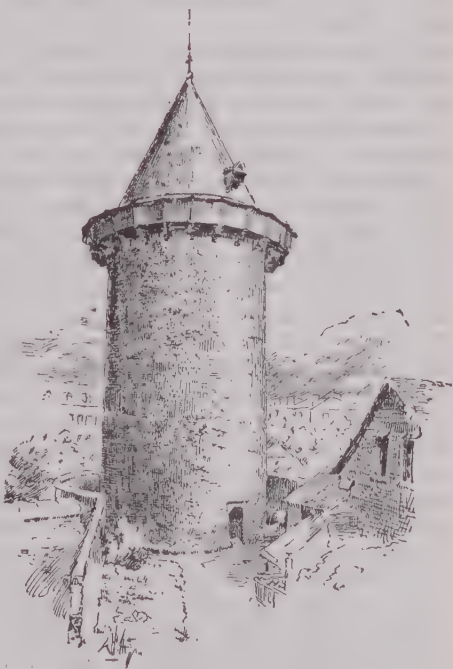
[1342 A.D.]

part of the Genoese under his command, and the lord Louis of Spain, the viscount de Rohan, with the rest of the Genoese and Spaniards. They sent for twelve large machines which they had left at Rennes, to cast stones and annoy the castle of Hennebon; for they perceived that they did not gain any ground by their assaults. The French divided their army into two parts; one remained before Hennebon, and the other went to besiege the castle of Auray. The lord Charles of Blois went to this last place, and quartered all his division in the neighbourhood: and of him we will now speak, and leave the others. The lord Charles ordered an attack and skirmish to be made upon the castle, which was well garrisoned; there were in it full two hundred men-at-arms, under the command of Sir Henry de Spinefort and Oliver his brother.

The town of Vannes, which held for the countess de Montfort, was four leagues distant from this castle; the captain whereof was Sir Geoffry de Malestroit. On the other side was situated the good town of Guingamp, of which the captain of Dinant was governor, who was at that time with the countess in the town of Hennebon; but he had left in his hotel at Dinant his wife and daughters, and had appointed his son Sir Reginald as governor during his absence. Between these two places there was a castle which belonged to the lord Charles, who had well filled it with men-at-arms and Burgundiansoldiers. Girard de Maulin was master of it; and with him was another gallant knight, called

Sir Peter Portebœuf, who harassed all the country round about, and pressed these two towns so closely that no provisions or merchandise could enter them without great risk of being taken; for these Burgundians made constant excursions, one day towards Vannes, and another day to Guingamp. They continued their excursions so regularly, that Sir Reginald de Dinant took prisoner, by means of an ambuscade, this Sir Girard de Maulin and thirty-five of his men, and at the same time rescued fifteen merchants and all their goods, which the Burgundians had taken, and were driving them to their garrison, called La Roche Perion; but Sir Reginald conquered them and carried them prisoners to Dinant, for which he was much praised.

We will now return to the countess de Montfort, who was besieged by Sir Louis of Spain in Hennebon. He had made such progress by battering and destroying the walls with his machines, that the courage of those within began to falter. At that moment the bishop of Léon held a conference with his nephew Sir Hervé de Léon, by whose means, it has been said, the earl of Montfort was made prisoner. They conversed on different things, in mutual confidence, and at last agreed that the bishop should endeavour to gain over those within the town, so that it might be given up to the lord



ANCIENT TOWER AT ROUEN



Charles; and Sir Hervé, on his side, was to obtain their pardon from the lord Charles, and an assurance that they should keep their goods, etc., unhurt. They then separated, and the bishop re-entered the town. The countess had strong suspicions of what was going forward, and begged of the lords of Brittany, for the love of God, that they would not doubt that she should receive succours before three days were over. But the bishop spoke so eloquently, and made use of such good arguments, that these lords were in much suspense all that night. On the morrow he continued the subject, and succeeded so far as to gain them over, or very nearly so, to his opinion; insomuch that Sir Hervé de Léon had advanced close to the town to take possession of it, with their free consent, when the countess, looking out from a window of the castle towards the sea, cried out, most joyfully, "I see the succours I have so long expected and wished for coming." She repeated this expression twice; and the townspeople ran to the ramparts, and to the windows of the castle, and saw a numerous fleet of great and small vessels, well trimmed, making all the sail they could towards Hennebont. They rightly imagined it must be the fleet from England, so long detained at sea by tempests and contrary winds.<sup>e</sup> The besiegers were forced to retire. About this time the traitor Robert of Artois fell in an engagement near Vannes.

Little by little, the two kings found themselves drawn personally into the contest. In 1342 Edward went himself to Brittany and appeared at the siege of Vannes, of Rennes, and of Nantes. The duke of Normandy drew up on his side an army comprising an infinity of barons and over forty thousand soldiers. The two forces met near Malestroit. The English, in numbers less than a fourth of their enemy, were careful to obtain a strong position. It was in the depth of winter; provision was lacking; cold rains flooded the two camps and multiplied disease. The papal legates proposed a truce, which was accepted on January 19th, 1343, to continue till the feast of St. Michael, 1346.<sup>g</sup>

It was also agreed that each monarch was to take the pope for arbiter, and plead his cause at Rome. Edward empowered certain commissioners to fulfil this office, and negotiate concerning "the right which he had, or might have, to the kingdom and crown of France." That he was prepared to insist upon this right, is proved by his order to the authorities in Guienne to have all appeals from that province to the king of France addressed to him, in that capacity, at his court in London.

#### PHILIP'S FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES

These repeated truces were not the result of any diminution of inveteracy or of pretensions on either side, but of the impossibility to continue the payment and employ of such large armies. Of Philip's financial or political acts we have not ample records; but sufficient exist to show the immense difficulty he found in supporting the military expenses of such campaigns. If to find proper soldiers was no easy task, to raise wherewith to pay them was a difficulty still greater. In 1342, Philip VI issued an ordinance, establishing store-houses and gabelles of salt, a government monopoly, in fact, of this necessary of life. Taxes on trade, wholesale or retail, had for some time existed. The Italian merchants paid so much in the pound on imports and exports. The city of Paris, in order to pay for the men-at-arms which were furnished to the royal army, had been allowed to levy a duty on all sales and purchases in the markets. The fairs of Champagne had always paid a similar

[1342-1345 A.D.]

tax. The king now levied this generally at the rate of five deniers the livre; but the chief resource was alternately debasing the coin, and raising its standard, until there was no ascertaining or being certain of its value for a month together. This incertitude put a stop to trade, and a scarcity coinciding with it, produced such universal distress, that partial insurrection and a general feeling of discontent were the consequence.

## RENEWAL OF THE WAR WITH ENGLAND (1344 A.D.)

In the meantime, the pope made no progress in reconciling the two monarchs, or passing judgment upon their differences; and a cruel act of Philip's so aroused Edward's resentment, that although the term of the truce had not expired, he gave orders for recommencing war. Olivier de Clisson, a Breton noble, had been the prisoner of the English. Edward, it seems, released him instead of the bishop of Léon, also his captive. This sufficed to inspire Philip with doubts of his fidelity, and of a sudden, De Clisson, De Laval, and some twelve or thirteen Breton nobles, were seized, conveyed to Paris, and, without form of trial, or even public accusation, decapitated. Several barons of Normandy were soon after seized, and as summarily slain, one of them, of the family of Harcourt, alone escaping. These acts were not more cruel and unjust than the tortures, trials, and condemnations of Philip the Fair; but they were worse precedents, evincing a contempt for even the forms of justice, and making barefaced murder and assassination one of the regular proceedings of government.

Many of the decapitated nobles were at least friends of Edward. Without being guilty of treason, they might well have considered the rights of De Montfort in Brittany as superior to those of Charles of Blois. Edward denounced the assassinations committed by King Philip in issuing an order to his lieutenants to recommence the war. The French were by no means gladdened at this renewal of hostilities. They feared not so much the enemy as the tax-gatherer, and began to think that their intolerable burdens would be made permanent. In February, 1345, therefore, Philip found it necessary to issue a proclamation, stating that it was not his intention to unite the gabelle of salt or the tax of four deniers the livre to his domain: in other words, he promised that they were not to be permanent.

Edward had hitherto neglected Guienne, against which his enemies directed their principal efforts. The chief men of Bordeaux and Bayonne and the noblesse, true to the English crown, came to the festivity which Edward gave on the occasion of his instituting the order of the Garter, and their representations made so great an impression on him, that he despatched Lord Derby soon after, with three hundred knights, six hundred men-at-arms, and a greater number of infantry, to Bayonne. The French, not in force to defend the country south of the Dordogne, endeavoured to prevent Lord Derby from passing that river at Bergerac, and marching to the recovery of Périgord and the districts north of Bordeaux. The English accomplished this, the Genoese alone withstanding their arrows, and the troops which the French had raised in the county flying before them.

Derby marched into Périgord, and so well provided was he with what Froissart calls artillery, his engines throwing immense stones, that all the fortresses in upper Gascony submitted to him. The strongest of these was Auberoche, which fortress, as soon as Derby retired for the winter to Bordeaux, the nobles of the county in the French interest came to besiege. There were ten or twelve hundred of them, and Auberoche was hard pressed.

Lord Derby and Sir Walter Manny instantly left Bordeaux, with three hundred lances and six hundred archers, and, with this small force, surprised and fell upon the army besieging Auberoche at the time of supper. The French were routed, and all the chief nobles of the district taken: every English soldier had two or three. The consequence of this victory was not only the fall of Réole and the places held by Philip north of the Garonne, but the capture of the important town of Angoulême by Lord Derby. The general submission to the English commander was not only due to his prowess, but to his *gentillesse*, in preventing his soldiers from pillaging and burning the towns and massacring the prisoners, as was then generally the custom in war.

Whilst Lord Derby was reconquering Angoulême, Edward was endeavouring, by means of Artevelde, to turn the Flemish alliance to profit. Notwithstanding the English king's assumption of the arms and title of king of France, the Flemings seemed not disposed to go much further than neutrality. Artevelde himself ruling by the democracy, with the rich citizens opposed to him, felt himself neither secure at home nor able to direct the forces of the Flemings abroad. In order to strengthen his position, he proposed making the son of Edward (the Black Prince) count of Flanders. The English king came with his fleet to Sluys, and had an interview there with the town magistrates of the Flemings; they could not entertain his proposal without first consulting their townsmen. The people of Bruges and Ypres were not averse to having the prince of Wales for their count; but with Ghent it was otherwise: there the enemies of Artevelde accused him of wishing to sell his country to the foreigner. They asked what had been done with all the money proceeding from the revenues that had been sequestered. The "great treasure," they said, had been despatched to England. Artevelde hastened to Ghent to face his enemies, and refute them; but he had no sooner entered the streets than he perceived the efforts of his enemies to have prevailed, and the minds of his fellow-townsmen turned against him. He shut himself up in his hotel; harangued and tried to move the crowd from one of the windows. Their reply was, "Give us an account of the great treasure of Flanders." Artevelde promised that he would do this fully on the morrow. "No," replied the crowd; "we must have an account of it immediately, lest you escape to England, whither you have already sent your treasure." Artevelde then wept, and reproached them with "having made him what he was, and now wanting to kill him. Recollect that your trade was lost when I took the government, and that I recovered all for you — procured you abundance, and work, and peace; and for all the great good I did you, God knows I obtained little profit." Such reproaches were not calculated to move the mob, which clamoured but the more. Artevelde tried to escape to a neighbouring church; but his enemies seized him in the street, and slew him without mercy. Edward's first movement was to take vengeance on the Flemings for the death of their leader; but the towns of West Flanders convinced him that they regretted the act of the people of Ghent as much as he did.

#### EDWARD RETURNS TO FRANCE (1346 A.D.)

The reverses which the French monarch suffered in Guienne had been thus compensated by Edward's loss of his Flemish ally, and, at the same time, by the death of John de Montfort. That prince, after his escape from the Louvre, had led succours from England to Brittany, but was able to do little towards changing the aspect of affairs or the relative position of parties,



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when he died at Hennebon. All the efforts of Philip were directed towards repelling Lord Derby. The French king assembled his estates in the north and in the south, but more to appease discontent than to command succour or adhesion: he merely proposed continuing his present levies of money, on the understanding that they were to cease at the peace. An army was collected and sent, under the duke of Normandy, to the south. He recovered Angoulême, and laid siege to Aiguillon, an important fortress not far from Agen; but Sir Walter Manny and Lord Pembroke were within the walls, and infused such spirit into the garrison that during four months it defied the duke of Normandy and his army, said to number one hundred thousand men.

The obstinacy of the siege as well as the defence induced the English king to march to the succour of his general, for Lord Derby at Bordeaux had no force sufficient to encounter the duke of Normandy. An expedition was fitted out, at Southampton, consisting of four thousand men-at-arms and ten thousand archers, besides the Irish and Welsh.<sup>b</sup>

The English fleet set sail for the mouth of the Gironde, where a tempest hurled it back into the Channel. A new traitor, Godfrey d'Harcourt, advised landing in Normandy, and promised the aid of his vassals and the use of his entire province. The king landed (July 22nd, 1346), with thirty-two thousand men, at La Hogue St. Waast, in the Cotentin. He easily possessed himself of Barfleur, Cherbourg, Valognes, and St. Lô. The 26th, he was at the walls of Caen—a city larger than any in England excepting London.

The inhabitants sallied forth bravely to the encounter. "But as soon as they beheld the approach of the English," says Froissart,<sup>c</sup> "in three divisions, close and compact, a multitude of banners flying, and saw the archers, to whom they had not been accustomed, they were so frightened that they betook themselves to flight, and not all the world could have stopped them."

The English entered the city with the fugitives, slaying as they went, showing mercy to none. But the inhabitants recovered their courage and defended themselves in their homes; more than five hundred English were dead or wounded when Edward put an end to the fighting, promising the inhabitants to spare their lives.<sup>1</sup> Louviers, which was already great, wealthy, and commercial, was next taken. An attempt on Rouen had miscarried. He returned along the left bank of the Seine, burning Pont-de-l'Arche, Vernon, Poissy, and St. Germain. His couriers came within sight of Paris, and burned Bourg-la-Reine and St. Cloud.

Hereupon Philip assembled a large force and marched on the English. Edward rebuilt the bridge at Poissy and by it passed over the Seine and retreated to his fief at Ponthieu, to establish himself beyond the Somme. Philip fortified and sentinelled all the fords of that river. At that of Blanquetaque he posted one thousand men-at-arms and five thousand Genoese archers. Edward forced a passage; but realising that he could retreat no further he halted, and on the 27th of August disposed his army for battle on the slope of a hill near Crécy, his men being in good order and condition.<sup>g</sup> His knights and nobles were to fight on foot, there being but four thousand of them.

The total English army must have numbered from twenty-five to thirty thousand combatants. Froissart evidently underestimates its size as he

[<sup>1</sup> Among the captures at Caen, was a document dated 1338, wherein the Normans offered Philip to reconquer England at their own cost, on condition he would reportion it among them after the fashion of William the Conqueror. It was used with good effect in rousing English spirit and continuing the wars. Some authorities regard it as a forgery.]

increases the total of the French force, doubtless in order to make the issue of the battle all the more marvellous.

But all exaggeration aside, the disproportion was enormous. Philip marched at the head of at least seventy thousand men among whom were about ten thousand men-at-arms, and a large body of Genoese archers whose numbers have been placed at from six to fifteen thousand.<sup>d</sup> But the French were a disorderly and undisciplined host while the English were professional soldiers and old campaigners, obedient to their chiefs and their sovereign.<sup>b</sup>

Philip had left Abbeville in the morning to go in quest of the enemy, then five miles distant. Heavy rains impeded the march. Four scouts sent to reconnoitre returned with the report that they had found the English waiting in the position they had chosen ; and they counselled the king to allow his soldiers a night's repose.

Philip gave the order to halt. But the great lords of France, instigated by vanity, moved one ahead of another, to get nearer the enemy. Neither the king nor his marshals could exercise any control over the troops, on account of the multitude of nobles each striving to assert his own authority. These rode about, without orders and without discretion, until they stumbled suddenly upon the camp of the enemy.<sup>g</sup>

#### FROISSART'S DESCRIPTION OF CRÉCY (1346 A.D.)

The English, who were drawn up in three divisions, and seated on the ground, on seeing their enemies advance, rose undauntedly up, and fell into their ranks. That of the prince<sup>1</sup> was the first to do so, whose archers were formed in the manner of a portcullis, or harrow, and the men-at-arms in the rear.

The earls of Northampton and Arundel, who commanded the second division, had posted themselves in good order on his wing, to assist and succour the prince, if necessary.

You must know that these kings, earls, barons, and lords of France did not advance in any regular order, but one after the other, or any way most pleasing to themselves. As soon as the king of France came in sight of the English, his blood began to boil, and he cried out to his marshals, "Order the Genoese forward, and begin the battle, in the name of God and St. Denis." There were about fifteen thousand Genoese crossbow-men; but they were quite fatigued, having marched on foot that day six leagues, completely armed, and with their crossbows. They told the constable, they were not in a fit condition to do any great things that day in battle. The earl of Alençon,

[<sup>1</sup> Prince Edward of Wales—the famous "Black Prince." He was but thirteen years old and only nominally in command of the first line under the guardianship of the earl of Warwick and Godfrey d'Harcourt.]



A FRENCH KNIGHT OF THE FOURTEENTH  
CENTURY

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hearing this, said, "This is what one gets by employing such scoundrels, who fall off when there is any need for them." During this time a heavy rain fell, accompanied by thunder and a very terrible eclipse of the sun; and before this rain a great flight of crows hovered in the air over all those battalions, making a loud noise. Shortly afterwards it cleared up, and the sun shone very bright; but the Frenchmen had it in their faces, and the English in their backs. When the Genoese were somewhat in order, and approached the English, they set up a loud shout, in order to frighten them; but they remained quite still, and did not seem to attend to it. They then set up a second shout, and advanced a little forward; but the English never moved. They hooted a third time, advancing with their crossbows presented, and began to shoot. The English archers then advanced one step forward, and shot their arrows with such force and quickness, that it seemed as if it snowed. When the Genoese felt these arrows, which pierced their arms, heads, and through their armour, some of them cut the strings of their crossbows, others flung them on the ground, and all turned about and retreated quite discomfited. The French had a large body of men-at-arms on horseback, richly dressed, to support the Genoese. The king of France, seeing them thus fall back, cried out, "Kill me those scoundrels; for they stop up our road without any reason." You would then have seen the above-mentioned men-at-arms lay about them, killing all they could of these runaways.

The English continued shooting as vigorously and quickly as before; some of their arrows fell among the horsemen, who were sumptuously equipped, and, killing and wounding many, made them caper and fall among the Genoese, so that they were in such confusion they could never rally again. In the English army there were some Cornish and Welshmen on foot, who had armed themselves with large knives; these, advancing through the ranks of the men-at-arms and archers, who made way for them, came upon the French when they were in this danger, and, falling upon earls, barons, knights, and squires, slew many, at which the king of England was afterwards much exasperated. The valiant king of Bohemia was slain there. He was called John of Luxemburg; for he was the son of the gallant king and emperor, Henry of Luxemburg; having heard the order of the battle, he inquired where his son the lord Charles was; his attendants answered that they did not know, but believed he was fighting. The king said to them: "Gentlemen, you are all my people, my friends, and brethren-at-arms this day; therefore, as I am blind,<sup>1</sup> I request of you to lead me so far into the engagement that I may strike one stroke with my sword." The knights replied, they would directly lead him forward; and in order that they might not lose him in the crowd, they fastened all the reins of their horses together, and put the king at their head, that he might gratify his wish, and advanced towards the enemy. The lord Charles of Bohemia, who already signed his name as king of Germany, and bore the arms, had come in good order to the engagement; but when he perceived that it was likely to turn out against the French, he departed, and I do not well know what road he took. The king, his father, had ridden in among the enemy, and made good use of his sword; for he and his companions had fought most gallantly. They had advanced so far that they were all slain; and on the morrow they were found on the ground, with their horses all tied together.

The earl of Alençon advanced in regular order upon the English, to fight with them; as did the earl of Flanders, in another part. These two lords,

[<sup>1</sup> His blindness was supposed to have been caused by poison, which was alleged to have been given to him when engaged in the wars of Italy.]



with their detachments, coasting, as it were, the archers, came to the prince's battalion, where they fought valiantly for a length of time. The king of France was eager to march to the place where he saw their banners displayed, but there was a hedge of archers before him. He had that day made a present of a handsome black horse to Sir John of Hainault, who had mounted on it a knight of his, called Sir John de Fusselles, that bore his banner; which horse ran off with him, and forced his way through the English army, and, when about to return, stumbled and fell into a ditch and severely wounded him; he would have been dead, if his page had not followed him round the battalions, and found him unable to rise; he had not, however, any other hindrance than from his horse; for the English did not quit the ranks that day to make prisoners. The page alighted, and raised him up; but he did not return the way he came, as he would have found it difficult from the crowd. This battle, which was fought on the Saturday between La Broyes and Crécy, was very murderous and cruel; and many gallant deeds of arms were performed that were never known. Towards evening, many knights and squires of the French had lost their masters; they wandered up and down the plain, attacking the English in small parties; they were soon destroyed; for the English had determined that day to give no quarter, or hear of ransom from anyone.

Early in the day, some French, Germans, and Savoyards had broken through the archers of the prince's battalion, and had engaged with the men-at-arms; upon which the second battalion came to his aid, and it was time, for otherwise he would have been hard pressed. The first division, seeing the danger they were in, sent a knight in great haste to the king of England, who was posted upon an eminence, near a windmill. On the knight's arrival, he said, "Sir, the earl of Warwick, the lord Stafford, the lord Reginald Cobham, and the others who are about your son, are vigorously attacked by the French; and they entreat that you would come to their assistance with your battalion, for, if their numbers should increase, they fear he will have too much to do." The king replied, "Is my son dead, unhorsed, or so badly wounded that he cannot support himself?" "Nothing of the sort, thank God," rejoined the knight; "but he is in so hot an engagement that he has great need of your help." The king answered, "Now, Sir Thomas, return back to those that sent you, and tell them from me, not to send again for me this day, or expect that I shall come, let what will happen, as long as my son has life; and say, that I command them to let the boy win his spurs; for I am determined, if it please God, that all the glory and honour of this day shall be given to him, and to those into whose care I have intrusted him." The knight returned to his lords, and related the king's answer, which mightily encouraged them, and made them repent they had ever sent such a message.

It is a certain fact that Sir Godfrey d'Harcourt, who was in the prince's battalion, having been told by some of the English that they had seen the banner of his brother engaged in the battle against him, was exceedingly anxious to save him; but he was too late, for he was left dead on the field, and so was the earl of Aumarle his nephew. On the other hand, the earls of Alençon and of Flanders were fighting lustily under their banners, and with their own people; but they could not resist the force of the English, and were there slain, as well as many other knights and squires that were attending on or accompanying them. The earl of Blois, nephew to the king of France, and the duke of Lorraine his brother-in-law, with their troops, made a gallant defence; but they were surrounded by a troop of English

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and Welsh, and slain in spite of their prowess. The earl of Saint-Pol and the earl of Auxerre were also killed, as well as many others. Late after vespers, the king of France had not more about him than sixty men, every one included. Sir John of Hainault, who was of the number, had once remounted the king; for his horse had been killed under him by an arrow; he said to the king, "Sir, retreat whilst you have an opportunity, and do not expose yourself so simply; if you have lost this battle, another time you will be the conqueror." After he had said this, he took the bridle of the king's horse, and led him off by force; for he had before entreated of him to retire.



RUINS OF A FRENCH TOWER OF THE THIRTEENTH OR FOURTEENTH CENTURY

The king rode on until he came to the castle of La Broyes, where he found the gates shut, for it was very dark. The king ordered the governor of it to be summoned; he came upon the battlements, and asked who it was that called at such an hour? The king answered, "Open, open, governor; it is the fortune of France." The governor, hearing the king's voice, immediately descended, opened the gate, and let down the bridge. The king and his company entered the castle; but he had with him only five barons, Sir John of Hainault, the lord Charles of Montmorency, the lord of Beaujeu, the lord of Aubigny, and the lord of Montfort. The king would not bury himself in such a place as that, but, having taken some refreshments, set out again with his attendants about midnight, and rode on, under the direction of guides who were well acquainted with the country, until, about daybreak, he came to Amiens, where he halted. This Saturday the English never quitted their ranks in pursuit of anyone, but remained on the field, guarding their position, and defending themselves against all who attacked them.

The battle was ended at the hour of vespers. When, on this Saturday night, the English heard no more hooting or shouting, nor crying out to particular lords or their banners, they looked upon the field as their own, and their enemies as beaten. They made great fires, and lighted torches because of the obscurity of the night. King Edward then came down from his post, who all that day had not put on his helmet, and, with his whole battalion, advanced to the prince of Wales, whom he embraced in his arms and kissed, and said, "Sweet son, God give you good perseverance: you are my son, for most loyally have you acquitted yourself this day: you are worthy to be a

sovereign." The prince bowed down very low, and humbled himself, giving all honour to the king his father. The English, during the night, made frequent thanksgivings to the Lord, for the happy issue of the day, and without rioting; for the king had forbidden all riot or noise. On the Sunday morning, there was so great a fog that one could scarcely see the distance of half an acre. The king ordered a detachment from the army, under the command of the two marshals, consisting of about five hundred lances and two thousand archers, to make an excursion, and see if there were any bodies of French collected together. The quota of troops, from Rouen and Beauvais, had, this Sunday morning, left Abbeville and St. Ricquier in Ponthieu, to join the French army, and were ignorant of the defeat of the preceding evening: they met this detachment, and, thinking they must be French, hastened to join them.

As soon as the English found who they were, they fell upon them; and there was a sharp engagement; but the French soon turned their backs, and fled in great disorder. There were slain in this flight in the open fields, under hedges and bushes, upwards of seven thousand; and had it been clear weather, not one soul would have escaped.

A little time afterwards, this same party fell in with the archbishop of Rouen and the great prior of France, who were also ignorant of the discomfiture of the French; for they had been informed that the king was not to fight before Sunday. Here began a fresh battle, for those two lords were well attended by good men-at-arms; however, they could not withstand the English, but were almost all slain, with the two chiefs who commanded them, very few escaping. In the course of the morning, the English found many Frenchmen who had lost their road on the Saturday, and had lain in the open fields, not knowing what was become of the king, or their own leaders. The English put to the sword all they met<sup>1</sup>: and it has been assured to me for fact, that of foot-soldiers sent from the cities, towns, and municipalities, there were slain, this Sunday morning, four times as many as in the battle of the Saturday.<sup>e</sup>

#### MICHELET ON THE RESULTS OF CRÉCY

The battle of Crécy was not merely a battle; the event involved a great social revolution. The whole chivalry of the most chivalrous nation was exterminated by a small band of foot-soldiers. A new system of tactics came forth from a new state of society; it was not a work of genius or reflection. Edward III employed foot-soldiers for want of horse. The issue revealed a fact of which no one dreamed till then; namely, the military inefficiency of that feudal world which had thought itself the only military world. The private wars of the barons, and of canton against canton, in the primitive isolation of the Middle Ages, had not disclosed this truth; for then gentlemen were defeated only by gentlemen. Two centuries of defeats, during the Crusades, had not damaged their reputation. All Christendom was interested in disguising the successes of the misbelievers. Besides, these wars were waged so far away, that there was always some means of excusing every disaster: the heroism of a Godefroy and a Richard redeemed all the rest. In the thirteenth century, when the

[<sup>1</sup> According to Froissart the English reconnoitring party slaughtered 7,000 in the fog. He declares that more perished on this Sunday than on the day of battle. The clerks sent by Edward to tally the dead reported 11 princes, 80 bannerets, 1,200 simple knights, and above 30,000 common men.]



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feudal banners were habituated to follow the king's, when out of so many seigniorial courts was formed a single one, brilliant beyond all the fictions of the romances, the nobles, diminished in power, increased in pride; humbled in their own person, they felt themselves exalted in their king. They valued themselves more or less in proportion as they shared in the galas of royalty.

In excuse for the disaster of Courtrai, the nobles pleaded their own hare-brained heroism, and the Flemish ditch. Two easy massacres at Mons-en-Pévèle and Cassel retrieved their reputation. For several years they railed at the king, who forbade them to vanquish. An opportunity was afforded them at Crécy; the whole chivalry of the kingdom was there assembled; every banner flaunted in the wind, with all those haughty blazons, lions, eagles, castles, besants of the Crusades, and all the arrogant symbolism of heraldry. Opposed to this gallant array, excepting four thousand men-at-arms, all the rest were the barefooted English commons, the rude mountaineers of Wales, and the swineherds of Ireland, blind and savage races, that knew neither French, nor English, nor chivalry. They aimed none the worse for this at noble banners; they killed but so much the more: there was no common tongue in which to parley. The Welshman or Irishman did not understand the noble baron prostrate beneath him, who offered to make him rich, and he made answer only with the knife.

From that day forth there was many an unbeliever in the religion of nobility. Armorial symbolism lost all its effect. Man began to doubt that those lions could bite, or those silken dragons vomit forth fire and flames. The cow of Switzerland and of Wales seemed good armorial bearings too.

#### THE SIEGE OF CALAIS

This huge disaster only led the way to a greater one. Edward laid siege to Calais, and set himself down before it in fixed quarters for life or death. After the sacrifices he had made for this expedition he could not show his face to the commons until he should have accomplished his enterprise. Round the town he built a second town with streets, and wooden houses solidly and snugly constructed, to serve for residence through summer and winter.

The Englishman, established in good quarters, and with abundant supplies, let those within and without the town do what they had a mind. He did not even grant them battle, but preferred starving them out. Five hundred persons, men, women, and children, expelled from the town by the governor, died of cold and hunger between the town and the camp. Such, at least, is the statement of the English historian Knighton.<sup>i</sup> Froissart<sup>e</sup> says, on the contrary, that he not only let them pass through his army, but also gave them an abundant repast.

Edward had taken root before Calais, nor was the pope's mediation capable of forcing him from thence. News was brought him that the Scotch were about to invade England. He never stirred. His perseverance was rewarded, for he soon learned that his troops, encouraged by his queen, had taken the king of Scotland prisoner. The next year Charles of Blois was likewise taken in besieging La Roche de Rien. Edward had but to fold his arms and leave fortune to work for him.

It was matter of most urgent necessity for the king of France to succour Calais; but so great was his penury, so inert and embarrassed was that feudal monarchy, that it was not until the siege had lasted ten months that

he was able to put himself in motion, when the English were fortified and intrenched behind palisades and deep ditches. Having scraped together some money by a debasement of the coinage, the gabelle, the ecclesiastical tithes, and the confiscation of the property of the Lombards, he at last began his march with a huge army like that which had been beaten at Crécy. He had no way of reaching Calais except through marshes or over sand-hills. To take the former course would have been certain destruction, for all the passes were intersected and guarded. The men of Tournay, however, gallantly carried a castle by assault, without machines and by strength of hand alone.

The downs on the coast of Boulogne were under the fire of the English fleet. Those about Gravelines were kept by the Flemings whom the king could not suborn. He offered them heaps of gold, and the surrender of Lille, Béthune, and Douai; he would enrich their burgomasters, and make knights and lords of their young men. Nothing could tempt them; they were too much afraid of the return of their count, who, after a false reconciliation, had again escaped out of their hands. Philip could do nothing. He negotiated, he challenged; Edward remained unmoved.<sup>1</sup>

Horrible was the despair in the famished town when they saw all those banners of France, all that great army marching away and leaving them to their fate. Nothing remained for the people of Calais but to give themselves up to the enemy if he would condescend to accept their surrender. It was probable enough that the king of England, who had passed such a tedious time before Calais, who had sat down a whole year there, and spent in one campaign the enormous sum for those days of nearly £400,000 sterling, would give himself the satisfaction of putting the inhabitants to the sword, whereby he would certainly have gratified the English merchants. But Edward's knights told him flatly that if he treated the besieged in that manner his own men would never again venture to shut themselves up in fortresses for fear of reprisal. He gave way, and condescended to admit the town to mercy, provided some of the principal townspeople came, according to custom, bareheaded and barefoot, with ropes round their necks, and presented the keys to him.

There was danger for those who should first appear in the king's presence. There were instantly found in that little town, depopulated as it was by famine, six volunteers to save the rest. Nevertheless, the queen and the knights had to intercede with Edward, to prevent his hanging those gallant fellows.<sup>f</sup>

Thus did Calais fall into the hands of England a year after the battle of Crécy. Edward, according to Walsingham,<sup>j</sup> spent a month in the town, ordering and fortifying it. He sent all the knights captive to England, and expelled a certain number of the other French townsmen, replacing them by English. He induced thirty-six rich citizens of London, with their families, to settle there, with three hundred of lesser condition, bestowing upon them several privileges and advantages. He fixed at Calais the staple of tin, lead, and woollen cloth, and prohibited all persons from exporting or shipping these commodities to England, unless they took oath to unship them at Calais. Eustace of St. Pierre was amongst the French citizens who remained and recovered their property, on transferring their allegiance to the English king. His heirs afterwards forfeited the property by refusing this allegiance.

<sup>1</sup> Edward announces in a letter to the archbishop of York that he had accepted the challenge, and that the fight did not take place, because Philip marched off precipitately before the day, after having set fire to his camp.

[1347-1348 A.D.]

## SUSPENSION OF THE WAR (1347 A.D.)

The papal legates seized this opportunity of renewing their efforts to bring about an accommodation between the monarchs. The capture of Calais, indeed, rendered terms of peace more difficult to arrange; but that event, with the campaign which preceded it, rendered a peace desirable on both sides. Edward consented, although Rymer contains many proofs of his intention to sail again to the continent and renew the war. The truce was at first concluded for ten months, but was extended from time to time, the monarchs being occupied with other cares. It was a cessation but from great expeditions and large armies, for partisans on both sides did not relax in their schemes to surprise and their efforts to hurt. Although Scotland was included in the truce, Douglas would not keep the peace; neither would French or English in Gascony. The *brigands*, as foot-soldiers were called, associated in bands of thirty or forty to pillage towns, surprise castles, and then sell them for large sums. King Philip did not disdain to purchase the castle of Combourne from the brigand Bacon, for 24,000 livres. This brigand, says Froissart, "was as well armed and mounted as any knight in the army, and in as great honour with the king."

The truce was not even observed between the now hostile towns of Calais and St. Omer. Geoffrey of Charny, who commanded for Philip in the latter place, hearing that Edward had intrusted the command in Calais to an Italian, Aimery di Pavia, made offers of many thousand florins, if he would betray the town. Pavia pretended to consent, but warned Edward, who came with his son, the Black Prince, and a body of archers and men-at-arms. Pavia, by the king's order, allowed a division of the French to pass the bridge and enter the fortifications, where they were instantly surrounded and taken prisoners. And then Edward and his son attacked the French under Charny, routing, slaying, and capturing the greater number. The king himself in the fray had a personal encounter with Eustace de Ribeaumont, whom he compelled to surrender, and to whom he afterwards presented a chaplet adorned with pearls, as a token of friendship and admiration.

In Brittany the lieutenants of King Philip were not more successful than at Calais. Charles of Blois himself had set the truce at naught by an attack upon the castle La Roche de Rien. Whilst thus engaged, he was come upon unawares by the forces of the De Montfort party, his army routed, himself severely wounded, and taken prisoner (1347). From Brittany he was sent to England.

A more general renewal of the war was rendered impossible by the eruption of the plague, which in the summer of 1348 carried off large numbers, first in the south of France,<sup>1</sup> from whence it extended to Paris and the towns of the north. Tumours under the arms and in the groin were the peculiarities of the disease, which almost always proved fatal. Out of twenty persons in a village, says a chronicler, not two remained. The towns of the south were especially depopulated, such as Marbonne, Montpellier, and Avignon. The Laura of Petrarch was amongst the victims. Eight hundred died each day in Paris, where the loss could not have been less than one hundred thousand. Amongst the consequences of the epidemic are mentioned a great scarcity of provisions and a complete suspense of education from the lack of teachers.

[<sup>1</sup> It had spread to France from Italy where its ravages were no less appalling. An extended notice of it is given in our history of Italy, Volume IX, where Boccaccio's vivid description of its terrors may be found.]



## TERRITORIAL ACQUISITION

Whilst France was thus ravaged by pestilence and humiliated by defeat, Philip succeeded in annexing to the monarchy the important province of Dauphiné, which lay between its possessions of Burgundy and Provence, and gave France the entire region westward of the Alps. The two contiguous principalities and dynasties of Savoy and of Dauphiné had started up and grown together in continued rivalry. Although the Savoy princes were defeated in one great battle they were still more than a match for the dauphins, as the princes who kept their court at Vienne were called from the arms they had assumed. The dauphin had recourse to the aid of the king of France; and, by degrees, the protection which these afforded grew into suzerainty. Humbert, the last dauphin, was a strange and capricious character; he had the misfortune to have let fall from a window of his castle his only son, the child being dashed to pieces as he fell. This misfortune disturbed the reason of the prince, who determined to proceed to the Holy Land and sell or mortgage his possessions in order to raise funds for the purpose. He began by selling lands, which he possessed in Normandy, to John, duke of this province. At last the dauphin consented to sell the reversion of the principality. He agreed to appoint the second son of Philip of Valois, Philip of Orleans, as his future heir, in the event of his having no children.

This treaty, so advantageous to France, was concluded in 1343, and Humbert took his departure for Palestine. None ever expected to see the return of so witless a prince. The dauphin, however, did return, not only to resume the government of his paternal dominion, but to regret the reckless manner in which he had alienated the independence of Dauphiné. He began to seek to extricate himself from his engagements. Edward III tried to induce the emperor of Germany to confer upon Humbert the title of king; but, surrounded by the power and the emissaries of France, the dauphin was not able to shake off his dependency. He was finally (1349) induced to transfer his adoption to Charles, son of John, duke of Normandy, heir to the French throne. This was the future Charles V. Having accomplished this act, Humbert withdrew to a convent, whilst young Charles assumed the title of dauphin, which was afterwards borne by the heir to the throne, and the possession of that rich province.<sup>b</sup>

The money spent in the purchase of Dauphiné was at least well spent for France. A few days after the definite treaty with Humbert, Philip made another useful acquisition: he bought the lordship of Montpellier from the last king of Majorca, James II. This prince, despoiled of the Balearic Isles, Roussillon, and Cerdagne, by his cousin, the king of Aragon, sold Montpellier in order to raise an army with which to recover his realm. Don James was beaten and killed; Montpellier remained to France.<sup>d</sup>

The plague of this year had been peculiarly fatal to princesses. The queen of France, Joan of Burgundy, the duchess of Normandy, wife of Prince John and daughter of the king of Bohemia, the queen of Navarre, daughter of Louis Hutin, perished under its influence. But no sooner had the pestilence disappeared, than marriage and its accompanying festivities became the order of the day. "The world," says the chronicler, "was renewed, but, unfortunately, not bettered; the enemies of France and of the church were no fewer, nor less powerful."

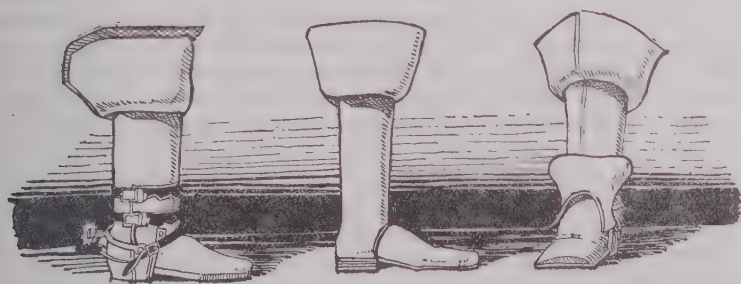
King Philip espoused a young wife, daughter of the queen of Navarre, just deceased. This princess, Blanche by name, had been destined to the duke of Normandy; but the king, his father, found her beautiful, and

[1348-1350 A.D.]

married her himself. The duke of Normandy married a duchess of Burgundy, and the dauphin, Charles, espoused a daughter of the duke of Bourbon. Thus were celebrated the marriages of three generations of princes.

Philip of Valois did not long survive his marriage with Blanche. He fell ill, and expired at Nogent in August, 1350. The continuator of Nangis<sup>c</sup> relates that he called his sons, the duke of Normandy, and Philip of Orleans, afterwards of Valois, to his bedside, and pointed out to them the validity of his right to the crown, and the necessity of defending it strenuously, and without any concession, against Edward of England, with whom the truce was about to expire.

Philip of Valois was the first prince of truly chivalrous spirit that ascended the throne of France. Unfortunately for him, he succeeded at a period when chivalry was insufficient either to illustrate the warrior or achieve great results in war. Unfortunately, too, he derived from his predecessors those unscrupulous habits of wreaking vengeance and spilling blood, which they were taught to consider their sovereign right, as if royal power and descent cancelled every crime, and consecrated even the basest treachery and felony. French kings are lauded by their countrymen for having considered themselves above feudalism. Feudalism, however, had its laws of honour and its sense of right; with these, unfortunately, French kings too soon and too completely dispensed.<sup>b</sup>





## CHAPTER VI

### JOHN THE GOOD AND CHARLES THE WISE

[1350-1380 A.D.]

THE new king John was between thirty-one and thirty-two years of age. It was long since a king of France had ascended the throne in such critical circumstances. All the internal maladies which, ever since the days of Philip the Fair, had been undermining the constitution of the state had burst out at the first shock of external violence. The weakness of this monarchy, arbitrary without order, fiscal without finances, military without an army, which had failed to create for itself any other instrument or any other support than a body of legists; the fragility of this colossus with feet of clay was now revealed both to the foreigner and to France herself. A country desolated by plague, impoverished by a disastrous war and by a government more ruinous than plague and war, where the lowest depths of society were stirred by those dull mutterings which announce the distant tempest; a royalty despoiled, by deserved misfortunes, of the prestige of birth and grandeur which had survived its popularity; finally a war which set at stake not the position of some frontier but the existence of the dynasty and the independence of the nation: such was the inheritance which the first of the Valois had bequeathed to his son.<sup>b</sup>

King John inaugurated his reign by debasing the coinage to meet the expenses of the coronation which was celebrated at Rheims, on the 26th of September, 1350, with all the accustomed splendour. The brilliant train of princes who accompanied him drew upon themselves not only the glances but the hopes of the entire population.

Treachery, however, was on all sides. Already Philip of Valois had attempted to deal with it outside the regular forms of judicial procedure; the newly made king followed in his footsteps. Raoul, count of Eu and of Guines, constable of France, obtained of Edward III, whose prisoner he was, liberty on parole, and returned to Paris to present himself at court. John caused him to be arrested and confined in the Louvre. A few days after-



[1350-1352 A.D.]

wards the constable was beheaded, and his property given to John of Artois, who assumed the title of count of Eu.

The office of constable was conferred upon a certain De la Cerda, Charles of Spain, brother of that Louis of Spain who had upheld the party of Blois in Brittany. The new constable, being the personal favourite of the king, found many rivals at court, and thus arose contentions that were to be the source of further troubles. For the purpose of anticipating acts of treason and of strengthening the attachment and devotion to himself of the most powerful nobles, John created a new order of chivalry; or, as Froissart *g* says, "A fine company, high and noble, after the manner of the Round Table which existed in the time of King Artus [Arthur]." He also had another model, the order of the Garter, recently created by Edward III. Thus was instituted the order of the Star, which had for emblem a star in gold, silver, gilt, or pearls, and which the king bestowed on the three hundred knights who had proved themselves "the most valiant at arms and the most useful to the kingdom." He imposed upon them an oath that they would never flee before the enemy to a distance of over four arpents. On the first occasion the king designated the recipients of the order himself, but later the choice was decided by the majority of the members. This was the first time that a court order of chivalry had been created in France. The new institution was destined to be of but short duration, however, as its dissolution immediately followed the captivity of its founder.

Preparations were begun for a renewal of the war with England, and in expectation of this event John displayed great activity. Financial aid, which was to be a portion of the profits on the sale of beverages and merchandise, was voted to him by the provinces of Vermandois and Normandy, the city of Paris, and the bailiwick of Amiens, the assemblies stipulating in exchange the confirmation of certain privileges and the suppression of various abuses; among others the right of lodgment and of *prise en vertu* by which the king caused his expenses and those of his household to be defrayed by anyone with whom he chose to lodge.

We can form some idea of the deplorable state of the finances from the fact that during the course of the year 1351 John issued no less than eighteen ordinances altering monetary values, although neither the help of such expedients nor the subsidies voted by the provinces availed to bring about an equilibrium between receipts and expenditures. The treasury continued, as in the preceding reign, to pay annually only a part of the officers' wages and of the interest on the debt. There were also ordinances regulating the order in which the public expenses were to be met, just as to-day, in cases of bankruptcy, the succession in which creditors are to be paid is determined by law. In the case of certain outlays the government was extremely tardy in making payment, taking for its model the nobility, to the members of which great latitude was allowed. "Let no one," said King John, "wonder or be ill-pleased, for we take account of the respites and delays accorded to the nobles in the payment of their debts, and it would not be seemly that we should be in a worse condition than they."

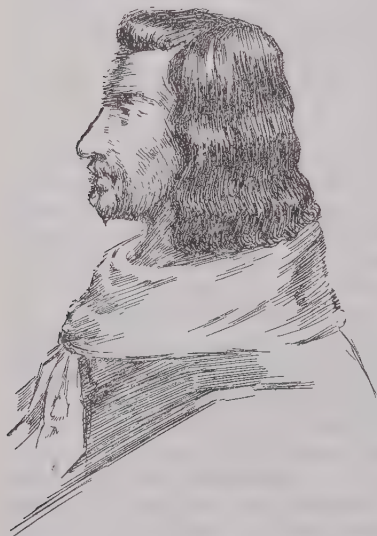
The truces, although renewed from year to year, were imperfectly kept; hostilities continued to break out from time to time at different points, and there was not a campaign during which special engagements did not take place between parties of English or French knights. There were frequent skirmishes during 1351 in the neighbourhood of St. Jean d'Angély, and in 1352 between Guines and St. Omer. The war in Brittany had been kept up in desultory fashion since the capture of Charles of Blois in 1347, when

his wife, Joan de Penthievre, took up the cause. The most celebrated of these minor combats was the *combat des trente*, fought in Brittany, August 1352, on the moor of Mi-Voie, between Josselin and Ploërmel.<sup>c</sup>

Robert de Beaumanoir, governor of the castle of Josselin, challenged the English captain Richard Bamborough who commanded at Ploërmel. They met on the lands of Josselin each with twenty-nine companions. The sixty champions fought on foot with short swords. "Such a combat," says Froissart, "had not been recorded for over a hundred years." It did not cease until all the combatants were either killed or badly wounded — four French and nine English, Bamborough among them, lay dead on the field. The rest of the English gave themselves up to the French. But such contests did not help matters, and so the war dragged on.<sup>a</sup>

#### TROUBLE WITH CHARLES OF NAVARRE

To the exterior dangers with which France was menaced was now added the calamity of civil war. The cause for this fresh trouble was to be found in the pretensions held by the king of Navarre, and the jealousy which he conceived against the new constable, Charles of Spain. This king of Navarre



JOHN THE GOOD

(From an old French print)

was Charles the Bad, so named for the rigour with which he had put down a sedition in Pamplona. A prince of the royal house of France on the side of his father, Philip of Évreux, he succeeded in 1349 not only to the kingdom of the Pyrenees, but to the county of Évreux, and the possession of several fiefs in Normandy. He was young, ambitious, enterprising, as were also his two younger brothers, Philip and Louis; and to attach him more securely to his interests, John betrothed to him one of his daughters, then a child, to whom he promised as marriage portion an income raised from the counties of Angoulême and Mortain. These counties having been ravaged by the English, Charles of Navarre demanded another dowry, and at the same time claimed indemnity for Champagne and Brie, former possessions of his mother which had been ceded to the crown during the preceding reign, but by treaty of which all the clauses had not been put regularly in execution. John refused to acknowledge these claims, or at any rate

was in no hurry to satisfy them, and gave Angoulême and Mortain to Charles of Spain.

The king of Navarre laid all the blame for this real or pretended breach of faith to the constable, and the two held a spirited altercation together in the presence of King John. With the king of Navarre was his brother Philip of Navarre, count of Longueville, who on being given the lie by the constable swore to be revenged. On leaving the scene of the quarrel he defied the constable and warned him to be on his guard against the infants of Navarre. Charles of Spain paid so little heed to these menaces that he betook himself, insufficiently attended, to Laigle, the latest evidence of the

[1354-1355 A.D.]

royal favour, which was situated not six leagues from Évreux, where dwelt his enemies. As soon as the count of Longueville learned of this move he left his home at night, accompanied by a troop of men-at-arms, and entering the hôtel of the constable, murdered the latter in his bed (1354).

The infantes of Navarre wrote letters of self-justification to several cities of France, and to the council of the king. At the same time they stocked their castles with supplies, assembled all their nobles, and opened up relations with the English, who were only too pleased to have a foothold thus established for them in Normandy. John, determined not to leave unpunished an act of personal vengeance that infringed seriously upon his own authority, marched in person against Évreux, and sent orders to the count d'Armagnac, his representative in Toulouse, to occupy Navarre with the whole strength of the southern troops.

This civil war, breaking forth so unexpectedly, was certain to renew the war with England, since it offered that country an unexampled opportunity to re-enter the lists. In fear of this event, the princes and princesses of the house of France, aided by the legate cardinal of Boulogne, offered their mediation and succeeded in bringing about an arrangement at Nantes, the 22nd of February, 1354. Payment of all that was due him, and the satisfaction of his legitimate claims were assured the king of Navarre, on condition that he should so far humiliate himself as to ask the king's pardon in open parliament. This he consented to do, but demanded that certain hostages be sent him. "And in the presence of all he asked pardon of the king for the deed wrought upon the said constable, for he had had just and sufficient cause thereto, all of which he was ready to reveal to the king then or at any time. Furthermore he declared and swore that he had not committed the act out of contempt for the king nor for the office of constable, and that nothing would afflict him so sorely as to be in the evil graces of the king." John accepted the excuse and took the offender back into favour.

This understanding retarded further hostilities, but only for a little time. John, who had been unaware of the secret relations entered into with the English, soon learned of them; whereupon Charles the Bad, fearing for his own safety, retired to Avignon, where he besought protection of the pope. In the month of November John entered Normandy, took possession of and sequestered the estates of the king of Navarre, and commanded the officers who were in charge of the various castles to deliver them up to him. Six of the defenders refused to obey, among others those in charge of the castles of Cherbourg and Évreux.

The court of Avignon had not ceased its efforts to negotiate a treaty between England and France, and as it was necessary that this treaty should be a final one the king of Navarre must be included in its terms; hence the papal protection had not been refused him in his need. The negotiations were carried on actively during the winter of 1354-1355, but fell through like all preceding ones, and in the spring came definitely to an end. Edward demanded that his full sovereignty should be recognised over Guienne and Ponthieu, which provinces should be separated from the French crown. He also refused to continue to pay homage to France, and tried to stipulate for a semi-independence for Brittany. John refused to consider propositions so injurious, and in a legitimate spirit of national pride resolved to try once more the fortunes of war.

On all sides preparations for war were being carried on. The king of Navarre, having passed through Pamplona and English Guienne, embarked in July, 1355, at Cherbourg, which port it was his intention to open to



Edward III. The English sovereign manned a fleet for the purpose of descending upon the north coast of France; but contrary winds held him for a long time in the Channel, in sight of Jersey, and finally obliged him to return to the harbour of Plymouth.

In spite of this mischance the English remained full of ardour, and built great hopes upon the assistance of the Navarrese. John's counsellors represented to him that he could not with safety allow his enemies to retain allies of such energy and power, and that at any cost the interests of Charles the Bad must be separated from those of Edward III. With great repugnance, therefore, the king consented to grant certain concessions to the king of Navarre, who joyfully accepted them. A second treaty was signed at Valognes, by the terms of which Charles the Bad was reinstated in his French domains on consideration that he should make formal apology for having allied himself with the enemies of the kingdom (September 10th, 1355). He hastened to fulfil his promise, and for the second time came to the Louvre to ask public pardon of the king. His brother Philip, count of Longueville, could not be induced to follow his example, but remained true to the English side.

By depriving the English of the Navarrese alliance King John robbed them of their chief support, and obliged them to change their plan of campaign. Edward III landed at Calais, and in October made several incursions into Artois; but John marched against him in person, and prevented him from crossing the French frontier, thus paralysing all his efforts.

The English were more successful in the south, where they had sent a large army headed by the prince of Wales and the celebrated John Chandos. This army made a rapid and fruitful passage through Languedoc — pillaging Castelnaudary, Carcassonne, and a number of towns and castles — as far as the very gates of Montpellier without meeting with the least resistance. The cities were all entered, and the whole district, one of the richest in France, laid waste as Normandy had been in 1346. The English returned with five thousand prisoners and a thousand wagons laden with silver, objects of worth and merchandise, particularly cloths and velvets taken from Narbonne and Limoux. In order to transport safely all this booty to Guienne it was necessary to cross the Garonne at a distance of only three leagues from Toulouse. The count d'Armagnac, commander of Languedoc, was shut up in this town with forces more considerable than those of the English; he refused, however, to sally forth and arrest them as they passed by, in spite of the orders which had been brought to him by the new constable James de Bourbon, successor to Charles of Spain.

To meet the needs of the war, and to provide himself with a still greater force for the coming campaign, John resorted to all sorts of financial expedients. He ordered his treasurers to adjourn all payments out of the public funds, be they for what purpose they might; he made treaties for subsidies with several provinces, Auvergne, Normandy, Maine, and Anjou, and lastly convened the states-general at Paris.<sup>e</sup>

#### THE STATES-GENERAL OF 1355 A.D.

The estates of the north, or of the Languedoil, convoked on the 30th of November, showed no tractable temper. It was necessary to promise them the abolition of that direct robbery called the right of seizure, and of the indirect one which was practised through the coinage. The king declared that the new impost should extend to all persons, and that it should be paid by

[1355-1356 A.D.]

himself, the queen, and the princes. These fair words did not reassure the estates. They put no trust in the royal word, or in the royal tax-gatherers. They required that the money should be received by themselves, through collectors chosen by them; that accounts should be laid before them, and that they should meet again on the 1st of March, and again, after the lapse of a year, on St. Andrew's day.

To vote and receive taxes is to reign. No one in those days was aware of the full import of this bold demand of the estates, probably not even Étienne Marcel, the famous provost of the merchants, whom we see at the head of the deputies of the towns. The assembly purchased this royalty by the enormous concession of 6,000,000 livres parisis for the pay of thirty thousand men-at-arms. This money was to be raised by two imposts, on salt and on sales—bad imposts, no doubt, and bearing heavily on the poor; but what other could be devised in so pressing an emergency, when the whole south was at the enemy's mercy?

Normandy, Artois, and Picardy sent no deputies to these estates. The Normans were encouraged by the king of Navarre, the count d'Harcourt, and others, who declared that the gabelle should not be levied on their lands: that there should not be found a man so bold on the part of the king of France, who should enforce it, nor sergeant who should levy a fine, but should pay for it with his body. The estates gave way. They suppressed the two imposts, and substituted for them a tax on income: five per cent. on the poorest classes, four per cent. on middling fortunes, and two per cent. on the rich. The more one had the less he paid. The king, bitterly offended by the resistance of the king of Navarre and his friends, said that he should never have perfect joy so long as they were alive. He set out from Orleans with some cavaliers, rode for thirty hours, and surprised them in the castle of Rouen, where they were at table, having been invited by the dauphin. He had D'Harcourt and three others beheaded; the king of Navarre was thrown into prison, and threatened with death (April 16th, 1356). A rumour was set afloat that they had urged the dauphin to escape to the emperor, and make war on the king, his father.<sup>e</sup>

A third session of the states-general was held in Paris on the 8th of May, under the shadow of these tragic events, and new subsidies from the revenues were granted the king. John was particular to mislead the public as to the causes of the recent affair at Rouen, and it was everywhere given out that he had seized letters that furnished evidence of a conspiracy between the Navarrese and the king of England. Nevertheless the people suspected that the "real treason" of Charles of Navarre lay in his resistance to taxation, and this opinion joined to the current rumours as to the harsh treatment the captive had received, won him the compassion and the interest of the masses.

The people as a whole regarded in the same manner the captivity of the Navarrese, the execution of D'Harcourt, and the vengeance which King John took upon the authors of a revolt at Arras, which occurred almost simultaneously with the arrest of Charles the Bad. On the 27th of April the marshal D'Audeneham had entered Arras without resistance and had seized those guilty of rebellion. Twenty of these were decapitated in the marketplace.<sup>b</sup>

King John, who had begun the campaign by seizing those strongholds of the king of Navarre in Normandy into which he might have introduced the English, at last advanced with a great army, as numerous as France ever lost. The whole country was covered with his runners; the English could

no longer find means of subsistence. Neither of the two hostile forces knew its own position. John thought the English were before him, and was hastening to overtake them, whilst they were really behind him. The prince of Wales, no better informed, thought the French were in his rear. This was the second and not the last time the English entangled themselves blindly in the enemy's country. Only a miracle could have saved them, and John's blundering rashness was no less.

#### THE BATTLE OF POITIERS (SEPTEMBER 18TH, 1356)

The army of the prince of Wales, partly English, partly Gascon, numbered 2,000 men-at-arms, 4,000 archers, and 2,000 light troops, brigands hired in the south. John was at the head of the great feudal gathering of the ban and arrière-ban, making fully 50,000 men. There were John's four sons, 26 dukes or counts, and 140 knights-banneret, with their banners displayed; a magnificent spectacle, but the army was none the better for all that.



A FRENCH KNIGHT OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

Two cardinal legates, one of whom was a Talleyrand, interfered to prevent the effusion of Christian blood. The prince of Wales offered to give up all he had taken, and to swear he would not serve for seven years to come against France. John refused the offer, as was natural; it would have been shameful to let those plunderers escape. He insisted that, at least, the prince of Wales should yield himself prisoner, with one hundred knights.

The English had fortified themselves on the Coteau de Maupertuis, a steep hill near Poitiers, planted with vines, and flanked with hedges and thorny thickets. Their archers covered all the summit. There was no need of attacking them. No more was requisite than to keep them there; hunger and thirst would have quelled them in two days. But John thought it more chivalric to subdue his enemy by force of arms. There was but one narrow path by which access could be obtained to the English position. The king of France sent horsemen forward to the charge. The archers shot down clouds of arrows, wounded and scared the horses, and threw them in confusion one on the other. The English seized this moment to charge down from the hill, and presently all that great army was in disorder. Three sons of the king of France retired from the field, by their father's command,<sup>1</sup> taking away with them an escort of eight hundred lances.

Meanwhile, the king stood fast. He had employed horsemen to charge up the hill; and with equal good sense, he ordered those about him to

[<sup>1</sup>The continuator of Nangis<sup>d</sup> is responsible for this statement.]



[1356 A.D.]

dismount, and fight on foot against the English, who were coming upon them on horseback. John's resistance was as injurious to his realm as the flight of his sons. His brethren of the order of the Star were, like himself, true to their vow, and did not retreat. "And they fought by troops and by companies, as they chanced to meet and fall in together." But the multitude fled to Poitiers, which closed its gates. "So there was on the road and before the gate such a horrible spectacle of men slaughtered and trampled down as is wonderful to think of; and the French surrendered the moment they caught sight of an Englishman ever so far off."

Meanwhile, the field was still contested. "King John himself did wonders; he was armed with a battle-axe, with which he fought and defended himself. By his side was his youngest son, who well deserved the surname of the Bold, who guided his blind valour, crying out to him every moment: 'Look to your right, father! to your left!' But the throng of assailants continually increased, all being eager to make so rich a capture. The English and Gascons poured in so fast on the king's division that they broke through the ranks by force; and the French were so intermixed with their enemies that at times there were five men attacking one gentleman. There was much pressing at this time, through eagerness of taking the king; and those that were nearest to him, and knew him, cried out: 'Surrender yourself, or you are a dead man.' In that part of the field was a young knight from St. Omer, who was engaged by a salary in the service of the king of England; his name was Denys de Morbeyne, who for five years had attached himself to the English, on occasion of his having been banished in his younger days from France, for a murder committed in an affray at St. Omer. It fortunately happened for this knight that he was at the time near to the king of France, when the latter was so much pulled about; he, by dint of force — for he was very strong and robust — pushed through the crowd, and said to the king in good French: 'Sir, sir, surrender yourself.' The king, who found himself very disagreeably situated, turning to him, asked: 'To whom shall I surrender myself — to whom? Where is my cousin, the prince of Wales? If I could see him, I would speak to him.' 'Sir,' replied Sir Denys, 'he is not here; but surrender yourself to me, and I will lead you to him.' 'Who are you?' said the king. 'Sir, I am Denys de Morbeyne, a knight from Artois; but I serve the king of England, because I cannot belong to France, having forfeited all I possessed there.' The king then gave him his right hand glove, and said: 'I surrender myself to you.' There was much crowding and pushing about, for everyone was eager to cry out: 'I have taken him.' Neither the king nor his youngest son, Philip, was able to get forward and free himself from the throng."

The prince of Wales did honour to the unparalleled good fortune that had placed such a pledge in his hands. He took good care not to treat his captive otherwise than as a king; in his eyes that captive was the true king of France, and not John of Valois, as the English had been used to call him. It was of the last importance to the prince that John should be king in reality, so that the kingdom might seem itself taken captive in the person of its sovereign, and should ruin itself to ransom him. He waited on John at table, after the battle; and when he made his entry into London, he set him on a tall white horse (an emblem of suzerainty), whilst he himself followed on a little black hackney.

The English were not less courteous to the other prisoners. They had twice as many of them as there were men to guard them, and dismissed the greater part of them on parole, pledging them to come at Christmas, and

pay the enormous ransoms they set upon them. The prisoners were too good knights to fail. In this war between gentlemen, the worst that could happen to the beaten party was to go and take their part in the festivities of the victors, to hunt and joust in England, and enjoy the courtesy of the English; a noble war, doubtless, which crushed none but the villain.

Great was the dismay in Paris when the fugitives from Poitiers, with the dauphin at their head, brought news that there was no longer a king or barons in France, but all were killed or taken.<sup>1</sup> The English, who had withdrawn for a moment to secure the captives, would, doubtless, speedily return. This time it might be expected that they would take, not Calais, but Paris and the realm.<sup>e</sup>

#### THE STATES-GENERAL OF 1356-1357 A.D.

The king a captive, the nobles prisoners or destroyed — the people alone remained to save France. This younger member, disinherited in the political family of the Middle Ages, took in hand the government of the realm, now falling to pieces through the incapacity of its elder brothers. It was not this one that had been vanquished at Crécy and Poitiers. These defeats, on the contrary, brought it forward, for it was evident that, scorned as it was by the nobility, at least it had not conducted itself worse, and perhaps even may have made a better show against the English archers than the knights. The people ruling — that was a novel and extraordinary thing. Nevertheless they were not, at least in their leaders, totally inexperienced in the conduct of affairs. Former progress had prepared them somewhat; the common people were in parliament, the church, and the universities; they had control of all commerce and had formed vast industrial corporations. The clergy and commerce (which was soon to become the aristocracy of the third estate) both furnished a leader to the new movement started after the battle of Poitiers — Robert Lecoq, bishop of Laon and president of the parliament, and Étienne Marcel, provost of the merchants of Paris.

Marcel's first care at the news of the disaster was to finish the fortifications of the capital, to place cannon on them, and to barricade the streets. The dauphin Charles arrived ten days after the battle, but the people did not make much of this young prince. His conduct at Poitiers had been decidedly equivocal; he had been one of the first to flee. He took the title of lieutenant of the king of France and convoked the states-general at Paris for the Languedoil, at Toulouse for the Languedoc (October 17th, 1356). The assembly at Paris had eight hundred members, of which four hundred came from the cities and towns; Marcel presided over the third estate and Robert Lecoq over the clergy. The nobles were few in number; their principal leader was John de Pecquigny, lord of Vermandois, and a friend of the king of Navarre. The three orders deliberated separately, but to bring unity into their actions nominated a mixed commission of eighty members. It formulated the wishes of the states-general and demanded for the reform of the kingdom the summons and trial, before judges nominated by the states-general, of the king's chief officers of finance and justice, accused of having perverted and sold judgments; the deliverance of the king of Navarre; the establishment of a council of four prelates, twelve lords, and twelve bourgeois elected by the states-general, without which the dauphin

[<sup>1</sup> The French left 11,000 dead on the field of battle. The English loss was but 2,500, and they made prisoners of 13 counts, 1 archbishop, 70 barons, and 2,000 armed men, not counting persons of less importance.]

1356-1357 A.D.]

could give no orders and which would control the entire government. On these terms they granted the dauphin one and a half tenths for one year of the revenues of the three orders. In truth, by their revolutionary changes the people placed themselves on the throne and undertook the burden of public affairs and the public welfare. The states-general of the Languedoc, less radical, voted a levy of fifteen thousand men with the necessary money to maintain them.

The dauphin would not listen to an agreement with these conditions. He played skilfully with the deputies of the third estate, in persuading them to consult their constituents once more, while he himself would go to ask help of his uncle the emperor of Germany. Charles IV was then putting forward his famous "golden bull" in the Diet of Nuremberg. The dauphin appeared there. He had strong hopes that on his return he would find the deputies dispersed and discouraged. Far from that, the provincial councils had reassembled, approved the measures of the states-general, and the whole country declared itself in the same fashion (1357). On the 3rd of March the dauphin was obliged to call a general assembly at the palace. The bishop of Laon acted as spokesman. He demanded that the prince dismiss twenty-two of his councillors or servitors and authorise the formation of a council of thirty-six members elected by the states-general "to provide for the needs of the kingdom, and which everyone would be compelled to obey." Commissioners at first had to be sent into all the provinces, but the states finally acquired the faculty of handling the government of its own creation by endowing itself with the power to meet twice a year without convocation. As to reforms, relating for the most part to finances and justice, the dauphin provided for them in the "grand ordinance of reformation." By this memorable charter he promised to impose no taxes without the vote of the states-general, to divert no money from the treasury, and to leave the levy and expenditure of taxes to the states-general's delegates, to make justice impartial and prompt, to sell judiciary offices no longer, and not to alter the coinage from a model which the provost of the merchants was to furnish. The right of seizure, forced loans, judgments by commissioners, and alienation of the crown domains were some of the abuses corrected by the ordinance which at the end declared the members of the states-general inviolable and authorised armed resistance to all illegal procedure.

The popular government of 1357 unfortunately did not have in its bosom sufficient harmony, strength, and experience to maintain the important conquest the people had just made. Moreover its situation was one of the most difficult; its credit was shaken by King John, who from his prison forbade the states-general to assemble and the people to pay the taxes they themselves had voted. The rural committees were in the most deplorable state. Overburdened by taxes, by the heavy ransoms which their captive lords extracted by torture, the peasants could no longer cultivate a land that had moreover been ravaged in the war. They developed into vagabonds and preferred to become the accomplices rather than victims of the bands of discharged soldiers from every country, which the war had left upon French soil.

In the fourteenth century the name brigand was given to this licensed soldiery, nearly all of whom, as we are aware, fought on foot, and were, as a general rule, but slenderly equipped; they carried, as a part of their equipment, a small fine coat of mail, which took its name of brigantine from them. The pay of the mercenaries being stopped in time of truce or between the different expeditions, they turned to the daily practice of rapine and



[1357-1358 A.D.]

plunder for their means of subsistence, which brought them in more than their pay. A crowd of adventurers and loafers joined forces with them, among the number being many noblemen. As to the rest, the following passage from Froissart<sup>o</sup> sets forth vividly the methods by which the brigands carried on their terrible profession:

“And the poor brigands always succeeded in sacking and pillaging towns and castles, and got thence such wealth as was marvellous, and some of them became rich, especially those who had made themselves leaders and captains of other brigands; there were among them some who even had as much as forty thousand crowns. Indeed and in truth right marvellous were the things they did. When—and this happened very frequently—they espied a large town or a fine castle, distant a day’s journey or two, twenty or thirty brigands would band themselves together and travel night or day by secret ways, and just as day broke they would enter the town or castle they had descried and set fire to a house. The townspeople, fearing that an army of a thousand warriors had come to burn their town, escaped each as best he might, and the brigands sacked houses, coffers; and libraries, seizing whatsoever they could find and departing laden with booty.”



A FRENCH NOBLEMAN OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

In spite of such horrors no profession was more lucrative or held in greater honour in the fourteenth century than that of the brigand. Even royalty, whose duty it was to protect the peasants, showed itself eager to make advances to the brigands and to reward their strange exploits. Philip of Valois proposed to Croquart, the famous chief of the brigands settled in Brittany, to knight him, marry him well, and pay him an annual income of two thousand pounds, if he would place himself at his disposal. This same king, hearing of the extraordinary cleverness by which one Bacon, a brigand who harassed Languedoc, had surprised the castle of Chambon in the Limousin, wished to keep by his side so daring and crafty a captain; so he made him his sergeant-at-arms and loaded him with honours. Too often the kings did not even attempt to protect the unhappy victims of the brigands. On the contrary they helped to complete the ruin of the peasants by authorising the abuse of *le droit de prise* (the right of seizure), and above all by arbitrarily raising or lowering the money standard, according to whether the question was one of levying taxes or of paying debts.<sup>h</sup>

#### THE DAUPHIN REPUDIATES THE GRANDE ORDONNANCE (1358 A.D.)

Under such existing conditions the dauphin believed himself powerful enough to declare that he would no longer tolerate trustees. February 8th, 1358, he revoked the *grande ordonnance*, and thus destroyed the popular government. This was a complete rupture with the states-general and the resumption of absolute power by the crown.

[1358 A.D.]

Against the dauphin the people called Charles of Navarre, who was dragged from his prison. This ambitious prince, skilful and eloquent, became the orator of the market-places, promising to defend the country and letting it be understood that he was not without some claim to the throne of France. The dauphin hoped to balance this new kind of influence with the same means. He went to the Pré-aux-Cleres; and Paris, as if by a magical transformation, suddenly beheld herself in the midst of the Middle Ages adorned with two forums. But the dauphin lost again, by his unfortunate alteration in the coinage, the sole means indeed of raising money without calling the states-general together. Marcel had armed the bourgeoisie at once and given them, as a rallying sign, caps part red and part blue. At the head of a company of this militia he made his way into the dauphin's palace, and had the marshals of Champagne and Normandy, the two principal officials, put to death; with his own hand he placed the red and blue cap upon the prince's head as a pledge of security and said to him, as the two bodies were thrown to the crowd, "I demand that you sanction the deaths of these traitors, for it is by the will of the people that this has been done" — of a small portion of the people, it might be added — the Parisian bourgeoisie (1358).

Indeed, the further they went the more the revolution they undertook lost its general character. The provincial deputies separated from their constituents lost their enthusiasm, while the commune of Paris, never away from their own hearths, remained numerous, ardent, and popular. The states-general, jealous of the commune's influence, permitted itself in part to be removed to Compiègne by the dauphin. The nobles gathered about the prince. He had seven thousand lances with whom he lived freely on the country between the Seine and the Marne, ravaging the whole land as far as Paris, which was suffering from famine. This maddened the peasantry of the Beauvoisis, of Brie, of Valois, Laon, and Soissons.

#### THE JACQUERIE (1358 A.D.)

It is quite unnecessary to lay stress upon the sufferings of the villeins here. The days were no more, as we have seen, when the lords of the manor, although they considered themselves of different clay from their serfs, defended them at the peril of their lives. Of the feudal institutions, nothing remained but the oppression. Ruined by the love of luxury, by gambling, by debauchery, by the necessity of paying a heavy ransom — preferring to run into debt rather than to impose privations upon themselves, and to wrest from those around them by means of blows, imprisonment, or the pillory the miserable savings they had laid by for bad times rather than to pay their debts, which would have prevented their contracting new ones — they used and abused the right to command so far as to make all testaments, all marrying, on their estates, dependent on their express permission. They even scoffed at their victims, giving them the name of "Jacques Bonhomme" in derision, on account of their awkwardness in carrying weapons, and of their patience in enduring all things. "Save a villain from hanging, he'll cut your throat; show a villain the steel, and he kneels," says a proverb of these times (*Oignez vilain, il vous poindra: poignez vilain, il vous oindra*).

To these permanent, and in some respects regular evils, aggravated still more by the caprices, the exactions of the kings, or at least, of their officers, were added, to render them more intolerable, the accidental evils of life and war. A series of bad years had brought famine and the plague. The

Navarrese of Philip of Longueville, the brigands of James Pipes, and other generals devastated all that the English had spared, and that a few only too uncommon inhabitants had not allowed to lie fallow. The Navarrese, the brigands, and the English inspired them with such terror that the unhappy villeins would leave their dwellings and fields, spend the nights on the islands or in boats moored in the middle of the river, and place one of their number in the church belfry in order that he might ring the tocsin, while they hid themselves in the bowels of the earth, in those subterranean places which were still to be found in the eighteenth century, along the Somme, from Péronne to its mouth.

Thus the hardships which nature and warfare imposed upon those living in country places made them more sensitive to those which their masters, if better advised or more humane, might have spared them. Their original devotedness had disappeared, as had their protection, of which they were no longer the object, and given place to muttered imprecations, to a vague and far-away desire to shake off the yoke. The hatred increased every day, but it still resembled a fire smouldering beneath the ashes. In order that it should burst forth, change into violence and activity, it was only necessary that a new exigency, a lesser one perhaps than many others to which they were subject, but more startling to their simple good sense, should arise in some wise to place the weapons in their hands. The occasion for movement was the fifth article of the ordinance, issued at Compiègne, which enjoined all those whom it might concern to put the strongholds in a state of defence at their own cost and expense. They whom it concerned were the unfortunate peasants, who were thus forced to pay for out of their savings, and to rebuild with their own hands, those citadels which when restored would make the oppression more intolerable than ever. This it is that caused a contemporary to say that the rebellion began with a protest against injustice.<sup>i</sup>

About a hundred of the peasants met at Clermont first, and raised the cry of "Death to gentlemen!" They elected a leader, called William Karl, or Callet, and rushed to the attack and destruction of the houses of the nobles. These hundreds soon swelled to thousands, and there was no excess of which they were not guilty: they slew the nobles themselves, with their wives and children, first treating the women with every indignity, their avowed purpose being to extinguish the race. They roasted a noble before the eyes of his family, and sought to make its members eat the flesh of the victim. Saracen or Christian, says Froissart,<sup>g</sup> never committed such iniquities.

There remains a doubt as to how far the townsfolk may have excited their rustic brethren to this revolt; but it does not appear that any great town made common cause with them. They were repulsed from Compiègne, though they entered Senlis. Marcel endeavoured to make use of the Jacques in humbling the noblesse and destroying their strongholds, without the infamy of outraging women and slaying children. But whilst Marcel was politic enough to make this attempt, the king of Navarre could not but sympathise with the noblesse, and fly to their aid. The Jacques, knowing his liberal reputation, were inclined to negotiate with him, which enabled the king of Navarre to entice the chief and some of his officers to parley. While thus engaged, they were surprised, bound, and decapitated. This is not the last instance of a magnate betraying those who trusted, and massacring those who could have best supported him. Charles afterwards attacked the army of Jacques, and slew three thousand of them.





THE JACQUERIE  
(From the painting by Georges Rochegrosse)



[1358 A.D.]

The regent, after holding the estates of Champagne and Vermandois, and procuring their adhesion, took his principal military post at Meaux in order to straiten Paris. To this place not only did his troops repair, but the ladies of the court — the duchesses of Normandy and Orleans, as well as the wives of the noblesse — betook themselves to Meaux as to a place of safety. The market of this town, surrounded by walls and by water, had been rendered a fortress by the regent. The Jacques attacked the town, in concert with a few Parisians, and easily made themselves masters of all save the market. The count of Foix, and the capital De Buch, Gascon nobles, were returning from a campaign with the Teutonic knights of Prussia against the pagans, when they heard of the peril of the noble ladies at Meaux. Though the capital was a subject of King Edward, he nevertheless flew with De Foix to the rescue of the three hundred ladies menaced by the Jacques; and these were routed and driven into the Maine with great slaughter. The victors of Meaux then attacked Senlis; there the citizens and Jacques fought together, and made a most obstinate resistance. But the nobles, reinforced by knights and nobles from Brabant, Hainault, and the Gascon hordes, annihilated the peasantry, notwithstanding their numbers; and the insurrection of the Jacques was drowned in blood.<sup>j</sup>

## DEATH OF MARCEL

The effects of the *Jacquerie* reached Marcel; discord appeared in the commune. Obligated to seek outside help, the provost of the merchants called upon the king of Navarre and agreed to prepare the way for him to the throne of France. On the night of July 31st, 1358, as Marcel was changing the guard at the Porte St. Denis through which Charles of Navarre was to enter, he was massacred, together with those who were with him, by the alderman, John Maillart, who had discovered the plot.<sup>1</sup> The dauphin returned to Paris with an army and had Marcel's chief companions decapitated or exiled.<sup>f</sup>

It is necessary to dwell upon the memorable part played by Étienne Marcel and the municipality of Paris in the political and social crisis which followed the disaster of Poitiers and the captivity of King John. In the middle of this fourteenth century, so uncivilised and sombre, a man appeared who, by wonderful instinct, laid down and nearly succeeded in obtaining the adoption of the essential principles on which modern society is founded; that is, the government of the country by elected representatives, taxes voted by the representatives of the taxpayers, the abolition of privileges founded upon right of birth, the extension of political rights to all citizens,

[<sup>1</sup> Maillart entered into communication with two leaders of the dauphin's party, Pépin des Essarts and John de Charny. All three with their men "came properly armed, a little before midnight, to the porte St. Denis, where they found the provost of the merchants with the keys of the gate in his hand. Upon this, John Maillart said to him, calling him by his name, 'Étienne, what do you do here at this time of night?' The provost replied, 'John, why do you ask it? I am here to take care of, and to guard the city, of which I have the government.' 'By God,' answered John, 'things shall not go on so: you are not here at this hour for any good, which I will now show you,' addressing himself to those near him; 'for see how he has got the keys of the gate in his hand, to betray the city.' The provost said, 'John, you lie.' John replied, 'It is you, Étienne, who lie'; and rushing on him, cried to his people, 'Kill them, kill them: now strike home, for they are all traitors.' There was a very great bustle; and the provost would gladly have escaped, but John struck him such a blow with his axe on the head, that he felled him to the ground, although he was his comrade, and never left him until he had killed him. Six others, who were present, were also killed; the remainder were carried to prison. They then put themselves in motion, and awakened everyone in the different streets of Paris," <sup>g</sup>]



and the subordination of traditional sovereignty to that external sovereign known as the nation. Marcel was that man.

Doubtless there are blots in Marcel's life. His siding with the Jacques is to be reproached against him as well as his friendship with the king of Navarre, "the third aspirant in the midst of the rival ambitions of France and England." But it was a question of putting down an absolute, unlimited power. If the aim is the entire remodelling of the organisation of society, when the end in view is the high ambition of snatching the direction of public affairs from the hands of an entire class, history shows that such objects have never been reached without bloodshed. When, four centuries later, the substitution of a representative government for a monarchy founded upon divine right caused so many heads to fall and entailed so much agony, is it to be wondered at that the revolution undertaken by Marcel should follow the same course and suffer the same fate? After all, if the bold provost shed the blood of his adversaries, he was playing a losing game, and staking his own life against the dominion of the nobility. Which is the more illustrious victim, the marshal or himself? Which executioner should be blamed? Marcel failed apparently, because the time was not yet ripe; he had, by a great bound into the future, put himself ahead of his epoch. But he threw an external lustre over the provosts of Paris, and as an eminent historian said, when he demanded that statues should be raised in memory of Marcel, "he is the greatest personage of the fourteenth century."<sup>k</sup>

#### PEACE NEGOTIATIONS; EDWARD IN FRANCE (1359 A.D.)

The dauphin had returned to Paris, but the state of the kingdom seemed desperate. People, however, spoke of peace. Weary of the sumptuous hospitality he had received at Windsor, John had treated with the king of England. He had abandoned to him the shores of the Channel, that is to say Calais, Montreuil, Boulogne, Ponthieu, and Normandy; the whole of Aquitaine, which included Gascony, Bordelais, Agénois, Quercy, Périgord, the Limousin, Poitou, Saintonge, and Aunis; also Touraine and Anjou; and besides this four million gold crowns for the king's personal ransom. It was the greatest and best part of France, including the entrances to all the rivers. When the treaty was brought to Paris the dauphin refused to execute it, and to strengthen himself for the contest with his father called, at Paris on the 19th of May, 1359, the semblance of an assembly of the three orders, which rejected the shameful terms and added that King John must stay in England until it pleased God to show him the way out.

Five months after, October 28th, 1359, Edward landed at Calais with his four sons, the most powerful lords of his kingdom, six thousand coats of iron armour, six thousand carts loaded with ammunition, ovens, mills, forges, tents — everything necessary to live comfortably, even to falcons and hunting-packs, and skiffs of rough hides for fishing. "There was such a multitude of armed men that all the country was covered, and so richly armed and bedecked that it was a marvel and great joy to see their shining armour, waving banners, and arranged contests. And again there were five hundred pages with shovels and picks who went before the wagons and opened the way and cut the thorns and the bushes to make the transport easier."

The weather did not favour the expedition, for it rained incessantly. On the 30th of November, the English arrived before Rheims. John de Craon the archbishop shut the gates upon them and valiantly repulsed all their attacks. Edward had announced a long time before that he wished to

[1358-1359 A.D.]

be crowned there. He passed some weeks before its walls, unable to take it by storm, but hoping each day that he would be attacked and win a great battle as Crécy and Poitiers. Finally, nobody appearing, he turned back, going leisurely across country to Châlons, Bar-le-Duc, Troyes, and Tonnerre; the duke of Burgundy obtained from the pillage some two hundred thousand gold crowns. Then Edward marched straight towards Paris, and established himself about two leagues from the town at Bourg-la-Reine. The English heralds approached to offer battle to the dauphin, who refused it. A knight of the enemy, Sir Walter Manny, advanced to the very ramparts, seeking for single combat, but Charles expressly forbade his warriors to go outside the barriers. He wanted none of this war as the nobles were conducting it at present.

And so the citizens shut up in their towns and the nobles in their castles let pass the storm which could not reach them behind their walls. Everything fell upon the peasants, who dared not even defend themselves. But misery finally gave them courage and despair brought them strength. They came to dare to look in the face the iron-sheathed men before whom they used to tremble, and at several points the foreign aggressor began to meet with local popular resistance, more dangerous for him than the great battles of the feudal princes. Edward himself wearied of this inert but invincible resistance. It was said that the English king and his followers making their way, weary and discouraged across the plains of

Beauce, encountered a terrific storm which seemed a warning from heaven, and that the king made a vow before Notre Dame de Chartres, to do all he could to re-establish peace between the two nations. The king's heart had not been turned suddenly by the storm; it was the fatigues of a war that was bringing no glory, for there were no battles and no booty, because everything had been captured or hidden in the fortresses.



A FRENCH PAGE, FOURTEENTH CENTURY

### *The Story of Le Grand Ferré*

One of the most curious incidents of this popular resistance is thus described by a chronicler of the age, the continuator of Nangis, in language not without charm in spite of many Latin barbarisms.<sup>1</sup>

There was one strong enough place, in a little Longueil village, close to Compiègne. The inhabitants, seeing they would be in great peril if the enemy should take possession of it, demanded of their ruling lord, and of the abbé of St. Corneille whose serfs they were, permission to fortify their village. After having obtained this, they collected provisions and arms, chose for captain a fine strong man named Guillaume des Alouettes from among themselves, and swore to defend their town with their last breath. When this was done and became known, many hastened from neighbouring

villages for protection. The captain had for servant a man as brave as he was tall and strong, known as "Le Grand Ferré" (*Magnus Ferratus*). In spite of his huge size and strength Le Grand Ferré had a very poor opinion of himself, and the captain could do with him what he liked.

There were about two hundred of them, all labourers and accustomed to gain a scanty livelihood with their hands. The English, who occupied a strong position near Creil, on learning of these preparations for defence, were filled with scorn for such wretched people. "Let us drive the villagers out," they said, "the place is good and strong and we will occupy it." And they prepared to do as they said. Two hundred English marched thither. Watch was not well kept; even the gates were open, and the enemy entered boisterously. At the noise they made those in the houses rushed to the windows, and seeing so many armed men were overcome by fright. The captain finally appeared with some of his men, and began to strike the English bravely, but was soon surrounded and mortally wounded. At this misfortune the others including Le Grand Ferré said among themselves, "Let us go down and sell our lives dearly, for we may expect no mercy." So they collected together and suddenly appearing from different directions threw themselves with redoubled blows upon the English; they struck as if threshing wheat on the barn floor. Arms were raised and lowered and at each blow an Englishman fell.

When Le Grand Ferré reached the side of his dying captain, his grief overcame him and he threw himself furiously upon the enemy. As he was head and shoulders above his companions they could see him wielding his axe, striking and redoubling his blows, none of which missed a victim. Helmets were broken, skulls split, and arms cut off. In a short time there was a clear space around him, for he had killed eighteen and wounded many more. His encouraged comrades did marvels, and the English quit the affair and took to flight. Some jumped into the moat and were drowned, others flung themselves against the gates; but blows rained upon them thick and fast. Le Grand Ferré, reaching the middle of the street where the enemy had planted its standard, killed the bearer, and seizing the flag told one of his own men to go and throw it into the moat. The man however pointed with terror to the still thick mass of English. "Follow me," called out Le Grand Ferré, and seizing his great axe in both hands he struck right and left, till he made a path to the moat where the others threw the enemy's ensign into the mud. Le Grand Ferré stopped a moment for breath, but returned at once to what remained of the English. Only a very few of those who came to perform this deed escaped, thanks to God and Le Grand Ferré, who killed that day more than forty of them.

The English were very angry and disturbed to see so many of their brave soldiers perish at the hands of these peasants. The next day they returned in greater numbers, but the people of Longueil no longer feared them. They went forth to meet the enemy, Le Grand Ferré at their head. And when the enemy saw him and felt the weight of his arm and his iron axe, they wished they had never come that way. They could not get back so fast that many were not mortally wounded, killed, or taken prisoners, and among these were some men of high lineage. If the folk of Longueil had consented to ransom them as the nobles do among themselves, they would have been very rich. But they would not hear of this and killed their captives, saying that in this way the enemy would do no more harm.

In this last struggle the fighting was very hard and Le Grand Ferré became much exhausted. He drank quantities of cold water and was almost



[1358-1360 A.D.]

immediately seized with a fever. He managed to get back to the village to his cottage and went to bed, but keeping close to him his good axe, an iron axe so heavy that a man of ordinary strength could scarcely lift it from the ground with both hands. The English learned with joy that Le Grand Ferré was ill, and without giving him time to recover despatched twelve soldiers with orders to kill him. His wife saw them from afar and cried to him, "Oh, my poor Ferré, here come the English, what will you do?" He forgot his illness, and got up quietly. Taking his heavy axe he strode into his yard. When they entered, "Ah, brigands," he cried, "you come to take me in my bed, but you don't know me." He placed his back to the wall so as not to be surrounded, and swinging his axe brought his assailants face to face with death. Of the twelve he killed five and put the rest to flight. Le Grand Ferré returned to his bed, but he had again overheated himself in dealing so many blows and drank more cold water. The violence of the fever redoubled, and a few days later, having received the sacraments, he passed away. Le Grand Ferré was buried in the village cemetery. All his companions, the whole countryside in fact, mourned his loss; for with him alive the English would never have dared approach.<sup>d</sup>

One feels, in the wealth of detail into which the chronicler enters, the sympathy of the old monk for the poor peasants. In the depths of the monasteries were narrated their valiant deeds against the pillagers of churches; these are told much more frequently in village companies. The tales spread slowly but went far. Little by little the foundations of hatred for the foreigner were laid in the hearts of the people, and a love of country whose fiercest outburst is found in Joan of Arc.

## THE TREATY OF BRETIGNY (1360 A.D.)

The dauphin was still more anxious to send the English home because "France was in its last throes, and for so little as its woes might last it might perish." A conference was opened at Bretigny, near Chartres, the 1st of May, 1360. The English negotiators demanded in the first place the whole crown of France; then they limited themselves to what had belonged to the Plantagenets; finally Edward III contented himself with the duchy of Aquitaine and all its dependencies (Gascony, Poitou, Saintonge, Aunis, Agénois, Périgord, the Limousin, Quercy, Rouergue, and Angoumois), ceded in independent sovereignty, and Calais with the counties of Ponthieu and Guines, also the viscounty of Montreuil. Thus ended the first period of the Hundred Years' War. The king's ransom was fixed at three million gold crowns;<sup>1</sup> in guarantee for which sum John had to leave in Edward's hands a certain number of hostages taken from the highest nobles and richest bourgeoisie of the land. Edward carried them with him across Normandy, which he harassed once more, in order to embark at Honfleur, the Havre of that day. The provinces promised to the king of England were given up, despite the protests against this pretended restitution by the great majority who said, with the inhabitants of La Rochelle, "We will acknowledge the English with our lips, but never with our hearts." For a whole year they refused to open their gates to the English.

At Abbeville things went still better. When the patriotic citizens saw in their streets the soldiers who for fifteen years had trampled France

[<sup>1</sup>According to Leber,<sup>m</sup> the king's ransom would equal 247,500,000 modern francs; and he adds: "This sum, enormous as it is, cannot equal the total of the single ransoms that went out of the country during this reign."]

under foot, they were unable to restrain themselves; secret meetings were held; then a riot broke out which was quickly suppressed, but not before a rich citizen, Ringois, was captured. The English commandant used, however, moderation and offered Ringois his liberty on sole condition that he would take the oath of allegiance to Edward III. Ringois refused. They took him to Dover, threatening him this time with death if he were obstinate, but he persisted. They brought him even to the platform of the fortress and showed him the furthestmost parapet with the sea beating furiously at its feet; if he said one word he would be saved. He still refused and the guard threw him off.

There still remained to find the money for the first payment of the ransom, and it was obtained by a shameful expedient. "The king of France," says Matteo Villani, the historian, "sold his flesh and blood." For 600,000 florins he bestowed his daughter Isabella, then only eleven years of age, on Gian Galeazzo Visconti, the son of the fiercest tyrant in Italy, who hunted men in the streets of his capital and threw them living into the flames. Thanks to this money the king left Calais on the 25th of October, 1360.

#### THE LAST YEARS OF KING JOHN (1360-1364 A.D.)

The 5th of December following we find an ordinance by which John announces, in spite of the great compassion he has for his people, the levy of a new tax on all merchandise sold or exported, on salt and on wine, in return for which he promises henceforth good and loyal justice to all, to put nothing but undebased coin into circulation, and to abolish the right of seizure and other abuses that fell so heavily upon the poor people. These promises did not deceive any more than the taxes profited them. What could be produced in a country ceaselessly ravaged by large forces and desolated by frequent appearances of the black death? It became necessary to fall back on other resources — loans, the revocation of all donations made by kings since Philip the Fair, and giving the Jews considerable privileges in matters of finance. With the money thus procured what did the king do? Did he use it to break up those bands of brigands, marauders, and *tard venues* that had just (1362) captured and killed the constable James de Bourbon at Brignais near Lyons? He made little journeys at great expense, travelling from town to town to take possession of the rich heritage of the Capetian house of Burgundy, which the death of Philip de Rouvre had recently placed in his hands. From there he journeyed down to Avignon where he spent six months in feasting, and planning a marriage with the famous queen Joanna of Naples. The pope, who had already been twice ransomed from the great companies, made John a proposition capable of appealing to his adventurous imagination — to form all these warrior bands into a crusade, which would rid France of them, and at the same time win glory for himself. It is not impossible that John would have embarked on this rash enterprise had he not learned that one of his sons, the duke of Anjou, had escaped from the English, by whom he was held in hostage. John felt for his son to do a thing like this was a slight on royal honour, and resolved to go himself to replace the fugitive. He thus escaped in a chivalrous manner from his embarrassing position and the sight of France's misery. A part of the winter was spent in London, "in great rejoicings and recreations," says Froissart, "in dinners, suppers, and other fashions." These fêtes and great repasts killed him; he died in London, April 8th, 1364, at the age of forty-four.<sup>1</sup>

[1361-1364 A.D.]

Towards the end of 1361 the young duke Philip de Rouvre of Burgundy expired, leaving no issue; his marriage with the young heiress of Flanders not having been consummated. The duke possessed not only Burgundy, but Franche-Comté, Champagne, Artois, and Boulogne. An ancestor of Duke Philip had three daughters, to whom the succession now reverted. The eldest had been Marguerite, the unfortunate queen of Louis Hutin, whose daughter, married to the king of Navarre, had conveyed to the representative of that family the best right to the Burgundian succession. King John, descended from the second sister, would admit no right to the king of Navarre, nor yet to the count of Bar, descended from the third sister. He pleaded that he was nearer of kin than Charles of Navarre to the duke just deceased; and thus made use of the same claim to Burgundy that Edward III had done to France. John hastened to Dijon and installed himself there as duke, taking a solemn oath to respect all the privileges and rights of the duchy. Artois and Franche-Comté returned to the duchess-dowager of Flanders. John had no intention of uniting Burgundy to the crown, which he well knew would displease the Burgundians, accustomed from time immemorial to their native dukes and provincial independence. He therefore, in 1363, gave the duchy of Burgundy to his youngest son, Philip, who had been constantly by his side during the battle of Poitiers and his subsequent captivity. King John, indeed, assigned this reason for the gift. It was fully acquiesced in by John's successor; and thus was founded that brilliant house of the dukes of Burgundy of the second race, which reigned from the Schelde to the Alps, and overshadowed and endangered the monarchy of France itself.<sup>1</sup>

## CHARLES THE WISE (1364-1380 A.D.)

Charles V was seven-and-twenty when he began to reign, and if he had followed the example of his father, he would have played the part of feudal king and fighting cavalier, as that for which he was ordained. But the young monarch saw that France had need of other defenders than feudal kings and fighting cavaliers. It needed a clear eye and a steady hand—a man at the helm, not a gilt figure at the prow; for never was there a time when the vessel of the state seemed in such danger. There was a whole people to feed and satisfy—rebellious vassals to reclaim—an open foe to guard against—riotous bands in the very heart of the kingdom to be discomfited; and for all this he had an empty treasury, a discontented parliament, ambitious communes, and a disunited nobility. But the French heart of courage and chivalrous spirit of loyalty was still entire.

Charles was weak in body, and over him hung the sentence of death passed on him by the physicians in his youth. Charles the Bad, it was said, in return for his arrest at Rouen, had poisoned the dauphin's food.<sup>2</sup> The prince escaped destruction by the opening of a perpetual wound in his left arm. "Whenever the sore heals over," the doctors said, "the dauphin must die." This issue was probably only a sign of a feeble constitution, but it silenced the sneers of his enemies, who were not accustomed to see a king except in armour; it doubled the respect of the few discerning potentates of the time, who began to perceive that a cabinet might be quite as great

[<sup>1</sup> This famous house consisted of but four dukes: Philip the Bold, 1363; John the Fearless, 1404; Philip the Good, 1419; and Charles the Bold (*le téméraire*), 1467-1477.]

[<sup>2</sup> This story is related by Froissart *o*, but, as Martin *b* says, "the fact is more than doubtful." Charles' biographer, Christine de Pisan, *v* is unable to give the cause of the king's constitutional weakness.]



a scene of glory as a field of battle. Edward III said he was never so resisted in open fight, as by the calm, sagacious councillor who had never drawn a sword. Before the first year was over all men perceived that things were greatly changed. There were no tournaments at the Louvre — no feasts at the palace. The king lived like an anchorite, except on state occasions, when he outshone the magnificence of oriental princes; and paid his men-at-arms their wages, and granted privileges to the trading towns, and did not increase a single tax! People must have grown ashamed of sustaining the

cause of Charles the Bad against so true a Frenchman and gracious a king as Charles the Wise; yet the war continued.<sup>n</sup>

Charles V at first made use of the help of his brothers, committing to their hands the provinces most remote from the centre, Languedoc to the duke of Anjou, and Burgundy to Philip the Bold. He himself attended only to the centre; but he needed an arm — a sword. There was then hardly any military spirit except among the Bretons and the Gascons. The king attached to him a brave Breton of Dinan, the sieur Du Guesclin, whom he had himself seen at the siege of Melun, and who had been fighting for France for some years.<sup>e</sup>



CHARLES V

### *Early Exploits of Bertrand du Guesclin*

The childhood of Bertrand du Guesclin offers some striking peculiarities. His ugliness, his deformity, and his rough, wild bearing had won for him

the dislike of his family; the harsh treatment he endured only served to embitter his character. Armed with a stick, which he invariably carried, young Bertrand was a great trouble to his mother, and the terror of all the children in the neighbourhood. He could not be taught to read. "He knew nothing of letters," says a chronicle, "and no masters could ever be found from whom he was willing to learn; but he always wanted to strike and beat them."

One fine day, being then about sixteen or seventeen years of age, Bertrand escaped from his father's house, which to his youthful ardour felt like a prison, and went off in triumph to Rennes to wrestle with a young Breton, already made proud by having overcome twelve adversaries; and soon afterwards Rennes beheld him again victorious in a solemn tournament, and from that time everyone who knew him, even his parents, understood that Bertrand had a great future before him. The war between Charles of Blois and John de Montfort, the two claimants of the duchy of Brittany, afforded Bertrand a favourable opportunity for distinguishing himself; he took the side of Charles of Blois, whose cause appeared to him more French than that of his rival, and the walls of Vannes, Fougerey, and Rennes were

[1359-1364 A.D.]

in turns witnesses of his extraordinary valour. Charles of Blois, to show his gratitude, presented him with the valuable domain of La Roche d'Airien or De Rien. In 1359 Bertrand compelled the duke of Lancaster to raise the siege of Dinan. His battle-cry was, "Notre Dame, Guesclin. Guesclin!" When in battle, this name rang in the ears of the English; it had the effect of a clap of thunder, and even the bravest trembled before such an enemy. The most careful and complete investigations have not enabled the learned to state the precise date when Bertrand entered the service of the king of France; it is not certain whether it was to King John or to the dauphin that he first offered the support of his valour. But at least we know that in 1361 he was already in the royal pay, and that he was in command of a company of men-at-arms and archers; this fact is proved by a discharge signed at Paris by Du Guesclin, and preserved amongst the registers of the court of exchequer.

Some authors say that the governorship of Pontorson was given to Du Guesclin as a mark of special favour. Whilst fighting for the glory of the lilies of France, the Breton warrior by no means forgot the interests of Charles of Blois, his natural sovereign; thus, after driving the English out of Normandy, he marched to the siege of Bécherel and routed De Montfort's troops. It must have been about this time that his marriage took place with

Tiphaine or Thiéphaïne Raguenel, a rich heiress who, if we are to believe the traditions of the fourteenth century, foretold future events. The date of this marriage is one of the points of uncertainty in the history of Bertrand.

The new king's first care was to recover the mastery of the course of the Seine. Mantes and Meulan belonged to the king of Navarre; Boucicault and Du Guesclin got possession of them by an act of signal perfidy. The two towns had paid the penalty of all the mischief the Navarrese had done to the Parisians. The citizens had the satisfaction of seeing twenty-eight of them hanged in Paris.

The Navarrese, reinforced by English and Gascons under the captal De Buch, desired to avenge themselves, and do something to hinder the king from going to Rheims. Du Guesclin soon advanced with a considerable body of French, Bretons, and also Gascons. The captal retreated towards Évreux, and halted at Cocherel, on an eminence; but Du Guesclin had the address to deprive him of the advantage of the ground. He sounded a retreat and made a feint of running away. The captal could not hinder his Englishmen from descending to pursue; they were too proud to hearken to a Gascon general, though a great lord and of the house of Foix. He was, therefore, constrained to obey his soldiers and accompany



BERTRAND DU GUESCLIN

them into the plain. Thereupon Du Guesclin wheeled round. The Gascons whom he had with him appointed thirty of their number to carry off the captal from the midst of his men. The other Navarrese leaders were killed and the battle was won. Won on the 16th of May (1364), it was known at Rheims on the 18th, the coronation day—a fine omen for the new royalty. Charles V gave Du Guesclin such a reward as never king before him had bestowed: an establishment on the footing of a prince, the county of Longueville, the patrimony of the king of Navarre's brother. At the same time he beheaded the sire de Saquenville, one of the chief advisers of the Navarrese. He dealt no better with the French who were found in the ranks of the companies. Men began to bethink them that brigandage was a crime.

*End of the Breton War: Battle of Auray (1364 A.D.)*

The war in Brittany ended in the same year. The king of France lent Charles of Blois Du Guesclin and one thousand lances. The prince of Wales sent De Montfort, John Chandos,—the only rival in Europe to the fame of Du Guesclin as general and knight,—two hundred lances, and as many archers; and with these were joined several English knights. Montfort and the English were posted on a height, like the prince of Wales at Poitiers. Charles of Blois did not care for that. That devout prince, who believed in miracles, and who himself performed them, had refused at the siege of Quimper to retreat before a flood. “If it is God’s will,” he said, “the tide will do us no harm.” He made no more account of the mountain at Auray than of the flood at Quimper. Charles of Blois had the greater strength; many Bretons, even, of La Bretagne-Bretonnante joined him, out of hatred doubtless to the English. Du Guesclin disposed the army in an admirable manner. “Each man-at-arms,” says Froissart,<sup>g</sup> “carried his lance straight before him, projecting five feet, and had a small, hard, and well-sharpened axe, with a small handle. And thus they advanced in most handsome array. They rode so close that you could not have thrown a tennis ball among them, but it would have fallen on the points of the lances.” John Chandos gazed long on the French order of battle, “the which he praised mightily within himself.” He could not conceal his sentiments, but said, “So help me God as it is true that there is here flower of chivalry, great sense, and good arrangement.” Chandos had set apart a reserve to support each corps that wavered. It was not without difficulty he prevailed on one of his knights to remain in the rear and command that reserve; prayers, and almost tears were necessary to overcome the feudal prejudice that made the front rank be regarded as the only post of honour. Du Guesclin could not have effected the same thing in the other army.

The two adverse claimants fought at the head of their respective forces. The Bretons were weary of this war, and wished to see it ended by the death of the one or the other. Chandos’ reserve gave him the advantage over Du Guesclin, who was unhorsed and taken prisoner. The whole brunt of the battle then fell on Charles of Blois; his banner was pulled down and himself slain. The greatest lords of Brittany obstinately held out, and were likewise slain (September 29th, 1364). When the English came, with great exultation, and showed De Montfort his enemy whom they had killed, the voice of French blood, or perhaps of kindred, awoke within him, and tears started from his eyes. A haircloth was found under the dead man’s cuirass. His piety and his good qualities recurred to memory. He had recommenced the war only in deference to his wife, whose patrimony



[1364-1366 A.D.]

Brittany was. This saint was also a man. He made verses and composed *lais* in the intervals between his battles. He had been a lover, too; a bastard of his was killed by his side, endeavouring to avenge him. De Montfort got possession of all the strongest places in the country in a few days. The children of Charles of Blois were prisoners in England. The king of France, who carried no passion into the trade of war, made terms with the victor, and induced the widow of Charles of Blois to content herself with the county of Penthievre, the viscounty of Limoges, and an income of 10,000 livres. The king did wisely. The essential thing was to hinder Brittany from doing homage to the English sovereign. There was every probability that, sooner or later, it would become weary of the protégé of England.<sup>e</sup> Peace was concluded on these terms at Guérande in 1365, and Du Guesclin was restored to liberty.

Peace also was concluded with Charles of Navarre, who was glad to accept the city of Montpellier in exchange for the places he had lost upon the Seine, and a period of rest was promised to the distracted land.

*Du Guesclin Leads the Free Companies into Castile (1366 A.D.)*

But the rest was impossible with so many conflicting interests to arrange, and such a spirit of unrule diffused by the recent struggles. Charles the Wise looked back with fond regret to the time of the Crusades, and meditated an exportation of the thousands of armed men of all surrounding countries to the East. But the Brabanters, English, and Saxons were very well satisfied with their present position, and had no desire to distinguish themselves against the enemies of the faith, when they could live so comfortably on the fat of abbey-lands, and occasionally put a bishop to ransom at home. The example of Montferrat, who had saved the pope at Avignon by leading the free lances of the south against the wealth of Milan, occurred also to the anxious thoughts of the king; and just at the moment when he was in greatest distress, a circumstance occurred in Spain which gave him the wished-for opportunity. Pedro, known in general history as the Cruel, but recognised in Spanish annals as the Great Justiciar, had offended a great proportion of his subjects by his relentless executions and harsh behaviour. He had poisoned his wife, a princess of Bourbon, at the instigation of his favourite Maria de Padilla, and threatened death to the surviving natural children of his father. Of these, Don Henry of Trastamara was the most popular and the best; he fled to France, and implored the aid of Charles against the murderous husband and un pitying brother. Du Guesclin saw the opening. "Sir," he said, "the free lances are anxious for work, and will gather from all parts if I hoist my banner. Better neighbours will they be on the other side of the Pyrenees than on this."

Charles adopted the party of the banished brother, and preparations were instantly made. Du Guesclin himself had begun as a leader of free lances, and knew their ways. Thirty thousand of them joined him in an incredibly short space of time, and he marched southward down the Rhone. The pope was as much alarmed as his predecessor had been, and sent out to know the object of their approach to Avignon. Bertrand answered with a grim smile, "We are thirty thousand poor Christian pilgrims bound on a crusade against the Saracens of Granada, and we want the holy father's absolution, and also 200,000 livres." "Touching the absolution, my son," replied the nuncio, "you shall have it without fail; but with regard to the money, that is a different thing." "Sir," replied the knight, "there be many here who reckon not

of absolution, but many who desire the money, for we make them prudent men in spite of themselves." Their prudence was rewarded with both the absolution and coin to the amount of 200,000 livres. They made a detour and Avignon was saved. When they reached Toulouse, the object of the expedition was for the first time declared to them. Plunder and battle was all they required, and a deluge of cruelty, courage, and destructiveness poured down on devoted Spain. Pedro was expelled from the throne, and fled to Portugal. Henry was crowned at Burgos with Du Guesclin at his side, and was joyously received in the other cities of Castile.

Both nations now seemed ready for repose, and the triumph of having restored an exile and created a king was added to the other glories of the French monarch. But the Black Prince held his court at Bordeaux. Shortly after his marriage, in 1361, he was created duke of Aquitaine and had been living in his dominions since 1363. Feasts and tournaments were celebrated according to the strictest rules of chivalry, and noble ladies listened to the songs of troubadours, and the picturesque narratives of Froissart, and the adventures of fabulous warriors, as their predecessors were said to have done in the days of Charlemagne and Arthur. Suddenly the dethroned and powerless Pedro threw himself at the feet of the master of the lists; and half the stories of kingdoms lost and won by the irresistible sword of a single champion immediately rushed to their minds. All the blood of knighthood was on fire at the insolence of a people who had rebelled against their anointed lord, and Edward of Wales, as became a knight and man of honour, vowed to restore his suppliant to the throne. Crécy was renewed over again in the great field of Navarrete in 1367. Du Guesclin himself fell into the enemy's hands, and all the work of the free lances was utterly undone. Pedro was king and justiciary in one, and let loose his royal vengeance on all the land. Murders, executions, confiscations threw the whole kingdom into despair, and the English bitterly repented of their interference in behalf of so unchivalrous, unpitying a tyrant. The dreadful heats of the south came to the support of Henry. The English died of fever and excess, and discipline became relaxed. The reinstated king declined to pay the stipulated rewards; mutiny broke out among the discontented conquerors; and in the scorching summer, and amid these disturbances, the health of the Black Prince began to fail.

Meantime, Charles the Wise endeared himself to his subjects by diminishing their burdens, by encouraging agriculture, and giving greater influence to the parliaments he convoked. The contrast was great and striking. Conquest in the field was of no avail against the steady advance of a popularity so justly founded and nobly sustained, as now grew on the vanquished side. The free lances, who had joined the prince, if not paid by the treasuries of Pedro, must be satisfied by the wealth of their employer. Edward returned to Bordeaux with barren laurels, and an empty exchequer. He laid fresh burdens on his unhappy subjects in Aquitaine, to pay for the expenses incurred in Castile, and when the population of that trampled province compared their position with that of their neighbours under the crown, dissatisfaction took a wider range, and they complained of their rulers, not only as oppressors, but as foreigners. The English, indeed, even when the languages were the same, never became acclimated in France, and now there was added the great distinction of a different tongue; for the Norman portion of the English people had now become so small that English at this time was declared to be the language of law, as it had long been of religion and commerce. Anglo-Saxon bowmen, who never spoke a word of French,

[1368-1369 A.D.]

served in the ranks of the Black Prince, and, of course, offended the nations by their brutal contempt for everything they did not understand. The prince, therefore, in the midst of failing health and military disappointment, perceived that his countrymen were not the masters of the land he claimed, but were only forcibly encamped on it.

From England no help was to be had. The king was old, and had fallen into the hands of a designing favourite, Alice Perrers, and her accomplices, who ruled him at their will. And nothing was wanting to the French monarch in these favourable circumstances, but warriors who could carry his plans into effect. Du Guesclin was a prisoner at Bordeaux, and all the wiser spirits in the court advised the prince on no account to let so dangerous an enemy go. But Edward was made of penetrable stuff; and on one occasion when they were in familiar conversation, he said, if the captive could collect a hundred thousand francs, he should be set at large—a vast sum in those days; but the sight of Du Guesclin, sword in hand, and released from bondage, was worth forty times the amount to the French king. The money was sent at once, and Du Guesclin lost no time in showing his arm as strong and his heart as brave as ever. A rapid incursion into Spain and the battle of Montiel (March 14th, 1369) established Henry of Trastamara once more upon the throne, and freed him from the rivalry of Pedro, by the death of that ferocious tyrant. He was stabbed to the heart by his infuriated brother, after a personal struggle which lasted a long time. Henry was now undisturbed, and attributed his prosperity to the favour of the French king. He put the Castilian navy at the service of France.



A FRENCH KNIGHT, END OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

*The Peace of Bretigny is Broken (1368-1369 A.D.)*

Charles was not slow in seeing the advantage of his position. Strengthened by the gratitude of his new ally, and the general favour of all his subjects, he spoke in a tone of defiance and majesty to the English prince, which sounded strange in his ears within twelve years of the battle of Poitiers. He summoned the prince of Wales to appear before his court of peers, as one of the feudatories of the realm, to answer for high crimes and misdemeanours. Edward answered, with much submission, that he would not fail to obey the summons, but would bring sixty thousand men along with him—helmet on head and spear in rest. Charles knew too well that this was but a vain boast, for the warrior was now too feeble to ride, and advanced in the exorbitance of his claims. Edward of England took up the game of brag on behalf of his son, and retorted from Windsor by reasserting his claim to the French throne, and calling himself, in formal documents, king of England and France once more.



War was openly declared, and Charles summoned his states in Paris (May 9th, 1369). Never was meeting so unanimous and so sedately firm. Taxes were voted, forces were raised, and defiance was hurled against the English both in their island fastness and the lands they usurped in France. The court of peers, consulted in its turn, declared that King Edward and his, not having appeared in answer to these summons, the duchy of Aquitaine and other English holdings in France should be and were confiscated. Every village, in imitation of the enemy they had learned to fear, had butts for practice of the bow; games of manly exertion were encouraged; freedom was extended to the serfs, and the municipal towns were enriched with further privileges. Du Guesclin returned from the Spanish triumph, and visited the king. The feeling in favour of illustrious birth was then so strong that, though Charles had bestowed the highest commands on the Breton soldier, they were offices which gave him only a temporary superiority over the forces employed, and implied no permanent pre-eminence when peace should be restored. But on this occasion a stately assemblage was called. All the princes of the blood, nobles of highest rank, chancellors, judges, warriors, were assembled in the great hôtel St. Pol, and Charles gave his sword to Du Guesclin, and said: "Du Guesclin, take my sword, and use it against my enemies. Henceforth you are constable of France." This was the highest dignity a subject could hold, and Bertrand excused himself on account of his humble extraction; but Charles persisted, and the Montmorencys, and De Coucys, and Courtenays, and Bourbons, thought the sword could not be in better wielding, and did obeisance to Sir Bertrand du Guesclin, who was now the foremost man in all the land.<sup>n</sup>

### *The English Invasion (1369-1370 A.D.)*

The English immediately landed at Calais, while the Black Prince prepared another attack upon the south. A French army marched to meet them, but refused to engage them and retreated as they advanced. The towns were well fortified, and none was taken; the expedition was confined to useless devastation of the surrounding country.

In 1370 they returned and the same programme was repeated. The order to refrain from combat was so rigorously observed that at Noyon, when one of the enemy's cavalry climbed the ramparts crying out: "My lords, I have come to call on you; since you do not condescend to come out of your shell, I will come in!" he was allowed to depart safe and sound. Before Rheims, before Paris, the English encountered the same stolidity. From his refuge at St. Pol, where he had shut himself up, the king could watch the burning of the villages. But the brave Clisson himself exclaimed:

"Sire, you have no need to pit your own men against these furies; let them wear themselves out. They will not deprive you of your heritage with all these rubbish-heaps."

"Never was a king of France less given to war," said Edward III; "never was one who kept me so busy!" Charles V, in fact, feeble and ailing, never held a lance; he was vastly more fond of books. He had the most valuable library of the day, 910 volumes carefully guarded behind iron bars in a tower of the Louvre. He read the Bible through once every year. He corresponded with the pope and sent him presents; and again, to quote Froissart,<sup>g</sup> "my lord the king piously marched barefoot in the procession, and madame the queen also." So good a friend of the pope, so pious a

[1370-1376 A.D.]

sovereign, merited the alliance of every bishop of the realm; and in fact the majority opened to him the gates of their capitals; even those upon whom the English most depended, as the bishop of Limoges, comrade of the prince of Wales, turned French.

This last act of treachery exasperated the English. The Black Prince swore by the soul of his father that he would enter into no other undertaking until he had made Limoges and the other traitors pay dearly for their treason. Having arrived before the city, he had part of the wall torn down, and his soldiers plunged through the breach into the streets. The prince had himself carried in in his litter.

"That was a sad scene," writes Froissart,<sup>g</sup> "where men, women, and children hung themselves at his feet, crying, 'Mercy, gentle prince!' But he was too inflamed with excitement to attend. Their pleading went unheard, and all were put to the sword. Never a heart so hard but would have wept to have stood in that city of Limoges and witnessed so great slaughter; more than three thousand men, women, and children lost their heads that day. And may God receive their souls, for martyrs they truly were."

The English grew somewhat calmer at last through their interest in a new spectacle: three French cavaliers, with backs to an old wall, contended as if in the lists against the duke of Lancaster and the earls of Cambridge and Pembroke. The prince of Wales stopped his chariot near by, the better to look on; and he allowed the three cavaliers to be recommended to mercy. The bishop, the principal author of the treason, he also spared. This unfortunate exploit was the Black Prince's last adventure; he languished for a few years, and returned to die in England (1376).

The English possessed an excellent infantry, archers whose darts pierced the best-made cuirasses, and men-at-arms almost worth a regular cavalry by their remarkable discipline and their habituation to concerted movement. To these Charles could oppose only an immense throng of nobles who, though they might be very brave, were also totally undisciplined. The part of wisdom, therefore, was to avoid encounter with large bodies; but in the intervals between expeditions he allowed his men to indulge in skirmishes. Thus Du Guesclin fought at Pont-Valain with Robert Knolles, a redoubtable English partisan (1370), and another corps near Chizey in Poitou (1373). Chandos had been killed during the first campaign. Another leader of great renown, the capital De Buch, was taken in 1372, near Soubise. The French were not always beaten back.

Meanwhile the king had his own battles to fight, and his victories are inscribed intact in the *Recueil des Ordonnances*. Under date of 1370 we read: "February, 1370, letters according the inhabitants of Rodez the right to trade with the entire kingdom free of duty on imports. — March, 1370, letters to the effect that the inhabitants of Figeac, now on land declaring allegiance to Edward, son of the king of England, will not have their goods confiscated if they return to French soil; ordinance setting forth privileges accorded the city of Montauban. — April, 1370, ordinance setting forth privileges accorded the city of Verfeil. — May, 1370, letters exempting the city of Milhaud from imposts during twenty years, and ordinance of privileges accorded the city of Tulle. — June, 1370, ordinance containing privileges accorded the inhabitants of the county of Tartas, the cities of Dorat and Puy-Mirol. — July, 1370, ordinances containing privileges accorded the cities of Cahors, Castres, Puy-la-Roque, Sarlat, Montégrier, and Salvétat."

These were Charles V's implements of war. Among those cities whose doors the royal ordinances failed to open prowled his captains with their

stratagems of war, cajoling and negotiating. Du Guesclin treated in secret with the inhabitants of Poitiers, who like those of many other towns had remained French at heart, and they allowed him to enter with three hundred lances within their walls (1372). Charles at once granted titles to all those who afterwards exercised the functions of mayor or alderman in that city.

Philip Mansel with one hundred English held La Rochelle. One day while dining with the mayor, John Caudourier, he received a letter from the king of England. The governor, recognising the royal seal, but being in his quality of gentleman unable to read, requested his host to read it for him. The mayor read out a message composed by himself to the effect that on the following day, August 15th, 1372, the citizens and the garrison should pass in review before the square. As soon as Mansel had drawn his men from the château, a troop placed in ambush by the mayor occupied the citadel. Du Guesclin was there with two hundred lances, ready to take possession in the name of France. Some weeks previously the Castilian fleet had destroyed an English fleet before La Rochelle.

Nevertheless the confident enemy tried again in 1373. Landing at Calais with thirty thousand men, the duke of Lancaster set forth to conquer France: he only crossed it. The journey was prosperous as long as it lay through the rich provinces of the north; but in the poor and meagre central districts deprivation and illness were encountered. At Auvergne not a horse remained; at Bordeaux only six thousand men were left: the cavaliers as well as foot soldiers had to beg their bread from door to door.

The English, disgusted with such warfare, remained away the following year; and the year after that they demanded a truce, which lasted up to the death of Edward III in 1377. Charles then broke the truce and struck a blow. He fitted out five armies and conquered all Guienne, while a Castilian fleet manned by French troops ravaged the English counties of Kent and Sussex. In 1380 there remained to the enemy only five French towns—Bayonne, Bordeaux, Brest, Cherbourg, and Calais. At the same time Charles the Bad was overwhelmed and saved his Pyrenean kingdom only by the ceding of twenty places as a pledge of peace (1379).

#### LAST YEARS OF CHARLES V AND OF DU GUËSLIN

The king of France attempted in Brittany what had served him so well in Guienne. June 20th, 1378, he summoned the duke John IV to appear before the court of nobles; the duke not appearing, his fief was declared forfeit to the crown. The Gascons gave themselves up to France. The Bretons would not hear of the alliance. Barons, knights, and esquires signed at Rennes, April 26th, 1379, an act of confederation that the citizens themselves subscribed.

John IV, although expelled from the country, was recalled. All the Bretons in the service of the king—and there was a great number of them—abandoned him; even those who had previously promised to second his projects turned against him. The old Du Guesclin sent him the constable's sword; and on March 1st, 1380, a treaty of alliance was signed at Westminster between England and Brittany. Again an English army landed at Calais under the earl of Buckingham, and again it journeyed with impunity across the north of France. It had not reached Brittany when Charles V died at Vincennes, September 16th, 1380.<sup>1</sup>

Many things had conduced to weaken the health of the too thoughtful king. Dissensions among his brothers renewed in Paris the scenes of false-



[1378-1380 A.D.]

hood and partisanship which were going on in London. The influence he possessed over Europe as long as the pope resided in Avignon was taken from him, first by the removal of Gregory XI to Rome; and, in a short time after that, the usefulness of the papal chair in his schemes of advancement was altogether destroyed by the schism which broke out at the election of the next pope.

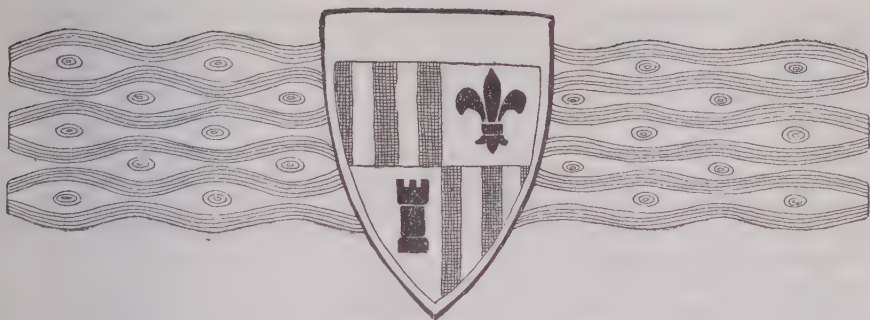
France accepted the Frenchman, Clement VII, who resided at Avignon as his predecessor had done; and half the rest of Christendom, including England, adhered to his Italian rival. This is the commencement of the great schism which afforded such vantage-ground, not only to the enemies of priestcraft but of Christianity itself. Charles felt the blow equally as Christian and king. While mourning this unhappy event, his grief was increased by the fall of the constable. Bertrand was besieging one of the strong castles in Auvergne which was rebellious against the royal authority and strengthened with an English garrison. The commander had agreed to surrender if not relieved within a certain time. Fever, pain, and anxiety laid Du Guesclin low; and when the appointed day came he was lying on his bier, and preparations were making to carry him to the grave. The governor, true to his word, hauled down the flag of independence, and marched out with all his men, head bare and sword drawn, and laid the keys of the fortress on the hero's coffin. So died the best soldier and truest gentleman of France. His last words to his comrades who bent over his couch were these: "Remember that whenever you are at war, the churchmen, the women, the children, and the poor are not your enemies."<sup>n</sup>

The modern editors of the works of the sieur Le Fevre give the following exaggerated estimate of Du Guesclin's merits:

"Bertrand was the man selected by providence as the instrument by which France was to be saved. Such a man deserved to take his place beside the kings among the tombs of St. Denis. He has been compared to Turenne; both brave and generous, they were like fathers to the men fighting under them; and when they were in want, Turenne sold his silver service for the benefit of his troops, as Bertrand sold his lands; there is some resemblance between these two characters, and the parallel might truthfully be carried further. But in reviewing the history of the Middle Ages, we find two heroes who much more strongly resemble Du Guesclin—Tancred and Richard Cœur de Lion. Examine carefully these three men, Tancred, Richard, and Du Guesclin, and you will find the same courage, the same boldness, the same rashness, the same contempt for danger, the same self-abnegation in victory; you will see three men who, on the battle-field, kill men as easily as an autumn wind blows down the leaves from the trees, and who, on their return to their tents, are as mild and docile as children; for them there is no intoxication in triumph, they show no pride in the hour of victory; their brows are humble, and you would think them unconscious of their own greatness. Bertrand du Guesclin swore 'by God who suffered on the cross and rose again the third day'; Tancred and Richard swore by the Holy Sepulchre, and trusting in the justice of their cause, the three knights would rush on the enemy with as much confidence as if God himself were speaking to them and urging them on. Does not the disinterestedness of Du Guesclin remind one of Tancred? How many knights were fed and paid by them—how many times they took off their own cloaks to conceal the poverty of some needy nobleman! Du Guesclin has all the characteristics of a hero of the Crusades; he would figure worthily in the Christian *Iliad* of the poet of Sorrento."<sup>o</sup>

The entire secret of Charles' success was reliance on his people ; and perhaps the most valuable portion of this reliance was in the fact that in the word "people" he included the whole population of France. This great word was not limited, in his interpretation of it, to the taxpaying inhabitants of the towns or free labourers on the farms. The very serfs on the soil were fellow-countrymen of the great successor of St. Louis. His laws had reference as often to the interests of the lowest of his subjects as to the rights of the richest cities. He was the first and the last to put arms into the hands of the whole nation. Each man had his bow and quiver of arrows, his short sword or iron-pointed staff. He was openly practised in the use of them, and was taught that it was dishonourable for a Frenchman to be unable to defend his wife and children with his own hands. The experiment was so successful against even such generals as Chandos and the Black Prince, that it might be expected to continue one of the standing institutions of the kingdom. But these feelings of self-respect were only useful against a foreign enemy, and might be dangerous against a domestic master. So, ere many years elapsed, the system was abolished ; the butts were destroyed, the bows and swords withdrawn, for fear the "small people" should find themselves too powerful ; and the result was — as we shall see — Henry V of England and the battle of Agincourt. It was not more in the formation of new establishments that Charles showed his wisdom than in the purification and improvement of the old. The legalism so strongly encouraged by Philip the Fair, as a preservative against the power of the nobles, had now become an oppression to the people. The civil servants of the crown absorbed a vast portion of the taxes they were employed to raise, and the paid offices about the provincial courts and local parliaments were innumerable. He diminished them both in number and amount of salary, and tried to save his subjects from the intricacies of technical pleadings, as almost an equal evil with the violence of lawless force. The only people, indeed, he could not bring within the rules of mercy and justice were the lords and gentlemen, who were the ornaments of chivalry and the strength of his armies. Feudalism, in fact, was dissolving, and chivalry, which was its poetic ideal, could not stand the trial of actual war. Knights were still mere gladiators — sometimes more for show than action ; and gentlemen, in our sense of the word, were not yet in existence.<sup>2</sup>





## CHAPTER VII

### THE BETRAYAL OF THE KINGDOM

[1380-1422 A.D.]

Fourteenth century France was the prey of Anarchy, of Civil War, of Foreign Invasion. When one considers the unhappy reigns of Philip of Valois and of John, the captivity of the king, the occupation of France by the English, the insanity of Charles VI, and the crimes of Isabella of Bavaria, one can explain why two centuries separated the literary epoch of France from that of Italy. — VILLEMAIN.<sup>4</sup>

CHARLES V was but forty-three years of age when he died. His death was a great misfortune for the country, for his eldest son was only twelve years old, and intrusted to the care of his three uncles, the dukes of Anjou, Burgundy, and Berri, grasping men, each solely preoccupied with one subject — the first with the kingdom of Naples where Queen Joanna had proclaimed him her successor, the second with the great fief of Flanders which he would in time inherit, the third with his pleasures and his wealth. The young king, who came to the throne as Charles VI, and who, owing to his tender years, was quite at the mercy of his relatives, had, on his mother's side, a fourth uncle, the duke de Bourbon, an excellent prince but wholly without influence; and a brother, the duke of Orleans.

During the late king's last moments, his eldest brother, the duke of Anjou, who by virtue of his title would assume the regency, kept himself hidden in an adjacent chamber. Scarcely had Charles drawn his last breath than the duke seized the crown jewels, and by threatening the treasurer, Savois, with death, got hold of a number of gold and silver ingots which had been sealed up in the walls of the castle of Melun by masons who had immediately been got rid of. The year before, while governor of Languedoc, he had caused an insurrection by his rapacious acts, and in Montpellier alone condemned two hundred citizens to the stake, two hundred to the gallows, two hundred to the block, eighteen hundred to the loss of their property, and the rest of the town to a fine of 600,000 francs. The king modified these atrocious sentences and recalled the duke. Unfortunately the power of regency belonged to this prince. His brothers, like himself, filled their pockets; Burgundy allotted himself the government of Normandy and Picardy; Berri, who had already had Berri, Auvergne, and Poitou in



appanage, took Languedoc and Aquitaine. Thus a third of the realm became a field for his rapacity.

A new reign always brings a moment of hope. The abolition of certain taxes was demanded, and the duke promised to suppress all those which had been instituted since Philip the Fair. He might as well have promised to renounce the government of France; the regent did not know how to keep his word. One day a mounted crier appeared in the public square, and announced that the king's silver plate had been stolen, promising a large reward to whoever recovered it. When a crowd had gathered to discuss the news, he cried that the next day a new tax would be levied on all merchandise sold, and galloped away at full speed.

The next day, in truth, which was the first of March, 1382, tax-gatherers appeared in the market-place and demanded a tax on a bit of cress which had just been sold by an old woman. A furious riot at once broke out. The rebels rushed to the Hôtel-de-Ville and the arsenal, and armed themselves with new mallets that had been stored up there in view of an attack from the English. These *maillotins* were, for the moment, masters of the situation; then, as in all popular riots of this time, fury gave way to terror and discouragement. The princes, who took the matter in hand, executed in secret the most seditious and imposed on others the most ruinous fines, with the proceeds of which the duke of Anjou departed for Italy. But the new tax was withdrawn and the leaders of the riot were punished secretly. The Parisian rising had meantime spread to Rouen, Rheims, Châlons, Troyes, and Orleans, where it formed the nucleus of two other revolutionary movements—one in the north in Flanders, the other in the south in Languedoc.

The duke of Berri had scarcely appeared in his province of Languedoc when trouble broke out. The pope interfered and put an end to it, but the pope could not stop the executions and cruelties of the governing prince. The peasants despoiled of everything by the soldiers commenced a sort of *jacquerie* (peasant revolt). They took refuge in the mountains, especially on the slopes of the Cévennes and thence, organised into armed bands, rushed down upon the nobles and wealthy inhabitants, giving no quarter to those whose hands were not callous with toil. They were called the *tuchins*. Affairs in Flanders were still more serious.

#### WAR IN FLANDERS: BATTLE OF ROOSEBEKE (1382 A.D.)

The Flemings had rebelled, in the preceding reign, against their French count who amused himself with violating the municipal franchises of the country. Peter Dubois and Philip van Artevelde, son of the famous brewer, had led with success the insurrection of the "*chaperons blancs*" (white-caps), and at the battle of Bruges (May 3rd, 1382) had overturned the last hopes of Count Louis. Philip van Artevelde pushed the insurrection with the same boldness and in the same manner as his father. Plenipotentiaries from Ghent, Ypres, and Bruges were sent to Richard II of England, offering to recognise him as king of France if he would come to their aid. For a quarter of a century the breath of revolt had been blowing over the middle classes throughout Europe—the enterprise of Rienzi at Rome, Wat Tyler in England, then Étienne Marcel and now the "*Jacques*," the "*maillotins*," the "*tuchins*," and the "*white-caps*"! Insurrection, smothered in one place, broke out afresh in another, and it was to be feared, as Froissart<sup>c</sup> says, "that all nobility and refinement would be dead and lost in France as well as in many other countries."

[1382-1383 A.D.]

One day while the dukes of Burgundy and Berri were discussing together the dangers of the situation and the necessity for intervention in Flanders, and of striking at the roots of the spirit of revolt and liberty, the young king entered, with a hawk on his fist. "Well, my dear uncles," said he, "and what are you talking about in such solemn council?" "Ah, monseigneur," replied Berri, "here is my brother of Burgundy who complains of the people in Flanders where the wretches have turned their lord and nobles out of their heritage. They have a leader who calls himself Artevelde, a true Englishman for courage, who has besieged a crowd of nobles in Oudenarde, and swears he will never leave and will have his will with those in the town unless your power relieve them." "By my faith," rejoined the king, "I have a great desire to help them. For God's sake, let us go there. I want nothing more than to arm myself, for I have never yet been armed, and if I wish to reign with power and honour, must I not learn the use of arms?" And he was anxious to set out that day or the next.

A great army was soon ready. At its approach all the Flemish towns made submission and the people of Ghent had now no resource but to win a great battle by throwing themselves upon the enemy with the impetuosity of the boar, as they had done at Bruges and as they now tried to do at Roosebeke, November 27th, 1382. They were tied one to the other, so as to make it impossible to retreat, and advanced in a single battalion. This manœuvre had been successful at Bruges against a much smaller number. But this time the wings of the great French army folded upon them, and, assailed on its side, the battalion was helpless. The lances of the cavalry carried much farther than the short Flemish spears, and the latter could not reach the enemy which was attacking them. Disorder soon reigned supreme in the little cohort surrounded on all sides.

"The men-at-arms," says Froissart,<sup>c</sup> "knocked down the Flemings with all their might. They had well-sharpened battle-axes, with which they cut through helmets and disbrained heads; others gave such blows with leaden maces that nothing could withstand them. Scarcely were the Flemings overthrown when pillagers advanced, who, mixing with the men-at-arms, made use of the large knives they carried, and finished slaying whoever fell into their hands, without more mercy than if they had been so many dogs. There was a large and high mound of the Flemings who were slain; and never was there so little blood spilt at so great a battle where such numbers were killed." Twenty-six thousand dead remained upon the field and among them the whole battalion of Ghent, including Artevelde. Flanders was not laid low by this defeat, for Ghent held out for two years more. But the nobles had avenged the shame of their defeat at Courtrai; and to efface even the memory of it, on leaving the town which had lodged them for a fortnight but where they had found, hanging in the churches, the golden spurs of the knights killed in 1302, they gave it to the flames after ransacking it. On his own account the duke of Burgundy took down from the cathedral a magnificent clock with figures which he removed to Dijon and set up in the south transept of the church of Notre Dame. It is still there.

## INSURRECTIONS IN PARIS AND ROUEN

The Paris riots, quite as much as the rising at Ghent, had been put down at Roosebeke. The Parisians realised that nothing more would be tolerated from them, but hoped nevertheless by showing their strength that nothing would be attempted. So they set out to meet the king to the number of

twenty thousand armed men, who drew up in line of battle beneath the heights of Montmartre. At this sight the nobles said to themselves: "Look at the fine rabble and its insolence. Why didn't they come with our army to serve the king in Flanders? They kept well out of it, and instead of ringing the bells to celebrate our victories, they dare to show themselves in arms before their lord."

Heralds came forward who asked the Parisians: "Where are your leaders? Which of you are captains?" The Parisians replied, "We have none other than the king and his nobles."



CHARLES VI

(From an old French print)

The heralds then demanded whether the constable and four barons would be allowed to enter in safety. "Ah, you laugh at us," returned the Parisians; "go, tell them that we are ready to receive their commands." The constable then confronted them. "Well, men of Paris," he said, "who has made you come out thus from the city? You look as though you would fight your lord the king." "My lord," they replied, "we have no such wish and we never had; we only wish to show the king the power of his fair city of Paris. He is very young and does not know what we could do for him should he ever need us." "Well said," retorted the constable, "but the king for this once does not wish to see you thus. If you would that he enters your city, go back to your homes and lay aside your arms." They obeyed (1383).

The next day the king arrived. The gates were all wide open; but he wished to enter through a breach and had a section knocked out. Then he made his way through the streets, helmeted, lance in hand, with the

most terrible air his young person could assume. Executions began at once; first those of the city's liberties. They took away its franchises, its elective magistrates, provost, aldermen, clerk, syndic, centurions, and tithing-men; they suppressed the people's masterships, corporations, and brotherhoods; they deprived them of their arms and of the chains that made the streets safe. Then followed executions of persons; they arrested, made summary investigation, and finished by killing. Three hundred of the richest bourgeoisie were drowned, hanged, or decapitated with scarcely a form of trial. Noteworthy were the deaths of Nicholas le Flamand, one of those who followed Étienne Marcel the day of the slaying of the two marshals, twenty-six years before, and of John Desmarets, *avocat-général* in the parliament, one of the negotiators of the Peace of Bretigny, and who was worn out in vain efforts between the two parties. His trial was iniquitous and his death touching. "When Desmarets," says the monk of St. Denis,<sup>d</sup> "arrived at the place of execution, 'Ask mercy of the king, Master John,' the people cried, 'that he may forgive your crimes.' The old man turned to them and replied, 'Loyally and well did I serve King Philip his great-grandfather, King John, and King Charles, his father; never had these kings anything to reproach me with; and this one would reproach me neither, had he the age and knowledge of a grown man. I do not believe him responsible in the



[1383-1388 A.D.]

least for this judgment. I have done nothing to ask mercy of him. It is God alone from whom I must ask it and I pray him to pardon my sins.'"

The bourgeoisie were brought together and read a long list of their misdeeds, with the punishments they deserved. At the moment when terror was at its height the two uncles of the king threw themselves at his feet and begged for pity. He let himself be influenced, and announced through his chancellor that he would change the punishments into fines. "This was," says Mézeray,<sup>e</sup> "the true reason for this *coup de théâtre!*" Paris did not get off on less than 400,000 francs, worth to-day about 20,000,000; at Rouen, Rheims, Troyes, Châlons, Orleans, Sens, in Auvergne and Languedoc, the same proceedings took place, especially the enormous fines. "And this all went," says Froissart,<sup>c</sup> "to the profit of the duke of Berri and the duke of Burgundy, for the young king was in their power!" This blow fell upon the bourgeoisie more disastrously than that of 1359, because the government was then in the hands of an intelligent man who checked the feudal reaction; in 1383 the princes gave themselves a free hand. The upper middle class was decimated and ruined; and when, after thirty years, public grievances caused them to essay another revolution, they were in no condition to assume its control and left it to violent men, who drenched Paris with blood.

In 1384 the count of Flanders died and the duke of Burgundy, his son-in-law, inherited his vast dominions. In 1369 Charles V, in order to facilitate the marriage of his brother the duke of Burgundy with the heiress of the county of Flanders, had abandoned French Flanders to him. But at the same time the king exacted an agreement from his brother, that the donation would be restored on the death of the latter's father-in-law, Louis de Mâle. But the count of Flanders survived the king, and Philip the Bold easily obtained from Charles VI the remission of his promise. Henceforth the house of Burgundy will turn all its affection towards these rich provinces, and as it finds means for aggrandisement in this direction at the expense of the petty German princes, it will forget little by little both the stock from which it came, and the France which began its greatness.

The following year was employed in immense preparations for an invasion of England. They collected, says Froissart, enough ships to make a bridge from Calais to Dover; there were fourteen hundred of them. They built a whole town of wood, which could be taken apart, piece by piece, in order to take an entrenched camp with them. But they let the proper moment for crossing over pass, and the project had to be given up, but not until enormous sums had been squandered. Another expedition against the duke of Gelderland who, for the price of a pension of £400 from England, bade defiance to the king of France, cost still more, and came to nothing (1388).

#### THE KING ASSUMES THE RULE (1388 A.D.)

The voice of public opinion was still very feeble, but it could be heard. On the return from the sad war in Germany, the king called a general council in the hall of the palace of the archbishop of Rheims, and demanded of those present, in virtue of the obedience they owed him, their advice on the conduct of public affairs. Peter de Montaigu, cardinal of Laon, took the floor, and praising the king's good qualities, exhorted him to begin the exercise of his absolute power by taking under his own control and direction the ministry of war and his own household, taking counsel from no one. Others supported the cardinal's advice; Charles declared himself determined

to follow it and thanked his uncles for the good offices they had rendered him. The king had scarcely left Rheims when the cardinal of Laon died by poison.

The former counsellors of Charles V, the "small fry," the *marmousets* as the great lords dubbed them in disdain, Olivier de Clisson, Bureau de la Rivière, Le Bègue de Vilaines, John de Novian, and John de Montaigu, reassumed, as ministers of state, the direction of affairs. The new administration was wise and economical, and stood for internal order and foreign peace, but through it the king only became the more prodigal; having no longer the pleasures and distractions of war, those of the fête and tourney became necessary to him, and these diversions now never ceased.<sup>b</sup>

Prodigious sums were needed for the "incomparable" fêtes in which Charles VI gloried, and which attracted to Paris the flower of the knights and noble ladies of all Christendom. This vast concourse of strangers, the stir, the joyful tumult, the dazzling shows intoxicated the young nobility and even the people of Paris; the Parisians had their share of the rain of gold and recovered in one way what was taken from them in another. In the first days of May, 1389, the most magnificent tournament which had ever been seen was held at St. Denis on the occasion of the knighting of the two sons of the late duke Louis of Anjou, the eldest of whom, Louis II, duke of Anjou and count of Provence, was preparing to set out to assert his claims to the kingdom of Naples against the heir of Charles of Durazzo. Charles VI had endeavoured to realise the most brilliant descriptions of the romances and to present to the feudal world a complete type of chivalric splendours. The ceremonial of initiation to the "holy order of chivalry," which had almost fallen into disuse since the adoption of the custom of conferring the order on the field of battle, was reproduced with scrupulous exactness.

In a neighbouring field the lists had been prepared, surrounded with wooden galleries for the ladies; and in the great court of the abbey a banquet hall had been constructed 192 feet long by 36 wide and hung throughout with tapestries of silk and gold. The first day of the tournament twenty-two knights in green and gold armour were conducted into the lists to the sound of music, by twenty-two fair ladies similarly attired and mounted on elegant palfreys; each gave her knight a ribbon of her own colours. The contests lasted all day; then the company proceeded from the enclosure to the festival hall and after the supper the ladies awarded the prize to the two who had done the best. The rest of the night was passed in dances and *caroles*<sup>1</sup> and in "pastimes" of a less innocent kind. The fête lasted three days and three nights—nights of orgy and delirium which rendered the venerable cloisters of St. Denis the witnesses of many voluptuous mysteries and which must have strangely scandalised the chaste shade of St. Louis in the depths of its tomb.

The jousts and balls were succeeded by a ceremony of a sterner character but equally sumptuous: the young king loved to vary his emotions and his shows. He had been seized with "a great love" for the memory of Bertrand du Guesclin, a feeling which was shared by the whole nation: although nine years had passed since the death of that great captain, and though Charles V had honoured him with a splendid funeral, Charles VI insisted on celebrating the obsequies of Messire Bertrand in presence of all the French and foreign nobility whom the tournament had brought together.

[<sup>1</sup> This old French word denoted either a song or a particular kind of dance.]

[1389 A.D.]

The fêtes of St. Denis had not satiated Charles VI; he remembered that the queen his wife had not yet been crowned: this was a fine occasion to indulge in fresh magnificences. He resolved to have Isabella anointed at Paris, and to compensate himself for the paucity of ceremonial which had been accorded to the queen's first entry into the capital. He notified his intention "to those of Paris," in order that they might be prepared, and charged the old queen, Blanche of Navarre, widow of Philip of Valois, to arrange the ceremony. Accordingly Blanche ordered the *Chronicles of St. Denis* to be examined for everything which they reported concerning the anointing of queens in olden times. Froissart<sup>c</sup> and the monk of St. Denis<sup>d</sup> have vied with one another in describing the queen's procession which arrived before St. Denis the 22nd of August, 1389, with all the princesses, some in painted and gilded litters, others on palfreys marvellously caparisoned. The king's uncles, who sought every opportunity to approach the supreme power, had presented themselves at court with their families; the dukes and all the great nobles escorted the litters which entered Paris to the sound of a thousand instruments and between two rows of horsemen clad, some in scarlet silk, others in green silk: they were on the one side the members of the king's household, on the other twelve hundred citizens of Paris led by the provost of the merchants. Across the whole of the rue St. Denis and the Grand Pont (the Pont au Change) were hung draperies of silk, camlet, and cendal (taffetas), which "shut out the sky"; all the houses were hung with silks and tapestries of a high warp and the windows were crowded with women adorned with dresses of brilliant materials and with gold necklaces. Fountains of milk and perfumed wine flowed at the street corners, and beautiful young girls offered the passers-by to drink from golden goblets. At the Porte St. Denis, at the *moultier* (monastery) of the Trinity, at the second Porte St. Denis or Painters' Gate (Porte aux Peintres), at the church of St. Jacques de l'Hôpital, at the Grand Chatelet, platforms, wooden castles, and richly ornamented theatres had been erected; one represented God in his paradise and the starry heavens filled with angels who sang "very melodiously" and congratulated in rhyme "the lady enclosed amongst *fleurs-de-lis*"; another "showed" the king of France and his twelve peers, King Richard Cœur de Lion, and King Saladin with his Saracens. A rope had been stretched from one of the towers of Notre Dame to the Pont au Change: as the queen passed the bridge a man dressed as an angel, seated on this rope, descended from the towers of Notre Dame, passed through an opening in the awning which covered the bridge, placed "a beautiful wreath" on the queen's head, and "was drawn up again through the said opening as if he were returning to heaven."

The procession presented itself before Notre Dame, whence it returned to the Palais, and the next day the queen was anointed and crowned in the Sainte-Chapelle, by the archbishop of Rouen. The descriptions of the banquets which took place at the "marble table" in the great hall of the Palais, and of the jousts at the Hôtel St. Pol are to be found in Froissart.<sup>e</sup> The king had adopted a golden sun with rays as his device: he was one of the victors in the jousts. The rich presents of the city of Paris to the queen and the duchess of Touraine, the king's sister-in-law, contributed to pay for the gaiety of the court; the Parisians offered the princesses gold and silver plate to the value of sixty thousand crowns: they doubtless calculated on being repaid for this munificence by a large diminution of the taxes; but their expectation was cruelly deceived. The king left Paris a few days later, and as a farewell to his people left an increase of the gabelle and an

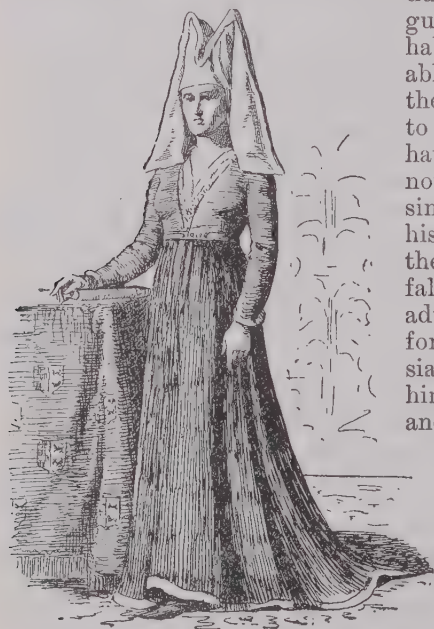


ordinance which prohibited, under pain of death, the use of silver coins of twelve and four deniers which had been in circulation since the reign of the late king. *f*

#### HATRED OF THE NOBLES FOR THE MINISTRY (1389-1392 A.D.)

The ministry attempted to combat this state of affairs or at least to extenuate its disastrous effects. It economised in state expenditure to make up for the king's extravagance, and the state was the gainer by the arrangement.

The ministers gave Paris back its provost and conferred upon the bourgeoisie the right to acquire fiefs, as though they were nobles, and deprived the duke of Berri of his government in Languedoc, where four hundred thousand inhabitants had fled into Aragon. Not being able to inflict further punishment on Berri, they caused his treasurer Bétisac to be put to death. This Bétisac had merited the hate of all by his exactions. But they did not dare condemn him as an embezzler, since the duke of Berri had authorised all his acts and it was on the duke himself that the complaints of the people should have fallen. So they laid a trap for Bétisac, by advising him to declare heretical opinions, for which he would be summoned to ecclesiastical jurisdiction which would exculpate him. The accused man followed this advice and they burned him for a heretic instead of hanging him for a thief.



COSTUME IN THE REIGN OF CHARLES VI

The "small fry" ruled the kingdom for four years. Four years in which the king's uncles and the great nobles had to keep their hands off the management of affairs, and longed for an opportunity to get back into power. Finally an Angevin nobleman, Peter de Craon, mortal enemy of the leader of the marmousets, the constable Olivier de Clisson, placed his personal hatred at the service of the aristocracy's political resentment.

On June 13th, 1392, at the close of a fête given at the Hôtel St. Pol, the constable lingered a little to take leave of the king and the duke of Orleans, and then with eight attendants, two carrying torches, made his way towards the rue Ste. Catherine. Here Peter de Craon was waiting for him, with forty mounted brigands, scarcely a half dozen of whom knew what was expected of them. When Clisson appeared, Craon's men threw themselves on his attendants and extinguished their torches. Clisson at first thought it a joke of the duke of Orleans, whom he supposed to have followed him. "My lord," he said, "you are young, we must pardon you. These are the pranks of youth." But Peter de Craon cried, "Die, die, Clisson; here you shall die." "Who art thou," asked Clisson, "who speakest such words?" "I am Peter de Craon, your enemy. You have many times

[1392 A.D.]

provoked me, and shall here pay for it. Forward," he called to his men. "I have him whom I wanted and will have." The constable tried to defend himself but was soon wounded and thrown from his horse. In falling, his head came against the unlatched door of a bake-shop, which gave way. This saved him. The assassins thought him dead; they had, moreover, recognised the constable, and fearful of having attacked so powerful a personage, they fled with Craon to his castle of Sablé in Maine.

The news of the outrage was brought to the king as he was preparing for bed. He called his guard, had torches lighted and went to the bake-shop where Clisson was beginning to recover consciousness. "Constable," said the king, "how do you feel?" "Weak and poorly, sire." "And who brought you to this pass?" "Peter de Craon, sire, and his accomplices, treacherously and with no warning." "Constable, nothing will be paid more dearly or amends made for than this thing."

Peter de Craon, who no longer felt himself safe in the castle of Sablé, sought refuge with the duke of Burgundy, who, called upon to deliver up the rascal, caused him to be hid and replied that he knew nothing whatever of him. Charles immediately collected an army, swearing to take no rest until he had punished this rebellion. The dukes of Burgundy and Berri endeavoured to block this enterprise. Their hatred towards Clisson had grown since they learned he possessed great wealth. The constable, believing himself about to die, had made his will, and besides his fiefs and heritage he had disposed of 1,700,000 francs' worth of personal property. But the king paid no heed to the delays and bad will of his uncles and to the fears which his physicians expressed for his health. He led his army as far as Le Mans.

#### THE KING GOES MAD: THE PRINCES RETURN TO POWER (1392 A.D.)

It was the middle of summer, during the prolonged August heat. As the king was crossing the forest, a man dressed all in white seized his bridle and cried, "Stop, noble king, go no further, thou art betrayed." This sudden apparition startled the king greatly; a little farther on the page who carried the royal lance nodded in the saddle. The lance fell and struck a shield a resounding blow. At the sound of arms the king trembled, drew his sword and cried, "Quick, quick, upon the traitors!" He thrust his naked sword at his brother the duke of Orleans, who barely avoided it. One of his knights finally had to seize him from behind. They disarmed him. He no longer knew anyone.

The king was mad. Some said it was sorcery, but the king himself was to blame. Possessor at twelve years of age of that unlimited power which is often the undoing of the strongest characters, he was at twenty-four worn out with every pleasure and emotion in the range of human experience from debauch to battle-field. His constitution was ruined, his mind shaken; a violent shock had deranged everything.

When it was hinted that the king was the victim of poison or sorcery, "No," exclaimed the duke of Berri, "he is neither poisoned nor bewitched, except by bad advice." These words sealed the fate of the marmousets. A few days later Clisson demanded of the duke of Burgundy the pay of the knights who had accompanied the king on his last expedition. The duke looked him through and through, and said, "Clisson, you need not trouble yourself about the affairs of the kingdom, for without your help it will be well governed. It was an evil day for the realm when you first meddled with it. How the devil have you got so much money, that you

were recently able to will away 1,700,000 francs? Neither his majesty, my brother Berri, nor I with all our present power have been able to acquire so much. Leave my presence and let me never see you again, for were it not for my honour I would put your other eye out." Clisson hastened to the safety of his castle in Brittany, while parliament declared him guilty of extortion, and banished him from the country, imposing a fine of 100,000 silver marks. The sire de Montaigu, warned by this experience, sought refuge at Avignon Bureau de la Rivière, the sire de Novian, and Le Bègue de Vilaines were arrested and imprisoned in the Château St. Antoine (the Bastille).

The king's uncles came again into full possession of the government: what would they do? They signed a twenty-eight years' truce with England in 1395 and gave King Richard II the infant princess Isabella, Charles VI's daughter, in marriage. But four years later (1399) the English deposed and afterwards, it is said, strangled their king, and this valuable alliance was broken.<sup>b</sup>

The signing of the truce of 1395 was a real assurance of peace in France, even in Brittany, where Clisson, banished to his fiefs, had armed his vassals at once and attacked John de Montfort. But the duke of Burgundy appeared in person at Ancenis, mediated between the two parties, and made them in January, 1395, sign a reciprocal promise to lay down their arms. Shortly after this John IV attended the meeting of Charles VI and Richard II at Guines (where the truce was arranged) and obtained from the English the restitution of Brest which had only been pledged to them.

With peace thus restored France was now able to occupy herself more particularly with the great questions then agitating all Europe: that of the papal schism of which all Christendom was longing for the end, and that of the crusade—or rather the barrier which it was felt must be raised against the conquests of the Ottoman Turks in the European provinces of the Greek empire.<sup>g</sup>

Forty years before the Ottoman Turks had crossed the Bosphorus, taken Adrianople and a portion of the Danube valley. Now they were threatening Hungary. A crusade was therefore resolved upon, and put under the direction of a young man of twenty-four, John, count of Nevers, who later became the famous duke of Burgundy (John the Fearless). Young and old, equally short-sighted, gaily descended the Danube, taking the whole matter as a pleasure excursion. When they arrived at Nicopolis, King Sigismund of Hungary advised them to meet the advance troops of the enemy with his Hungarian foot-soldiers and light cavalry, and to reserve the knights for the real Ottoman army which would appear afterwards. But no one was willing to forego the honour of striking the first blow. So all opposed themselves to the advance-guard, threw themselves upon the first enemy who appeared, and arrived exhausted and in disorder at the top of a hill where they were received by the redoubtable janissaries which Amura had just organised, and who made short work of the breathless, disordered troops. It was said that Bajazet put ten thousand captives<sup>1</sup> to death in his own presence, saving only from the massacre the count of Nevers and twenty-four nobles whom he ransomed (1396).<sup>b</sup> Consternation was universal throughout France, especially in Burgundy. Duke Philip strangely abused the obligations of feudalism which compelled vassals to ransom a captive lord or his son and raised as much from his vassals as from the royal treasury, more than double the 200,000 ducats which Bajazet demanded for the freedom of his captives.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Doubtless a monkish exaggeration.



[1396-1407 A.D.]

## DOMESTIC TROUBLES AND SCANDALS

The government of the aristocracy was not fortunate: its acts were discrediting it abroad; its quarrels were weakening it at home.

Isabella of Bavaria was but fifteen years old when she came from Germany to wed Charles VI. Without parents, without a guide in the midst of a corrupted court, she learned its morals quicker than she learned its tongue, and she lived solely for luxury and pleasure. Years did not render her conduct more circumspect, or her thoughts more serious. From pleasure she descended to debauchery. Charged after the king's affliction with the keeping of his person, she used the authority obtained through the melancholy situation of her husband to satisfy her passions, her vices, and her vengeance. It will soon be seen how fatal this foreign queen was to France.

The duke of Burgundy, Philip the Bold, kept the sovereign authority until his death in 1404. His son, John the Fearless, wished to receive, with his heritage, his father's influence in the government, but the duke of Orleans, the king's brother, all powerful with the queen—master, through her, of the king and the dauphin; chief of the nobility, and brilliant knight himself—had no intention of renouncing the power to anyone. So there soon sprang up, between John the Fearless and Orleans, a rivalry that threatened to become civil war right in the midst of Paris. Each collected his arms and fortified his palace; they were about to fight when the aged duke of Berri interposed. He brought Burgundy to the bedside of Orleans who was lying ill and made the two men embrace and talk and take food together. This reconciliation took place November the 20th, 1407; on the 23rd Louis of Orleans fell, assassinated by John the Fearless.

For more than four months, the duke had been planning this murder. He had bought, in the city, a house for the ostensible purpose of storing wine, corn, and other provisions, but really concealed in it seventeen hired assassins. This house, situated in the rue Vieille du Temple, near the Porte Barbette, lay in the path of the duke of Orleans while returning from the king's residence to his own palace. Wednesday, the 23rd of November, at eight in the evening, the duke of Orleans left the Hôtel Montaigu on mule-back. The night was very dark, and he was accompanied only by two equerries mounted on one horse and four foot attendants carrying torches. Although it was not late, all the shops were closed. The duke, keeping a little behind his people, was singing softly to himself and toying with his glove when suddenly the assassins, concealed by the corner of a house, rushed upon him crying, "Die! Die!"

"I am the duke of Orleans," the duke shouted. "Then we want you," they replied, striking him. A page tried to cover the prince with his body and was killed. A woman who witnessed the affair from a window screamed murder. One of the assassins called to her, "Shut up, wretch." Then by the light of the torches she saw come out of the duke of Burgundy's recently bought house, a large man with a red hat over his eyes, who, with a lantern, looked to see that there had been no slip as in the case of the constable De Clisson. But this time the murderers had well earned their wage. The body was literally hacked to pieces; the right arm was cut in two, the severed left wrist was thrown to one side, the skull split from ear to ear, and the brains scattered on the pavement. At this the man in the red hat said to the others, "Put out your lights and let us go, he is dead." They put their torches back into the house they had occupied, strewed caltrops behind them to prevent pursuit, and retired to the Hôtel d'Artois in the rue Mauconseil.

The next day John the Fearless went, like all the princes, to see the corpse, and sprinkled it with holy water, at the church of the Blancs-Man-teaux. "Never," he said, at sight of the dead, "has so foul a murder been committed in this realm." He wept at the funeral and held a corner of the pall. Some days later, however, when the provost of Paris announced in the council that he would make every effort to find the assassins if they would give him permission to search the palaces of the princes, John the Fearless became confused and grew pale. Then it was he drew aside the duke of Berri and the king of Sicily, "I did it," he whispered, "the devil tempted me." This state of mind soon passed, and the duke of Burgundy resolved to admit and justify his crime. In fact the next day he boldly appeared at the council of the princes, but his uncle Berri met him at the door and said, "My good nephew, don't come in this time. I don't want you here." The thought came to the guilty man that perhaps they were going to arrest him, and he fled at once to his possessions in Flanders. From there he proclaimed, preached, and wrote to the world that he had but forestalled an ambush of the duke of Orleans. A Franciscan monk, the learned John Petit, was the following year charged with the proof in twelve arguments, in honour of the twelve Apostles, that if the duke was killed it was for the glory of God, since he was a heretic; for the good of the king, since he wished to usurp the throne, and for the public welfare, since the state was rid of a tyrant.

To this strange apology for the murder, from the pen of a monk, Burgundy added a bloody victory.<sup>b</sup> An insurrection of the people of Liège against their bishop, a creature of the duke, called the latter from Paris. His influence had caused John, a younger brother of the house of Bavaria, to be elected bishop; John took deacon's orders to entitle him to assume the episcopal sovereignty, but he refused to be priested, preferring the helmet to the mitre. The Liégeois were discontented at having a profane knight in lieu of a bishop; they entreated and petitioned John to take upon him the sacerdotal character. He laughed at them. They rebelled and drove him out. Such was the crime of the Liégeois. The duke of Burgundy marched against them; a battle was fought at Hasbain, in which the burgesses of Liège were as unfortunate as those of Ghent had been at Roosebeke. It is said that twenty-six thousand dead were counted on the field of battle.<sup>c</sup>

This was the best argument in Burgundy's defence; he returned to Paris promising the people an immediate abolition of taxes, and extracted from the king a letter of forgiveness, in which Charles VI declared that he cherished no resentment towards the author of his brother's death (Peace of Chartres. March, 1409).

The duchess of Orleans, the beautiful and gentle Valentine Visconti, was at least spared this last shame. The death of her husband killed her. She had taken for her motto, "*Rien ne m'est plus; plus ne m'est rien*," and "died in 1408" [says Juvénal des Ursins<sup>i</sup>] "in anger and grief."

The duke of Orleans was not worth much regret. His administration had been as deplorable as his morals. He had declared war on England, and had not carried it out, and had used this pretext for an increase of taxes which he himself had appropriated. Burgundy had bitterly opposed this new burden, and to appease the people, and especially to lay his own hand on the rich spoil, he now sent the superintendent of finances to the scaffold (1408). Then he restored the Parisians their ancient free constitution, the rights to elect their provost and to organise a citizen militia under elective leaders, and even to hold noble fiefs with the privileges thereto attached. Besides this he was extremely popular, which state of affairs he increased by showing citizens,

[1408-1412 A.D.]

even the least important, such consideration as they had never before known. These were the market people who formed, in Paris, the strength of the Burgundian party. Feudalism never forgave John the Fearless for having sought such support, no more than it did for having compromised seignorial inviolability by slaying a prince of the blood, the king's brother. A considerable faction of the nobility turned against him. The avengers of Orleans ranged themselves under the banner of the father-in-law of one of his sons, the count d'Armagnac, who gave the party its name (1410). Thus, with the king mad, the queen ignored and incapable, the dauphin threatened by his excesses with his father's end, the first prince of the blood stained with an infamous murder, there was no government—only armed factions, and war at home and abroad. Such was the state of France; nothing but disaster could come of it.

## CIVIL WAR

From 1410 to 1412 the two factions attacked each other twice, and twice came to a settlement (Peace of Bicêtre, November, 1410; Peace of Bourges, July, 1412). Both sides made advances to the English to win over the country's enemy.<sup>b</sup> The Gascon soldiers, preferring a plundering life in the midst of France to their own rude and poor homes, were constant to their banners. The duke of Burgundy, on the other hand, could not get his Flemings to quit their families and crafts for more than forty days; he was therefore obliged to call in the English. Henry IV sent a body of archers to his aid, with whom he drove his enemies from the north of the capital (February, 1410). In May we find Henry in league with the Orleans party, who were to restore to the English, in recompense, all their ancient possessions in France. The emissary who bore this treaty was seized at Boulogne; its contents were made public, and great odium was in consequence excited against the Armagnacs. The hapless monarch, Charles, recovering for a moment from his frenzy, joined in this indignation; he called an army, displayed the oriflamme, and marched with the Burgundians to besiege Bourges. The campaign, as usual, ended without an action, in a kind of treaty. Both parties felt the thirst of pillage and of blood; both wanted the courage to decide their differences in a general combat. No period of history manifests such an utter want of talent; no prowess was shown except in tournaments; no statesmanship save in the planning of a murder. Although the passions of men possessed of power and means were excited to the utmost, yet not a decisive blow was struck in policy or in arms. The fortune of the struggling parties was left to events—to chance. Success and reverse, the former at least, if not both, unearned,



SHIELD USED IN THE FIRST PART OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY



alternately ensued; conquerors and conquered pursued and fled, rolling like destructive waves over the necks of a prostrate and ruined people. Civil wars in general, destructive as they are of peace and prosperity, beget at least the virtue of courage; yet it was not so in France. The peasantry were crushed and trodden down; the nobles and knights feared to trust them with arms. The Bretons and the Gascons, natives of distant provinces, were the only foot-soldiers, the sole infantry of France at this time; and a handful of English sufficed in these quarrels to give the advantage to either party.<sup>h</sup>

In this condition of affairs there was much to recall the worst days of king John, and to better them the bourgeoisie took the initiative, parliament, as in 1356, holding back. The University of Paris was very proud of having recently accomplished the deposition of two anti-popes, the election of Alexander V, a former doctor of the Sorbonne, and the convocation of a general council for the consideration of reforms within the church; and the bourgeoisie thought it could pacify the state as it hoped to have pacified Christianity. It obtained from Charles VI, in one of his lucid moments, a decree ordering all the princes back to their provinces and forbidding them to leave. But in a few months the war recommenced. The Armagnacs committed a thousand atrocities, telling their victims to seek vengeance from the "poor mad king." The body of citizens asked, in the king's council, that the defence of Paris might be committed to a friend of Burgundy's, the count of Saint-Pol, and the latter, not very sure of the upper middle classes, wished to overcome them by means of the populace. He took refuge in the great and rich corporation of the butchers which he authorised to raise five hundred men for the municipal defence. The butchers armed their servants and all the men employed about the slaughter-houses. This violent mob, accustomed to the sight of blood and killing, and who made a slaughterer named Caboché their chief, let themselves be led for a time by their masters and the learned men of the University of Paris. Then Paris presented the most singular and terrible spectacle. One day the mob presented itself at the dauphin's palace, forced him to appear on a balcony and through their spokesman, the old surgeon, John de Troyes, made him listen to their demands. He must send away his evil companions; lead a more regular life in every way; and take care of his health, and of his soul. The butchers charged themselves with superintending this change of morals which would bring with it, according to their ideas, the reformation of the kingdom. They set a watch around the Hôtel St. Pol for the safety of the king and monseigneur the duke of Guienne, and if they heard the sound of instruments and dancing in the night they entered boldly to put a stop to it, and preserve decency and order. But these rough and violent natures were not always content with words. If they had compassion on "that good fellow, the dauphin," they broke out against those who were corrupting him and removed them violently from the palace and dragged them before the parliament for justice, even sometimes administering it on the way to those who had displeased them the most.

However, the able members of the party drew up, for the repression of abuses, the ordinance of 1413, known as the Cabochian ordinance, whose application would have been successful, if in making elections universal it had not made its administration impossible (May 25th). "But," says Augustin Thierry, "men were found to conceive that great reform charter, joint work of the citizens and the university, while none could be found to execute and maintain it. Wise men and those accustomed to affairs had at this time neither will power nor political energy. They kept themselves apart, and all action

[1413-1415 A.D.]

rested upon fanatics and the unruly who precipitated, through their intolerable excesses, a reaction which brought about their fall and put a stop to all reform."

What the bourgeoisie respected, the mob outraged. It proscribed not only vice and immorality, but wealth, and mingled pillage and murder with its reforms; it disgraced finally those who had employed it and who, blushing at the association, now preferred the Armagnacs to the Cabochians. Called upon by all men of moderation the Armagnacs put a stop to the mob's excesses, but at the same time overthrew the reform measures of the bourgeoisie (September 5th, 1413). John the Fearless fled again to his Flemish provinces.<sup>b</sup> Charles VI marched in person against him at the head of the Armagnacs, besieged and took Soissons, of which the inhabitants of every age and sex were inhumanly massacred. Arras was next invested,<sup>1</sup> but the Armagnacs becoming disgusted at the tediousness of the siege, as the Burgundians had been the previous year at that of Bourges, an accommodation ensued, the duke of Burgundy making verbal submissions, and promising never to show himself in Paris again. (Treaty of Arras, September, 1414.)

#### HENRY V INVADES FRANCE — A FRENCH VIEW

Whilst France was thus occupied and torn by civil contests, Henry V had succeeded, in 1413, to the throne of England.<sup>h</sup> I've now judged the time come to interfere in the French *mêlée*. He stood, moreover, in need of a foreign war to settle himself on the throne his father had usurped. Since the great campaigns of the preceding century, the idea of a war with France had ever been popular in England. Therefore, when Henry proposed a serious expedition, he obtained easily from parliament six thousand men-at-arms and twenty-four thousand archers, with whom he debarked at Harfleur on the 14th of August, 1415. After a heroic defence which lasted a whole month, Harfleur, unsuccoured, was compelled to give up. But Henry V had lost fifteen thousand men (two thousand men-at-arms, thirteen thousand archers)—the half of his army. Too feeble now for any great undertaking, he resolved to march across country to Calais, and to throw the French knight-hood a new and insolent defiance.

The English left Harfleur on the 8th of October, traversing the Pays de Caux, not without some resistance, although they took nothing but food and wine from the towns for fear of arousing the inhabitants. On the 13th they arrived at Abbeville intending to cross the Somme there, but they found the ford at Blanquetaque so well defended this time that they were obliged to ascend the stream as far as Amiens.

Near Nesle a peasant pointed out a ford that could be reached across a marsh. It was a difficult and dangerous passage; they would be lost if attacked. But the French army was still far away. Besides, the nobles would not have wished a combat in this swamp; they were seeking a fine battle in open field and to this end asked king Henry for a day and place for a fight. To which the Englishman replied that it was not necessary to name either day or place, since every day would find him on the field.

In spite of this answer, they feared, in the French army, that the enemy would escape; and to make sure they should not, the princes took up a position between the villages of Tramecourt and Agincourt [French Azincourt], where the English must necessarily pass, on a narrow plain, newly ploughed and all sodden with rain.<sup>b</sup>

[<sup>1</sup> At the siege of Arras the harquebus was used for the first time.]

On Thursday, the 24th of October, the English having passed Blangy learned that the French were close at hand, and thought they were about to attack them. The men-at-arms dismounted from horseback, and all of them kneeling down, and lifting up their hands to heaven, prayed to God to take them into his keeping. Nothing, however, took place as yet, the constable not having reached the French army. The English proceeded to quarter themselves at Maisoncelle, still nearer to Agincourt. Henry V disencumbered himself of his prisoners, saying to them, "If your masters survive, you will present yourself again at Calais."

At last, they discovered the huge French army, its fires and its banners. There were, according to the estimate of the eye-witness, Lefebvre de St. Rémy,<sup>j</sup> fourteen thousand men-at-arms, in all perhaps fifty thousand men; thrice the number of the English. The latter had eleven or twelve thousand men remaining of the fifteen thousand that had marched from Harfleur, ten thousand of them at least being archers.

The Welshman, David Gam, the first who brought word to the king of the enemy's presence, being asked how many men the French might have, is said to have replied, "Enough to be killed, enough to be taken prisoners, enough to fly." An Englishman, Sir Walter Hungerford, could not forbear from observing that it would not have been amiss to have brought ten thousand more stout archers; there were as many in England who would have desired no better. But the king replied peremptorily, "Now in our Lord's name, I would not have one man more. The number we have is that which he has willed; these folks place their confidence in their multitude, and I in him who so often gave victory to Judas Maccabæus."

The English having still a night at their disposal, employed it usefully in making their preparations, and providing as well as possible for both body and soul. First, they rolled up the banners for fear of the rain, and took off and folded up the handsome coats of arms they had put on for the fight. Then in order to pass the cold October night in comfort, they opened their baggage and laid straw under them, which they procured from the neighbouring villages. The men-at-arms fitted the rivets of their armour, the archers applied fresh strings to their bows. They had for several days employed themselves in cutting and sharpening the stakes which they usually planted before them to stop the advance of cavalry. Amidst all their preparations for victory, these brave men did not forget their souls' weal, but set their accounts in order with God and their consciences. They confessed hastily, those at least whom the priests could attend, and all this was done without noise, in whispers. The king had commanded silence, under penalty of forfeiture of their horses for the gentlemen, and of loss of the right ear for those of lower degree.

It was otherwise on the French side, where the time was spent in making knights. In every direction there were great fires which showed everything to the enemy; a confused din of people shouting and calling to each other; a bustling mob of valets and pages. Many gentlemen passed the night on horseback in their heavy armour, no doubt to avoid soiling it in the deep mud, which with the cold rain chilled them to the bones.

#### MICHELET'S ACCOUNT OF THE BATTLE OF AGINCOURT (OCTOBER 25TH, 1415)

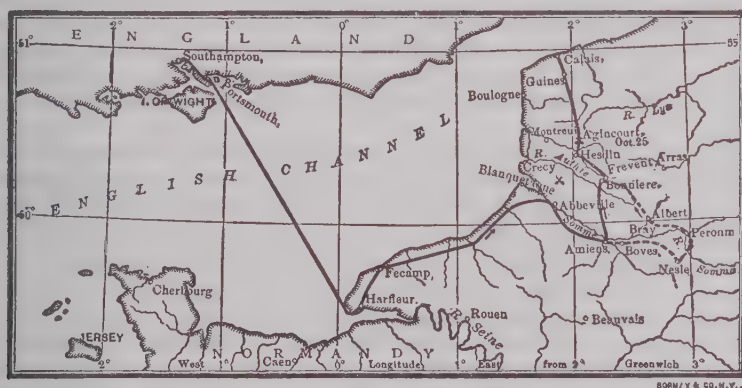
On the morning of St. Crispin and St. Crispinian's day, October 25th, 1415, the king of England heard three masses, bareheaded, but otherwise in full armour. "For it was his custom," says John de Vaurin,<sup>k</sup> "to hear three



[1415 A.D.]

masses each day, one after the other." He then put on a magnificent helmet with an imperial gold crown. He rode without spurs on a gray palfrey, and made his men advance over a field of green corn, where the ground was less spoiled by the rain, the whole army forming one body, with the few lances he had in the centre, flanked by bodies of archers. He then rode slowly along the line, speaking a few brief sentences: "You have a good cause; I am come but to demand my right. Remember that you belong to old England; that your kindred, your wives and children are awaiting you there; see that you return to them with good cheer. The kings of England have always fared well in France. Look to the honour of the crown; look to yourselves. The French say they will cut off three fingers from each archer's hand."

The ground was in so bad a condition that no one was disposed to attack. The king of England parleyed with the French, offering to renounce the



MAP ILLUSTRATING THE MARCH OF HENRY V AND THE BATTLE OF AGINCOURT  
(The dotted line indicates a doubtful part of the route.)

title of king of France, and to surrender back Harfleur, provided he were given Guienne, with some few convenient additions, Ponthieu, a daughter of the king, and 800,000 crowns. While this parleying between the two armies was going on the English archers were securing their stakes.

The two armies formed a strange mutual contrast. On the French side were three enormous squadrons, like so many forests of lances, following each other in lengthened file through the narrow plain; at their head the constable, the princes, the dukes of Orleans, Bar, and Alençon, the counts of Nevers, Eu, Richemont, and Vendôme, a multitude of lords, a dazzling iris of enamelled armour, escutcheons, banners, the horses fantastically disguised in steel and gold. The French, too, had archers, men of the commonalty; but where were they to be placed? Every post was numbered, and no one would give up his own; these men would have been a blot upon so noble an assemblage. There were cannon, but it does not appear that they were made use of; probably there was no place for them either.

The English army did not look handsome. The archers had no armour, often no shoes; for headpieces they had sorry caps of boiled leather, or even of willow with a crosspiece of iron; the axes and hatchets stuck in their belts gave them the appearance of carpenters. Many of these good workmen had taken off their breeches, in order to be at their ease and to work the better. It is a strange, incredible, and yet certain fact, that the French army really could not stir either to fight or to fly. The rear alone escaped.

At the decisive moment, when old Thomas of Erpingham, having drawn up the English army, threw his truncheon into the air, crying out, "Now strike!" and when the English had replied with a shout from ten thousand throats, the French army, to their great astonishment, still remained motionless. Horses and riders, all appeared enchanted, or dead in their steel cases. The fact was that the big war horses, loaded with their heavy riders and their steel caparisons, had sunk deep in the stiff soil, had become firmly fixed there, and only struggled out to advance slowly a few paces. Such is the acknowledgment of the English chroniclers; a modest acknowledgment, which does honour to their probity.

Lefebvre,<sup>j</sup> John de Vaurin,<sup>k</sup> and Walsingham<sup>m</sup> expressly say that the field was nothing but viscid mud. "The place was soft and cut up by the horses, so that it was with great difficulty they could drag their feet out of the ground. The French were so loaded with harness that they could not advance. They had long and very weighty coats of mail, hanging below the knees; below these they had leg harness, and above them plate harness, and, moreover, helmets of proof. They were so much crowded together that they could not lift their arms to strike an enemy, except some of them in the front."

Another historian of the English side, Titus Livy,<sup>l</sup> informs us that the French were drawn up thirty-two deep, whilst the English were ranged in but four ranks. This enormous depth of the French served no purpose; their thirty-two ranks consisted wholly, or almost so, of cavalry; the majority of whom, far from being able to act, did not even see the engagement; whereas every man of the English was efficient. Of the fifty thousand French, two or three thousand only could fight against the eleven thousand English, or at least might have done so if their horses could have extricated themselves from the mud.

To rouse those inert masses, the English archers discharged volleys of ten thousand arrows with extreme rapidity and pertinacity at their faces. The iron-clad horsemen stooped their heads, otherwise the arrows would have entered through their visors. Then, from the two wings of Tramecourt and Agincourt, two French squadrons began with much spurring to execute a clumsy charge, led by two excellent men-at-arms, Messire Clignet de Brabant and Messire William de Saveuse. The first squadron, advancing from Tramecourt, was unexpectedly taken in flank by a body of archers concealed in the woods; neither squadron reached the enemy.

Of twelve hundred men who began this charge, there remained not more than 120 when they came up with the English palisades. Most of them had fallen in the mud by the way, men and horses. Would to God that all had so fallen; but the others, whose horses were wounded, could no longer control the frantic animals, which rushed desperately back on the French ranks. The vanguard, far from being able to open and let them pass, was, as we have seen, so closely packed together that not a man could move. We may imagine the frightful accidents that took place in that dense mass, the horses wild with terror, backing and smothering each other, flinging off their riders, or crushing them under their armour as the iron masses clashed together. Then came the English to complete the havoc. Coming out from their line of stakes, and throwing down their bows and arrows, they advanced quite at their ease with axes, hatchets, heavy swords, and leaded clubs, to demolish that confused mountain of men and horses. In process of time they succeeded in clearing away the vanguard, and made their way, with the king at their head, to the second line of battle.

[1415 A.D.]

It was perhaps at this moment that eighteen French gentlemen made a dash at the king of England. They had made a vow, it was said, to die or bring down his crown; one of them struck off a point from it; all perished in the attempt. This *on dit* is not enough for the historians, who further adorn the tale, and convert it into a Homeric scene, in which the king fights over the body of his wounded brother, like Achilles over that of Patroclus. Then it is the duke of Alençon, commander of the French army, who kills the duke of York and cleaves the king's crown. Being speedily surrounded, he yields; Henry holds out his hand to him; but he was already slain.<sup>1</sup> What is more certain is that the duke of Brabant arrived in haste at the second stage of the engagement. He was the duke of Burgundy's own brother, and seems to have sought the field to clear the honour of his family. He arrived very late, but time enough to die. The brave prince had left all his men behind him, and had not even put on his coat of arms: instead of which he took his banner, made a hole in it, passed his head through it, and charged the English, who slew him instantly.

There remained but the rearguard, which soon dispersed. A great number of cavaliers, dismounted, but raised up again by their servants, had made their way out of the throng of battle and surrendered to the English. At this moment, word was brought the king that a French corps was pillaging his baggage; and at the same time he saw some Bretons or Gascons in the French rear, that seemed about to return to the charge against him. He was alarmed for the moment, especially as he saw his men embarrassed with so many prisoners, and instantly ordered every man to kill his captive. Not one obeyed; those soldiers without shoes or breeches, who held the greatest lords of France in their hands, and thought they had made their fortunes, were now ordered to ruin themselves. As they refused to comply, the king appointed two hundred men to act as executioners. "It was a sad spectacle," says Lefebvre,<sup>j</sup> "to see those poor disarmed wretches, who had just received promise of quarter, slaughtered in cold blood, cut and hewed, head and face!" The alarm was groundless. It was only some pillagers of the neighbourhood, people of Agincourt, who, in spite of their master, the duke of Burgundy, had taken advantage of the opportunity. The battle being ended, the archers made haste to strip the slain, whilst they were yet warm. Many were dragged forth alive from beneath the corpses; among others, the duke of Orleans. Next day the victor, on his departure, killed, or made prisoners, all that remained alive.<sup>2</sup> "It was a piteous sight to see the great nobles who had there been slain, and who were already stark naked, like those who were born of men of no account." An English priest was not less affected by the spectacle. "If this sight," he says, "excited pity and compunction in us, who were strangers, and but passed through the country, how great was the sorrow for the native inhabitants. Oh, may the French nation come to peace and union with the English, and depart from its iniquities and its evil ways!" Sternness then prevails over compassion, and he subjoins: "Meanwhile, let his grief be turned upon his head."

The English lost 1,600 men; the French 10,000, almost all gentlemen,

<sup>1</sup> This embellishment is of Monstrelet's *n* contrivance. He places it apart from the account of the battle after the long list of the killed. Lefebvre, an eye-witness, could not make up his mind to copy Monstrelet in this place.

<sup>2</sup> Lefebvre<sup>j</sup> and Monstrelet<sup>n</sup> are the authorities for this statement. De Barante<sup>o</sup> says without naming his source, "Henry V put a stop to the carnage and caused the wounded to receive relief." [Tyler,<sup>s</sup> after reviewing the evidence, declares that "Henry did not stain his victory by any act of cruelty. His character comes out of the investigation untarnished by a suspicion of his having wantonly shed the blood of a single fellow-creature."]



120 lords having banners. The list fills six large pages in Monstrelet, beginning with seven princes (Brabant, Nevers, D'Albret, Alençon, the three De Bar); then come lords without number, Dampierre, Vaudemont, Marle, Roussy, Salm, Dammartin, etc., the bailiffs of Vermandois, Mâcon, Sens, Senlis, Caen, and Meaux, and Montaigu, the brave archbishop of Sens, who fought like a lion.<sup>1</sup>

The duke of Burgundy's son bestowed the charity of a grave on all the dead that lay naked on the field of battle. Twenty-five square rods of ground were measured out, and in that huge pit were laid all the bodies that had not been carried away, fifty-eight hundred men by the tale. The ground was consecrated, and a thick thorn hedge was planted round it, for fear of the wolves. There were but fifteen hundred prisoners, including the dukes of Orleans and Bourbon, the counts d'Eu, de Vendôme, and de Richelieu, the marshal de Boucicaut, Messire James d'Harcourt, Messire John de Craon, etc.<sup>2</sup>

#### MASSACRE OF THE ARMAGNACS IN PARIS (1418 A.D.)

With this rich capture, Henry hastened to re-embark at Calais. His army, reduced to ten thousand men, was unable to consider any further enterprise. The duke of Burgundy had taken no part whatever in the battle of Agincourt;<sup>2</sup> it was his enemies that brought about that shameful defeat. If he had made haste, he might have entered Paris as its master. D'Armagnac, the new constable and successor of D'Albret, showed more promptitude; he took possession of the capital, of the king and the dauphin his son, who was still a minor; that is to say, of the entire government. To recall a little popularity to the side of the party he showed a praiseworthy activity, borrowing ships from the Genoese, raising troops in France, and besieging Harfleur (1416). But funds were lacking and he fell back on the great resource of the times, debasement of money and false loans.

John the Fearless was always the patron of the poor. Paris murmured, and John the Fearless, to increase the fermentation, prevented the arrival of provisions in the city. He succeeded in carrying off Queen Isabella from Tours and having her declared regent. He forbade the cities, in his name, to pay the taxes imposed by D'Armagnac, and he entered into negotiations with the English (1417).

The latter had now returned. Henry V had taken Caen (1417), and like a conqueror who is sure of himself had divided his army into four divisions, the more quickly to accomplish his purpose. What, in fact, did he have to fear? The dukes of Brittany, Anjou, and Burgundy had signed treaties of neutrality with him. D'Armagnac could do nothing, for he was reduced to "borrowing from the saints," in melting their shrines, with the people of his party fast abandoning him because they were not paid enough; it was necessary to protect Paris with the Parisians who hated and betrayed him.

One Perrinet Leclerc, iron merchant on the Petit Pont, had charge of the small gate at St. Germain. "His son," says Monstrelet, "and some reckless young companions, who formerly had been punished for their esca-

[<sup>1</sup> For other views of the battle of Agincourt see our history of England.]

[<sup>2</sup> But neither for that matter had, in person, the count d'Armagnac. The princes had refused the aid of any civic corps, and as Burgundy could command but the town folk of Flanders and Picardy, his offers of help were rejected. The responsibility of the battle lay therefore entirely with the Armagnacs; but, as Crowe<sup>h</sup> says, "to the honour of the Burgundian party, more of its princes, than of the Armagnacs, fell on the field of Agincourt."]

[1418 A.D.]

pades," plotted to deliver the city over to the Burgundians. On the night of May 29th, 1418, Perrinet entered his father's chamber while the old man slept and stole the keys from under the pillow. The sire de l'Isle-Adam, informed in advance, was on the other side of the moat. He entered with eight hundred men, and the former partisans of the faction, the butchers, the slaughterers — all the people of the market flocked around him. Some Armagnacs tried to escape, taking the dauphin with them; but the greater part including the constable were thrown into prison, where their lives were soon in peril. The mob, which in 1413 had made its first appearance, reappeared on the scene in 1418 exasperated and furious with misery and uneasiness. Provisions failed and Paris was threatened with famine at the same time that ugly rumours circulated in the crowd; the Armagnacs were coming to assail such a gate, such a faubourg; the English, another. The cause of these misfortunes, they cried on every side, were those Armagnacs they had in their keeping. Vengeance must be had upon them and an end put to their schemes.

Sunday the 12th of June, 1418, the mob got under way and rushed to the prisons, Hôtel-de-Ville, Temple, St. Éloi, St. Magloire, St. Martin, and the Grand and Petit Châtelet, to murder indiscriminately everyone they found there. Armagnacs or not, by Monday morning sixteen hundred people had perished, killed in the prisons and streets. Their bodies were left there and "bad children played with them and dragged them about." With that of the constable they amused themselves by raising a large strip of skin "to represent the white scarf of Armagnac."



A FRENCH CROSSBOW-MAN, BEGINNING OF FIFTEENTH CENTURY

#### THE DUKE OF BURGUNDY MASTER OF PARIS (1418 A.D.)

These dreadful occurrences had just taken place when John the Fearless returned with the queen to Paris, amidst the enthusiastic acclaims of the crowd, who believed he brought peace and abundance with him. Vain hope! Neither one nor the other was to come from the duke of Burgundy, but on the contrary to all preceding misfortunes there was added an epidemic which carried off in Paris and its environs fifty thousand persons. Again the fury of the mob became uncontrollable and wrought its vengeance on the wretched beings that had been overlooked in the prisons or sent there since June. The 31st of August an immense assemblage formed itself under the orders of the hangman Capeluche, and set out for the prisons. The duke of Burgundy hastened after them imploringly, and even went so far as to press the hand of Capeluche, but in vain. A new massacre took place. Some days after the duke sent the bloodthirsty mob after some Armagnacs, shut up, as

he said, in Montlhéry, and as soon as they were gone he shut the gates of Paris behind them and had Capeluche beheaded.<sup>b</sup>

In becoming master of Paris, the duke of Burgundy had succeeded to all the embarrassments of the constable D'Armagnac. He had now in his turn to rule the great city, victual and maintain it, which could only be done by keeping the Armagnacs and the English at a distance—that is to say, by making war, re-establishing the taxes he had suppressed, and losing his popularity.

The equivocal part he had so long played, accusing others of treachery, while he himself was betraying his country, was now to come to a close. As the English were ascending the Seine and menacing Paris, he had no alternative but to forego his hold on the capital, or to give them battle. But by his eternal tergiversation and duplicity, he had enervated his own party, and was now powerless alike for peace or war.

The people of Rouen and Paris, who had chosen him for their leader, were Burgundians, indeed, and foes to the Armagnacs, but still more foes to the English. They were astonished, in their simplicity, to see that their good duke did nothing against the enemy of the kingdom. His warmest partisans began to say, as the *Bourgeois de Paris*<sup>c</sup> relates, that “he was, in all his proceedings, the slowest man that could be found.” The Armagnacs possessed the whole centre, Sens, Moret, Crécy, Compiègne, Montlhéry, a girdle of towns round Paris, Meaux, and Melun; that is to say, Marne and Haute Seine. The duke sent to Rouen all the forces he could spare without leaving Paris unprotected, namely, four thousand horse.

It had long been foreseen that Rouen would be invested. Henry V had approached it with extreme slowness. Not content with having two great English colonies in his rear, Harfleur and Caen, he had completed the conquest of lower Normandy by the capture of Falaise, Vire, St. Lô, Constance, and Évreux. He kept possession of the Seine, not only by Harfleur, but also by Pont de l'Arche. He had already re-established some degree of order, reassured the clergy, and invited the absentees to return, promising them support in case of their compliance, and declaring that otherwise he would dispose of their lands or their benefices. He reopened the exchequer and the other tribunals, and appointed his grand treasurer of Normandy supreme president over them. He reduced the tax on salt to almost nothing, “in honour,” says Rymer,<sup>d</sup> “of the Holy Virgin.”

#### SIEGE OF ROUEN (1418–1419 A.D.)

There were in Rouen fifteen thousand foot-soldiers and four thousand horse, in all, perhaps, sixty thousand souls—a whole people to feed. Henry, knowing he had nothing to fear, either from the dispersed Armagnacs, or from the duke of Burgundy, who had just besought of him another truce for Flanders, did not hesitate to divide his army into eight or nine bodies, so as to embrace the vast compass of Rouen. These bodies communicated with each other by means of trenches, which protected them from shot; whilst in the direction of the open country they were defended from a surprise by deep ditches set with thorns. He was prepared for an obstinate resistance, but his anticipation was surpassed. There was a strong Cabochian leaven in Rouen. Alain Blanchard, the chief of the arblast men, and the other Rouennese leaders, seem to have been connected with the Carmelite Pavilly, the Parisian orator of 1413. The Pavilly of Rouen was the canon Delivet. These men defended Rouen for seven months.



[1418-1419 A.D.]

The king of England, thinking to terrify the inhabitants, had gibbets erected all round the town, and hanged the prisoners on them. He barred the Seine, too, with a wooden bridge, chains, and barges, so that nothing could pass. The Rouennese seemed reduced to extremities at an early period of the siege, and yet they held out six months longer; it was a miracle. They ate up the horses, dogs, and cats. When these were gone, those who could anywhere find a morsel of food, however filthy, took good care not to let it be seen; a thousand greedy wretches would otherwise have seized upon it. The most horrible necessity that befell the town was that of expelling all who could not fight, twelve thousand old men, women, and children. The piteous crowd presented themselves before the English intrenchments, and were received at the sword's point. Repulsed alike by their friends and their enemies, they remained between the camp and the town, in the ditch, without any other food than the weeds they plucked. There they passed the whole winter, with nothing between them and the sky.

Meanwhile, the duke of Burgundy was beginning to put himself in motion. First, he went to Paris from St. Denis, where he made the king go through the solemn mockery of displaying the oriflamme, to remain a long while at Pontoise, and again a long while at Beauvais. There he received another message from Rouen by a man who had risked his life to convey it. It was the voice of an expiring town, and said merely that fifty thousand men had died of famine in Rouen and its environs. The duke of Burgundy was touched by this sad tale, and promised succour; then having got rid of the messenger, and feeling assured that he should hear no more of Rouen, he turned his back on Normandy, and took the king to Provins.

A surrender was then inevitable; but the king of England, desirous of making an example on account of so long a resistance, wished to have the inhabitants at his mercy. The Rouennese, who well knew what was the mercy of Henry V, resolved to undermine a wall, and to pass out that way by night with arms in their hands, trusting in God's grace. The king and the bishops reconsidered the matter, and the archbishop of Canterbury personally offered the besieged the following terms of capitulation: (1) their lives to be spared, five men excepted (those of the five who were rich, or churchmen, got themselves out of the difficulty, and Alain Blanchard paid for all; the English were bent on an execution, in order to ratify the principle that the resistance had been rebellion against the lawful king); (2) for the same reason, Henry insured to the town all the privileges which the kings of France, his ancestors, had granted to it, "before the usurpation of Philip of Valois"; (3) it had to pay a tremendous fine—300,000 gold crowns—one-half before the end of January (it was already the 19th of that month), the other half in February, 1419. To squeeze all that from a depopulated, ruined town was no easy matter.

## HENRY AND JOHN THE FEARLESS (1419 A.D.)

The king of England being occupied with the task of organising the country he had conquered, granted a truce to the two French parties, the Burgundians and the Armagnacs. He felt it necessary to refit his army; and, above all, to collect money and discharge his debts to the bishops, who had lent him funds for his long expedition.

Henry was so far from apprehending danger from the dauphin, that he was not afraid to displease the duke of Burgundy. The latter sought an interview with him, and proposed to him a marriage with a daughter of

Charles VI, with Guienne and Normandy for a dower; but Henry required also Brittany as a dependence of Normandy, besides Maine, Anjou, and Touraine.

But the duke of Burgundy had about him persons who besought him to treat with them. They were followers of the dauphin, Barbazan, and Tannegui Duchâtel, the commanders of his troops. It was full time France should become self-reconciled, when her ruin was so imminent. The parliament of Paris, and that of Poitiers, laboured equally to that end; so, too, did the queen, who talked, wept, and found means to move his hardened soul.

On the 11th of July was beheld, at the bridge of Pouilly, this singular spectacle: the duke of Burgundy surrounded by the old servants of the duke of Orleans, and by the brothers and kinsmen of the Agincourt prisoners, and of the victims butchered in Paris. Of his own accord he knelt before the dauphin. A treaty of amity and mutual aid was signed and submitted to by both parties. But on the 29th of July, less than three weeks after the signing of the treaty, the Burgundian garrison of Pontoise, near Paris, suffered themselves to be surprised by the English; the inhabitants fled to Paris, which they filled with consternation, and this augmented when, on the 30th, the duke of Burgundy, carrying away the king from Paris to Troyes, passed beneath the walls of the capital, without making any other provision for the defence of the distracted Parisians than naming his nephew, a boy of fifteen, captain of the town.

Seeing all this, the dauphin's followers believed, rightly or wrongly, that the duke had a secret understanding with the English, and his servants told him, it is alleged, that he would perish in an interview which the dauphin sought with him. The dauphin's people had set about erecting on the bridge of Montereau the gallery in which it was to take place; a long, tortuous wooden gallery, without any barrier in the middle, contrary to the custom always observed in that suspicious age. In spite of all this he persisted in his resolution to meet the dauphin; such was the wish of Dame de Giac, who never quitted him.

As the duke did not come in time, Tannegui Duchâtel went to fetch him. The duke hesitated no longer, but slapped him on the shoulder, saying: "Here is the man I trust in." Duchâtel made him hasten his pace, for the dauphin, he said, was waiting. In this way he separated him from his suite, so that he entered the gallery along with none but the sire de Noailles, brother of the captal de Buch, who was in the service of the English, and had just taken Pontoise. Neither of them came out alive (September 10th, 1419).

The altercation which took place is variously related. Tannegui Duchâtel, however, averred that he had not struck the duke. Others boasted that they had done so. One of them, Le Bouteiller, said: "I said to the duke of Burgundy: 'Thou didst cut off the hand of the duke of Orleans, my master; I am going to cut off thine.'" However little worthy of regret was the duke of Burgundy, his death did the dauphin immense mischief. John the Fearless and his party had both fallen very low, and in a little time there would have been no more avowed Burgundians. Everyone was beginning to despise and hate him; but from the moment he was killed all were again Burgundians.

#### THE TREATY OF TROYES (1420 A.D.)

We must not suppose that Paris easily admitted the foreigner, but extreme lassitude and inexpressible suffering made everyone only too happy to find a pretext for a settlement with Henry. Each man exaggerated

[1419-1420 A.D.]

to himself his feelings of pity and indignation. The shame of calling in the stranger was veiled by a fair show of just vengeance; but the real fact was that Paris yielded, because it was perishing of hunger. The queen yielded, because, after all, if her son was not to be king, her daughter, at least, would be queen. The duke of Burgundy's son, Philip the Good, was the only person who acted sincerely; he had his father's death to avenge. But he, too, doubtless, thought to find his advantage in the new order of things; the Burgundy branch would thrive by the ruin of the elder branch, by placing on the throne a stranger, who would never have more than one foot on the continent, and who, if he were wise, would govern France through the duke of Burgundy.

Paris then left the Burgundians, who again possessed full authority in the town, to do as they thought fit. Young Saint-Pol, nephew to the duke of Burgundy, and captain of Paris, was sent, in November, to the king of England, with Maitre Eustace Aloy, "in the name of the city, the clergy, and the commune." He received them extremely well, declaring that he desired nothing but the independent possession of what he had conquered, and the hand of the princess Catherine; and he said graciously: "Am I not myself of the blood royal of France? If I become the king's son-in-law, I will defend him against all men living." He obtained more than he demanded. His ambassadors, encouraged by the inclinations of the new duke of Burgundy, asserted their master's right to the crown of France, and that right the duke acknowledged. The king of England had spent three years in conquering Normandy; the death of John the Fearless seemed to give him France in one day.

The treaty concluded at Troyes, May 20th, 1420, in the name of Charles VI, secured to the king of England the hand of the daughter of the king of France, and the reversion of the kingdom: "It is agreed that immediately after our decease the crown and realm of France shall remain and be perpetually to our said son King Henry and his heirs. The faculty and exercise of governing and ordering the public affairs of the said realm shall be and remain, during our life, to our said son King Henry, with the counsel of the nobles and sages of the said realm. During our life the letters pertaining to matters of justice shall be written and shall proceed under our name and seal; nevertheless, for as much as extraordinary cases may occur, it shall be competent to our son to write his letters to our subjects, wherein he shall order, prohibit, and command, on our behalf, and on his own, as regent." After this, was not the subsequent article a mockery? "All conquests which shall be made by our said son king, over the disobedient, shall be and shall be made to our profit."



FRENCH MAN-AT-ARMS, BEGINNING OF  
THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY



This monstrous treaty concluded worthily with these lines, in which the king proclaimed the dishonour of his family, the father proscribed his son: "Considering the enormous crimes and misdemeanours perpetrated upon the said realm of France by Charles, styling himself (*soi-disant*) dauphin of Viennois, it is agreed that we, our said son the king, and also our very dear son Philip, duke of Burgundy, will in no wise treat concerning peace or concord with the said Charles, nor will we treat by ourselves or others, except with the consent and counsel of all and each of us three, and of the three estates of the two realms aforesaid."

The mother received prompt payment for the shameful phrase, *soi-disant dauphin*. Isabella immediately had 2,000 francs a month assigned to her, payable out of the mint at Troyes. For this price she denied her son, and gave up her daughter. The English took from the king of France, at one stroke, both his kingdom and his child. The poor girl was forced to wed a master, and brought him for dower her brother's ruin.<sup>p</sup>

#### HENRY'S STRUGGLE WITH THE DAUPHIN (1420-1422 A.D.)

Such was the tenor of the Treaty of Troyes, so glorious to Henry, yet so impracticable of accomplishment, that it must be doubted whether there was any sincerity in the French signers of it. To be avenged of the dauphin, and to crush him by the assistance of England, was evidently the foremost thought, the first desire. But it is scarcely credible that the duke of Burgundy looked forward to continuing, after the accomplishment of his vengeance, the faithful vassal of the house of Lancaster. The arrangement of one king governing the two countries was plainly impracticable. And that Henry himself could have entertained it only shows how the most vigorous intellects may allow their perspicacity and sense to be clouded by success and superstition. He was well aware that his new position could only be preserved by force of arms. On the occasion of his marriage with the princess Catherine, which took place on June 2nd, the knights of both countries were for celebrating the event by a tournament. But he forbade the rival combat, and told those who proposed it to join him in the siege of Sens, where they might exercise their prowess against the Armagnacs. Sens made but a trifling resistance.<sup>h</sup> Next, this implacable hunter of men hurried to Montereau, and not being able to reduce the castle, he had his prisoners hanged by the ditch sides.

With all his impetuosity he was forced to have patience before Melun, where the brave Barbazan detained him many months. The king of England, employing all the means of which he could avail himself, took Charles VI and the two queens to the siege, presenting himself as the son-in-law of the king of France, speaking in his father-in-law's name, and using his wife as a bait and a snare. All these clever devices were ineffectual. The besieged resisted valiantly; obstinate conflicts took place round the walls, and beneath them, in the mines and countermines, and Henry did not spare his own person. At last, however, provisions failed, and the garrison were constrained to surrender. Henry, according to his custom, accepted the capitulation, and put to death several citizens, all the Scotchmen who were in the place, and even two monks.

During the siege he had got the Burgundians to deliver up to him Paris and the four fortresses, Vincennes, the Bastille, the Louvre, and the Tour de Nesle. He made his entry in December, riding between the king of France and the duke of Burgundy. The latter was dressed in mourning, in token

[1420-1421 A.D.]

of grief and vengeance, perhaps also from a feeling of shame for the unworthy part he played in thus introducing the foreigner. The king of England was accompanied by his brothers, the dukes of Clarence and Bedford, the duke of Exeter, the earl of Warwick, and all his lords. The king of England was well received in Paris. He entered into formal possession as regent of France, by assembling the estates on the 6th of December, 1420, and making them sanction the Treaty of Troyes.

That the son-in-law might be sure of inheriting, it was necessary that the son should be proscribed. The duke of Burgundy and his mother presented themselves before the king of France, sitting as judge in the Hôtel St. Pol, to make "great plaint and clamour of the piteous death of the late duke John of Burgundy." The king of England was seated on the same bench as the king of France. Messire Nicholas Raulin demanded in the name of the duke of Burgundy and his mother that Charles, styling himself dauphin, Tannegui Duchâtel, and all the murderers of the duke of Burgundy, should be carted through the streets, with torches in their hands, to make *amende honorable*. The king's advocate spoke to the same effect, and the university supported the demand. The king authorised the prosecution, and Charles was cried and cited at the Marble Table, to appear within three days before the parliament. He did not put in an appearance and was condemned by default, sentenced to banishment, and stripped of all right to the crown of France (January 3rd, 1421).

The cumbrous and devouring army which Henry brought with him was but too necessary to him. His brother Clarence was defeated and killed, with two or three thousand English, in Anjou (battle of Baugé, March 23rd, 1421). In the north even the count d'Harcourt had taken up arms against the English, and was overrunning Picardy. Saintrilles and La Hire were advancing by forced marches to combine with him. All the men of family were gradually going over to the side of Charles VII, to the party that made bold expeditions and adventurous forays. The peasants, it is true, who were the sufferers by these pillaging exploits, would in the long run declare for a master who could and would protect them.

The ferocity of the old Armagnac marauders was of service to Henry's cause. He did a popular thing in besieging Meaux, the captain of which town, the bastard De Vaurus, a sort of ogre, had filled the country round with indescribable terror. But as the bastard and his men expected no mercy, they defended themselves with desperate determination. They detained the English the whole winter, eight long months, before Meaux, till cold, want, and pestilence consumed that fine army. The siege began on the 6th of October, and on the 18th of December, Henry, who already saw his forces diminishing, wrote urgently for fresh soldiers to Germany and Portugal. Englishmen were probably more costly to him than those foreigners. To induce the German mercenaries to take service with him rather than with the dauphin, he caused them to be told, among other things, that he would pay them in better coin.

He could not reckon on the duke of Burgundy. That prince appeared for a short while at the siege of Meaux, but soon withdrew, under pretence of going into Burgundy, and obliging the towns in his duchy to accept the Treaty of Troyes. Henry had good reason to believe that the duke himself had secretly instigated their resistance to a treaty which annulled the contingent rights of the house of Burgundy to the crown, as well as those of the dauphin, the duke of Orleans, and all the French princes. And why had young Philip made such a sacrifice to the friendship of the English?

Because he thought he needed their aid to avenge his father and beat his enemy. But it was much rather they who had need of him. Fortune had forsaken them. Whilst the duke of Clarence was getting himself beaten in Anjou, the duke of Burgundy had been brilliantly successful in Picardy, where he had come up with the dauphin's partisans, Saintrilles and Gamaches, before they could form a junction with d'Harcourt, and had defeated and made them prisoners.

During that interminable siege of Meaux, whilst Henry was seeing his fine army dissolving away around him, word was brought him that the queen had been delivered of a boy at Windsor Castle. He evinced no joy, and comparing his own destiny with that of the child, he said, with prophetic sadness: "Henry of Monmouth will have had a short reign and will have conquered much; Henry of Windsor will reign long and will lose all. God's will be done!"

Henry was still young, but he had toiled much in this world, his time for rest was come; he had never had any since his birth. He was attacked, after his winter campaign, with an acute irritation of the bowels, a malady very common in those days. Being warned by the physicians that his end was at hand, he commended his son to his brothers, and gave them two wise counsels; first, to conciliate the duke of Burgundy, and secondly, in any treaty that might be made, to manage always so as to keep Normandy.

He died at Vincennes on the 31st of August, 1422; Charles VI followed him on the 21st of October. The people of Paris shed tears for their poor mad king as freely as the English for their victorious Henry V. "The whole *peuple*," says the *Bourgeois de Paris*,<sup>a</sup> "were in the streets weeping and crying, as if each had lost the friend he most loved. Truly, their lamentations were like those of the prophet, '*Quomodô sedet sola civitas plena populo!*' The petty folk of Paris cried, 'Oh, most dear prince, never shall we have one so good! Never shall we see thee more! Cursed be death! We shall never have aught but war since thou hast left us. Thou art gone to rest; we remain in tribulation and sorrow.'"

Charles VI was carried to St. Denis, "poorly accompanied for a king of France. There were only his chamberlain, his chancellor, his confessor, and some subordinate officers." One prince only attended the funeral, and that was the duke of Bedford. When the corpse was lowered into the grave, the ushers-at-arms broke their wands and threw them into the grave, and reversed their maces. Then Berri, king-at-arms of France, cried out, over the grave, "May it please God to have mercy on the soul of the very high and very excellent prince Charles, king of France, sixth of the name, our natural and sovereign lord."<sup>p</sup> And then he added, "God grant long life to Henry, by the grace of God, king of France and of England, our sovereign lord." About the same time at Mehun-sur-Yèvre, in Berri, some French knights unfurled the royal banner, crying, "Long live King Charles, seventh of the name, by the grace of God, king of France."<sup>b</sup>

#### WOES OF THE PEOPLE — THE *DANSE MACABRE*

After having spoken of the death of the king, we must mention that of the people. From 1418 to 1422, the depopulation was frightful. The history of those dismal years runs in a murderous circle; war leads to famine, famine to pestilence, and pestilence again brings round famine. It is like that night of the Exodus, in which the angel passes and repasses, touching each house with the sword.



[1418-1424 A.D.]

When men have come to that pass they weep no more; there is an end to tears, or there mingle even with tears gleams of hellish joy and savage laughter. It was the most tragical characteristic of the times that in the gloomiest moments there were alternations of frantic gaiety. The beginning of that long series of evils, "of that woeful dance," as the *Bourgeois de Paris*<sup>a</sup> says, was the madness of Charles VI, and contemporaneously therewith the too famous masquerade of the satyrs, the piously burlesque mysteries, and the *basoche* farces.<sup>1</sup>

The year in which the duke of Orleans was murdered was distinguished by the organisation of the corporation of minstrels. That corporation, quite indispensable of course in so joyous a period, became important and respected. Treaties of peace were cried through the streets with a mighty strumming of violins; hardly any six months passed in which a peace was not cried and sung. The eldest son of Charles VI, the first dauphin, was an indefatigable player on the harp and the spinet. He had a great staff of musicians; and in addition to these, he used to call in the aid of the choir-boys of Notre Dame. He sang, danced, and "balled" (*balait*), night and day, and that even in the year of the Cabochians, whilst they were killing his friends. He killed himself, too, by dint of singing and dancing.

It seems an ascertained fact that in the fourteenth century dancing became involuntary and maniacal in many countries. The violent processions of the Flagellants set the first example. The great epidemics, and the terrible and lasting shock they gave to the nerves of the survivors, easily gave occasion to St. Vitus' dance. These phenomena are, as we know, contagious. The spectacle of the convulsions acted with so much the more force, as there was nothing in men's souls but convulsion and vertigo; and then the sick and the hale danced together promiscuously. They would catch each other violently by the hand, in the streets and the churches, and foot it round in a ring. Many a one who at first laughed at this sight, or looked on coldly, became at last bewildered, his head reeled, and he, too, reeled and danced with the rest. The rings went on multiplying, interlacing; they became bigger and bigger, more and more heady, fast, and furious, as though they were huge coiling reptiles, that momentarily swelled to view. There was no stopping the monster, but its joints might be lopped; the electric chain was broken by one falling with feet and fists on some one of the dancers. The rude dissonance interrupting the harmony, they found themselves free, otherwise they would have gone on reeling until utterly exhausted, and have danced themselves to death.

This phenomenon of the fourteenth century does not occur again in the fifteenth; but in the latter we find, in England, France, and Germany, a strange amusement, which reminds us of those great popular dances of the sick and dying. It was called the dance of the dead, or *danse macabre*. It was a great favourite with the English, who introduced it into France.

The spectacle of the dance of the dead was enacted in Paris in 1424, in the cemetery of the Innocents. That narrow space in which the enormous

[<sup>1</sup> In 1402 letters-patent were issued by the king permitting the bourgeois of Paris to constitute themselves into a religious fraternity for the representation of the "Mystery of the Passion." This is the origin of the modern tragic theatre. The "morality plays," or comedies, were created by the clerks of the *basoche*—the corporation formed by the clerks of the *procureurs* of the parliament of Paris. This body exercised extensive jurisdiction over its members—it's head bore the title of "king." In the reign of Charles VI playing-cards were perfected, and about 1420 Jan van Eyck, called Jean of Bruges, discovered a drying oil, which has caused him to be regarded as the inventor of oil painting. Hitherto men had used distemper, fresco, gum, paste, or white of egg.<sup>b</sup>

city for so many ages accumulated the remains of almost all its inhabitants had been at first both a cemetery and a laystall, haunted at night by robbers, and in the evening by wantons, who plied their trade among the tombs. Philip Augustus enclosed it with walls, and to purify it dedicated it to St. Innocent, a child crucified by the Jews. In the fourteenth century the churches were already very full, and it became the fashion among the good citizens to bury their dead in the cemetery. Such was the suitable theatre of the *danse macabre*. It was begun in September, 1424, when the heat had diminished, and the first rain had rendered the smell of the place less offensive. The performances lasted many months.

Whatever disgust both the place and the spectacle might inspire, it was matter suggestive of much thought to see in that fatal period, in a town so frequently and so cruelly visited by death, the hungry, sickly, scarce living multitude, merrily making death itself a matter of spectacle, attending with insatiable avidity to its moralising buffooneries, and enjoying them so heartily as to tread heedlessly upon the bones of their fathers, and on the gaping graves they were themselves about to fill.<sup>p</sup>

#### THE UNIVERSITY OF PARIS AND THE COUNCIL OF CONSTANCE

A very different phase of life which demands at least a passing notice is that which clustered about the wonderful University of Paris.<sup>a</sup> As early as the thirteenth century, the university shone in all its glory. Born in the shadow of the cloister of the bishopric, and primarily confounded with the ancient cathedral college of the town, it had obtained, little by little, immunities and privileges by favour of which it had grown and had reached a point where it was dependent upon no one but the court of Rome. Among the popes who conferred the most important privileges may be cited Alexander III, Innocent III, and his successor Honorius III, all promoters of the progress of knowledge, all jealously seeking to retain for the church that superiority of studies and learning to which its power was bound. The University of Paris rose rapidly above the universities of Italy, the only ones with which it was then in serious rivalry. It became the most important ecclesiastical and scientific college of Europe, the school whence the high clergy of France was recruited, as well as that of a large part of Christianity. It belonged to the church by its creation, by its studies in which theology predominated, and by its object, which was to prepare the learned candidates for the obtention of livings. For all its rights it depended on the holy see, which subjected it to visits and regulations. Meanwhile it formed in the bosom of the church itself a vast corporation (*universitas*), governing itself by its own laws with an extended liberty.

It was divided into four faculties: arts or philosophy which comprised nearly all the known sciences; theology; decree or canonical law; and medicine. The faculty of arts had a particular celebrity; it is to it that the capital of France owes its appellation of the Modern Athens. The faculty of theology was not less celebrated after the lectures of Roscellinus and Abelard. That of law was incomplete, since civil law, which restored to honour the work of the great Italian jurists, was taught in Paris only subsidiarily. It even ceased to exist at the beginning of the year 1220, although the laws of Justinian had found able interpreters in France as well as in Italy. The decree of the pope, Honorius III, to suppress its instruction in Paris, had probably its entire concentration in the college of Boulogne for an object. In any case, that suppression was only

for a time, and a little later at Orleans a special university was founded, called the University of Law. As to the study and profession of medicine, it is well known that in the Middle Ages it was a prerogative of the religious orders almost exclusively.

Each faculty held special assemblies, in which the masters and graduates had deliberative voice. The four faculties met once a year to elect their rector, the formulæ of which elections, determined with infinite care, in order to guarantee liberty of vote and prevent intrigue, presented a great analogy to the election of a pope. Thus the University of Paris possessed a liberal government, with a regular hierarchy, where degrees conferred powers, and where superior intelligence ruled.

The pope gave it its highest protection. He made the rules of study, intervened in disputes with the civil authorities. The principal ecclesiastical privilege of the University of Paris was that of being dependent on no bishop, and having its own jurisdiction. Its members could not be excommunicated except by the court of Rome.

It is one of the strangest contrasts of history that while France was at the lowest ebb of its national history, the University of Paris was attempting to carry out one of the greatest revolutions in the history of Europe. The conciliar movement in the church, which produced such great international gatherings as the councils of Constance and of Bâle, and which aimed to limit papal absolutism by something like a parliamentary system, was due to the work of men like Jean Gerson, chancellor of the University of Paris, and Pierre D'Ailly, scholar and prelate. It was universally admitted that abuses had crept into the administration of the church. There was evidently something wrong when, while Frenchmen were perishing from famine, and France was on the verge of ruin, the papal court at Avignon luxuriated on a revenue that was more than royal, and a pope (John XXII) could accumulate a treasure of eighteen millions of gold florins, and jewels and vestments estimated at seven millions more.

But the evils which date from the residence at Avignon were increased twofold during the schism. All Christendom was in doubt how this would end. For the civil war in the church had divided the countries under rival obediences. France, Scotland, and Spain adhered to the pope at Avignon; and England, Germany, and Italy obeyed the Italian pope.

At first they tried to induce the rivals to resign; and Pedro de Luna, who was elected pope at Avignon as Benedict XIII, won the high office by declaring that he would resign as easily as take off his hat. But the wily prelate, after his election, declared that no earthly power could dethrone him, and for more than a decade defied the attempts of reformers to achieve union. It was then that in the University of Paris the theologians began agitation for a universal council, as supreme over the pope. It is said that a German doctor began the movement, but the credit has gone to France. First at Pisa and then at Constance, the great parliaments of the church took in hand the reformation.

In the later council (1414-1418) union was achieved by the deposition of opposing popes and the election of Martin V (see volume on The Papacy), but the decree *Frequens* which demanded regular meeting of councils in the future, was gradually lost sight of in the following pontificates, and the great experiment of a constitutional church was a failure. That such an attempt should be made while France was in the throes of this great Hundred Years' War, and that mostly by Frenchmen, shows that alongside of the story of carnage, crime, and superstition, there were signs of intellectual life and



earnest effort of reformers, which are suggestive in the age of Wycliffe and Huss.

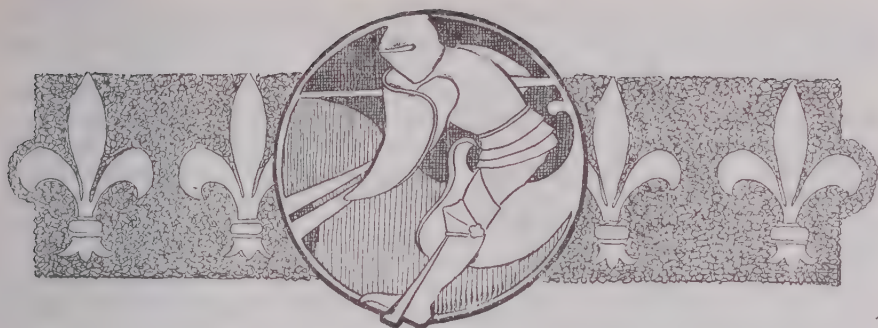
A strange page of history is opened here. Sigismund, emperor of Germany, who presided at the council of Constance, was anxious to play a great part in the world's affairs. He took advantage of the great international assemblage in his dominions to attempt to put himself at the head of a European confederacy to fight the Turks, who were advancing along the Danube.

To accomplish this he made a journey into France and England to try to prevent the war. His visit took place just before the fatal invasion of Henry V which brought the victory of Agincourt.<sup>1</sup> To raise the money for that journey Sigismund made over the mark of Brandenburg to Frederick of Hohenzollern, burggraf of Nuremberg, and thus founded the power of the Hohenzollern.

Henry V, was willing to accede to Sigismund's plans, but although he even offered the succession of Hungary as a bribe, the court of France refused to make the peace he desired, and Sigismund's great effort at European concord resulted in only one thing — the foundation of the great dynasty which rules in Germany to-day. France and England went their own way, bringing mutual disaster for another generation.<sup>a</sup>

[<sup>1</sup> It was Sigismund's grandfather, the blind King John of Bohemia, whose death at Crécy gave the famous motto, *Ich dien*, to the prince of Wales.]





## CHAPTER VIII

### THE RESCUE OF THE REALM

[1422-1431 A.D.]

No longer on St. Denis will we cry,  
But Joan la Pucelle shall be France's saint.  
—SHAKESPEARE.

THE king proclaimed at St. Denis was an infant of ten months, grandson, on his mother's side, of Charles VI. His two uncles ruled in his name, — one the duke of Bedford in France; the other the duke of Gloucester in England. This child was recognised as sovereign of the kingdom of France by parliament, by the university, by the first prince of the blood, Philip the Good, duke of Burgundy, and by the dowager queen, Isabella of Bavaria. Paris, Île-de-France, Picardy, Artois, Flanders, Champagne, and Normandy — that is to say, almost all the country north of the Loire — and Guienne, south of that river, obeyed him.

The king proclaimed in Berri, sole surviving son of Charles VI, was a youth of nineteen years, graceful bearing, but weak in body, pale of figure, of small courage, and ever in fear of violent death; and besides, adds Chastelain,<sup>d</sup> “a good Latinist, a fine *raconteur*, and most wise in council.” Such indeed he was later on; but for the present and for many years to come he showed spirit only for his own pleasures and a sort of dull apathy in matters of state and in the face of peril. His authority was recognised only in Touraine, Orleans, Berri, Bourbonnais, Auvergne, Languedoc, Dauphiné, and Lyonnais. Indifferent to disaster, he was resigned to hearing himself called derisively “the king of Bourges.” To Poitiers he transported his council, his parliament, and his university. But Bourges and Poitiers were still great towns in his eyes; he dragged his little court from castle to castle, completely submissive to the sire de Giac, to Le Camus de Beaulieu, to the sire de la Trémouille, and willingly enduring the all-powerful influence of his mother-in-law Yolande of Anjou.<sup>b</sup>

The young king, brought up by the Armagnacs, found in them his chief support, and so shared their unpopularity. These Gascons were the most veteran soldiers in France, but the greatest and most cruel plunderers. The

hatred they inspired in the north would have been sufficient to create there a Burgundian and English party. The brigands of the south seemed more of foreigners than the foreigners.

Charles VII next made trial of the foreigners themselves, of those who had gained experience in the English wars. He called the Scotch to his aid. These were the most mortal enemies of England, and their hatred might be relied on as much as their courage. The greatest hopes were built on these auxiliaries. A Scotchman was made constable of France; another, count of Touraine. Notwithstanding, however, their incontestable bravery, they had often been beaten in England. They were not only beaten in France, at Crevant and Verneuil (1423, 1424), but destroyed: the English took care that none of them escaped. It was asserted that the Gascons, out of jealousy against the Scotch, had not supported them.

The English narrowly escaped giving Charles VII an ally far more useful and important than the Scotch—the duke of Burgundy. So little concert was there between the two brothers, that at the selfsame time Bedford married the duke of Burgundy's sister, and Gloucester was commencing war against him. A word as to this romantic story.

The duke of Burgundy, count of Flanders, never thought himself secure of his Flanders until he should have flanked it with Holland and Hainault. These two counties had fallen into the hands of a girl, the countess Jacqueline, widow of the dauphin John. The duke of Burgundy married her to a cousin of his own, a sickly boy. Jacqueline, who was a handsome young woman, did not resign herself to so irksome a fate, but left her sorry mate, nimbly crossed the Straits, and herself proposed marriage to the duke of Gloucester. Gloucester committed the folly of accepting the proposal (1423). He espoused Jacqueline's cause, thus beginning against the duke of Burgundy, the indispensable ally of England, a war which, for the latter, was a question of actual existence, a war without treaty, in which the sovereign of Flanders would risk his last man. The incensed duke of Burgundy concluded a secret alliance with the duke of Brittany, and then he made pecuniary demands on Bedford. What could Bedford do? He had no money; instead of it, he offered an inestimable possession worth more than any sum of money—his whole barrier on the north (September, 1423). The bands of Charles VII came and lodged themselves in the very heart of English France, in Normandy; a pitched battle was fought before they could be expelled. It took place on the 17th of August, 1424, at Verneuil. In June, Bedford had regained the good will of the duke of Burgundy by an enormous concession, having pledged his eastern frontier to him, Bar-sur-Seine, Auxerre, and Mâcon.

All northern France was greatly in danger of thus falling bit by bit into the duke of Burgundy's hand; but suddenly the wind shifted. The sapient Gloucester, in the midst of this war begun for Jacqueline, forgets that he has married her, forgets that at that very moment she is besieged in Bergues, and weds another, a fair English woman. This new folly had the effect of an act of wisdom. The duke of Burgundy consented to be reconciled to the English, and made a show of believing all Bedford told him; the essential thing for him was to be able to despoil Jacqueline, and occupy Hainault, Holland, and afterwards Brabant, the succession to which could not but soon be opened.

Charles VII, therefore, derived little advantage from this event which seemed likely to be so profitable to him. The only benefit that accrued to him from it was that the count de Foix, governor of Languedoc, compre-



[1422-1427 A.D.]

hended that the duke of Burgundy would sooner or later turn against the English, and declared that his conscience obliged him to recognise Charles VII as legitimate king. He placed Languedoc in subjection to him, with the clear understanding that the king should draw from it neither money nor troops, and should not in any wise interfere with the little royalty which the count de Foix had contrived for himself in that province. The friendship of the houses of Anjou and Lorraine seemed to promise more direct advantage to the party of Charles VII. The head of the house of Anjou was then a woman, Queen Yolande, relict of Louis II, duke of Anjou, count of Provence, and pretender to the throne of Naples; she was the daughter of the king of Aragon, by a lady of Lorraine, of the house of Bar. The English having committed the egregious mistake of troubling the houses of Anjou and Aragon, as regarded their pretensions to the throne of Naples, Yolande formed against them an alliance of Anjou and Lorraine with Charles VII. She married her daughter to the young king, and her son René to the only daughter of the duke of Lorraine. Yolande was of service to her son-in-law. By her sage counsels she removed the old Armagnacs from about him; she had the address to win the Bretons back to him, and caused the constable's sword to be conferred on the count of Richemont, brother of the duke of Brittany.

Charles VII, combining together the Bretons, Gascons, and Dauphinois, had thenceforth the real military strength of France on his side. Spain sent him Aragonese, Italy Lombards. But the war sped feebly for all that; money was wanting, and union still more so. The king's favourites frustrated Richemont's first enterprises: not, indeed, with impunity, for the stern Breton put to death two of them within six months, without form of trial. Since a favourite was necessary to the king, he gave him one of his own choosing, young La Trémouille, and the first use the latter made of his ascendancy was to dismiss Richemont. The king, strange to say, forbade his constable to fight for him; the king's men and Richemont's were on the point of drawing their swords against each other. Thus Charles VII found his cause less advanced than ever.<sup>c</sup>

Meanwhile the towns were resisting the foreign domination. La Ferté-Bernard underwent in 1422 a four months' siege and only yielded to the earl of Salisbury in the last extremity. In 1427 the English, in order to get closer to the Loire, sent three thousand men-at-arms to besiege Montargis on the Loing. The town had only a small garrison under the brave La Faille, but the inhabitants supported him well.<sup>d</sup>

#### MONSTRELET DESCRIBES THE SIEGE OF MONTARGIS (1427 A.D.)

Shortly after their arrival the English built some bridges and passages over the river. This being done, they began to approach the town and fortress of Montargis, and attacked and destroyed several engines of war. But despite this, the besieged defended themselves valiantly, and kept the besiegers thus employed for the space of about two months. During this time tidings were carried to King Charles of France, which informed him that, if he did not shortly send succour to the besieged, they must needs yield to their adversaries. This news came to the knowledge of King Charles, and it is said that king summoned a council, where it was concluded and determined to send help to Montargis, or, at least, to reinforce it with men and provisions. The charge of the relief was bestowed upon the bastard John of Orleans and Étienne de Vignolles, known as La Hire.

They, with about sixteen hundred fighting men and skilful soldiers, took the road with much display, with the intention of victualling the said town of Montargis, and raising the siege. When they had come within half a league, as secretly as they could, they took counsel together and determined to make an attack upon some of the camps of the English, on both sides of the town. They had with them some of the garrison of the said town of Montargis who would direct them. They attacked the camps of the English with much violence (which attack the English had not guarded against), crying, "Montjoie St. Denis!" and began to fire a number of the

camps, and killed and captured several of the English. Such was the spirit they put into their work, that the camp of Sir John de la Pole was overthrown in a short space of time; but the same lord and about eight others escaped in a small boat. The water was so high at that time that the bridges the English had made were covered, so that when they attempted to escape they fell beside these bridges and were drowned.

Whilst this was going on, the bastard of Orleans was on the other side of the town, attacking on foot the camp of Henry Basset, and there being much to do, the others, when they had overthrown the first camp, came to his assistance. The English, perceiving that the victory was not to them, began to retreat to the camp of the earl of Warwick, and crossed a bridge so hastily and in such numbers that the bridge gave way beneath them, and there perished miserably very many; for besides this



CHARLES VII

(From an old French engraving)

the inhabitants of Montargis, who had sallied forth boldly to the help of their own people, slaughtered and captured many, and did not spare them.

Meanwhile, the earl of Warwick assembled his men as quickly as he could. But when he learned the great loss and pitiable defeat of his host, of which from a thousand to fifteen hundred men were either killed or captured, he departed and went his way, with the remainder of his men of which the greater number were on foot. They retreated to the castle of Landou in Nemours, and to other places under their suzerainty.<sup>e</sup> This was the first time that the bastard of Orleans was intrusted with a command of any importance, and he did not fail to justify his brilliant début.<sup>f</sup>

## THE SIEGE OF ORLEANS (1428-1429 A.D.)

The following year (1428) Bedford resolved to push military operations vigorously and to force the barrier of the Loire. In the month of June the earl of Salisbury debarked at Calais with six thousand of the best soldiers England ever had in France; Bedford joined him there with four thousand men drawn from garrisons in Normandy, and their army took Jargeau, Janville, Meung-sur-Loire, Thoury, Beaugency, Marchenoir, and La Ferté-Hubert, thus approaching Orleans step by step.

[1428-1429 A.D.]

Orleans was the gate to Berri, the Bourbonnais and Poitou. This taken, the "king of Bourges" would become the king of Dauphiné and Languedoc. October 12th, 1428, the English appeared before its ramparts and at once formed around the place a series of bastilles, each of which was commanded by one of the first lords of England—by William de la Pole, earl of Suffolk; the "English Achilles," Lord Talbot; and William Glasdale, who had sworn to kill everyone in Orleans. Salisbury was commander-in-chief. The Orléanais, who had been expecting the siege, had fortified the heart of their town by burning the suburbs. Their captain was the sire de Gaucourt whom the English had held captive for thirteen years, because he had persisted in defending Harfleur against them. The garrison did not number more than five hundred at the most, but they were all hardened warriors. Moreover, the bourgeois were looking out for themselves. They had formed thirty-four companies—and each undertook the defence of one of the thirty-four towers of the wall.

Artillery was beginning to play a great rôle in battles and sieges. That of the besiegers was badly handled, and the bourgeois laughed at the unskilful English cannoneers who threw eighty-pound balls into the town and killed no one.<sup>a</sup> The Orléanais artillery was very different. It was composed of seventy pieces, aimed by twelve master cannoneers, expert at firing. Each cannon had its name and its own particular duty. The good cannon *Riflard* (Clean Sweep) killed its man at every shot.<sup>b</sup> Another one, too, was the celebrated culverin of a skilful Lorrainian cannoneer, Maître Jean; the two, man and culverin, made the finest hits. The English came at last to know this Maître Jean; he never ceased killing them except to make game of them: from time to time he would drop down and pretend to be dead; his body was carried off into the town; the English were in ecstasy when—behold! back he would come, alive and merry, and fire upon them worse than ever.<sup>c</sup>

But the luckiest shot of all was fired by a child [according to Grafton, the son of a gunner who had gone to dinner]. This schoolboy came across a fully loaded piece on the rampart. He lit the fuse and ran away. The ball went straight into the face of the earl of Salisbury, who was standing on one of the bastilles and to whom, at that very instant, William Glasdale was saying, "My lord, behold your town."

The English commander was dead; and the next day the bastard of Orleans, the handsome, brave Dunois, entered the town with the best knights of the time—La Hire, Saintrailles, Marshal de Broussac, and six or seven hundred soldiers. Others followed until little by little seven thousand were gathered in Orleans.<sup>b</sup>

### *The "Battle of the Herrings" (1429 A.D.)*

The siege continued with various success to the 12th of February, 1429, with sundry episodes in the way of sorties, feigned attacks, conflicts about provision entering the town, and even duels, to amuse the two parties and try their respective mettle. They went on slowly completing their fortifications, and it was to be foreseen that the town would be at last almost entirely shut in.

However careless the king might appear about saving the appenage of the duke of Orleans, it was clear that, once that city had fallen, the English

[<sup>a</sup> It was positively asserted that a ball had taken off a man's shoe without hurting his foot.]



would advance unhindered into Poitou, Berri, and the Bourbonnais, would live at the expense of those provinces, and ruin the south after having ruined the north. The duke de Bourbon sent his eldest son, the count de Clermont, under whom some Scotch forces and some lords of Touraine, Poitou, and Auvergne were to succour Orleans, east provisions into it, and even hinder the arrival of provisions in the English camp. The duke of Bedford sent a supply from Paris under the conduct of the brave Sir John Fastolf; and he had availed himself of the old Cabochian enmity of Paris to Orleans, to add to his English detachment a considerable number of Parisian arblast men, and the provost of Paris himself. They took with them three hundred wagon-loads of provisions, particularly herrings, an article indispensable in Lent. Troops and wagons all marched in narrow file, and nothing could have been easier than to break their line and destroy them. The Gascon La Hire, who was in advance of the French, burned with impatience to fall upon them, but received express orders not to do so, from the prince, who was advancing slowly with the main body of his force.

Meanwhile, the English had taken the alarm, and Fastolf had drawn his men together under cover of the wagons and a line of sharp stakes which these provident English always carried with them. The English archers were posted on the right, the Parisian arblast men on the left. In spite of all the count de Clermont could say, his men were carried away by their impetuous rancour; the Scotch leaped from their saddles to fight the English on foot, and the Armagnac Gascons rushed upon their old enemies the Parisians; but the latter stood their ground. The Scotch and Gascons having thus broken their ranks, the English issued from behind their temporary ramparts, pursued them, and killed three or four hundred. The count de Clermont remained immovable. La Hire was so furious that he turned back upon the English who dispersed in the pursuit, and killed some of them. The count's party had to return to Orleans after this unlucky engagement, to which the Orléanais, always satirical, gave the name of the "battle of the Herrings"; in fact, the balls had burst the barrels; and the field was strewn with herrings more than with the slain.

Slight as was this check, it discouraged everyone. The most knowing hastened to quit a town that seemed lost. The young count de Clermont had the weakness to withdraw with his two thousand men; the admiral and the chancellor of France thought it would be a sad thing if the king's great officers should be taken by the English, and they too departed. As the men-at-arms no longer hoped for human aid, and the priests did not reckon very confidently on divine succour, the archbishop of Rheims took himself off, and even the bishop of Orleans left his flock to defend themselves as they could.

They all went away on the 18th of February, assuring the citizens that they would soon return in strength. Nothing could stay them. The bastard of Orleans, who with equal skill and valour defended the appenage of his house, had in vain been telling them since the 12th that a miraculous succour should be looked for, that a daughter of God, who promised to save the town, was coming from the marches of Lorraine. The archbishop, an ex-secretary of the pope, and an old diplomatist, paid little heed to this talk about miracles. Dunois himself did not reckon so exclusively on aid from on high as to neglect employing a very human and very politic means against the English. He sent Saintrilles to the duke of Burgundy, to beg him, as a relative of the duke of Orleans, to take the latter's town into his keeping. He was now asked to accept the grand and important possession of the centre of France, and he did not refuse the offer. He went straight to Paris, and told the affair

[1429 A.D.]

to Bedford, who answered dryly that he had not toiled for the duke of Burgundy's behoof. The latter, much offended, recalled all the troops he had at the siege of Orleans.

Supplies arriving with difficulty, discontent began in the town; many no doubt were of opinion that the town had made quite enough sacrifices for the sake of its lord, and that it was better Orleans should become English than cease to be. Things did not stop there. It was discovered that a hole had been made in the wall of the town; treachery was manifestly at work. Besides all this, Dunois could expect no help from Charles VII. The estates, assembled in 1428, had voted money and summoned the tenants of fiefs to fulfil their feudal duties. Neither money nor men had arrived.

We are not well acquainted with the intrigues that divided the little court of Charles. The divisions in it had naturally augmented in this its extreme distress. The old Armagnac advisers, whom Richemont and the king's mother-in-law had for a while removed, were in the way to regain their credit. That southern party would have been well pleased to have a king of the south holding his court at Grenoble. The duchess of Anjou, the king's mother-in-law, on the contrary, could not preserve Anjou if the English definitively passed the Loire. So far there was a community of interests between her and the house of Orleans. But the house of Anjou had so many other interests, so various and divergent, that she thought it expedient always to keep on fair terms with the English, and to negotiate perpetually. When the defence of Orleans appeared to be desperate (May, 1429), the old cardinal De Bar hastened to treat with Bedford, in the name of his nephew, René of Anjou, lest he should lose the inheritance of Lorraine, calculating that René could disavow his proceedings, should the affairs of Charles VII at any future time assume another aspect.

The impending ruin of Orleans had frightened the other towns of the Loire. The nearest, Angers, Tours, and Bourges, sent provisions to the besieged; Poitiers and La Rochelle, money; then, when the alarm increased, the Bourbonnais, Auvergne, and even Languedoc sent the Orléanais salt-petre, sulphur, and steel. Gradually all France became interested in the fate of one town, and moved with sympathy for the brave resistance of the men of Orleans and their fidelity to their lord. Orleans was pitied; so too was its duke. The captive Charles of Orleans could not defend his town.<sup>1</sup>

The English had one thing in their favour, namely, that their young king, Henry VI, was certainly a Frenchman by the mother's side, and grandson of Charles VI, whom he resembled but too much as regarded the weakness of his mind. The legitimacy of Charles VII, on the other hand, was very doubtful; he was born in 1403, in the high tide of his mother's intimacy with the duke of Orleans; and she herself had acquiesced in the acts in which he was called *soi-disant* dauphin. Henry VI had not yet been crowned at Rheims, but neither had Charles VII. The people in those days recognised a king but by two things, royal birth and the crown placed on his head with the church's solemn sanction. Charles VII was not king according to religion, nor was he sure that he was so according to nature. This question, of no moment for politicians of that class who decide after their own interests, was everything for the people, who are willing to obey only the right. A woman had obscured this great question of right, and by a woman it was cleared up. This second woman bore the name Jeanne Darc. She was soon to be famous as the Maid of Orleans.

[<sup>1</sup> The duke of Orleans had been a captive in England since the battle of Agincourt.]

THE MAID OF ORLEANS (*LA PUCELLE*) (1429 A.D.)

The originality of the Maid of Orleans, and what determined her success, was not so much her valour or her visions as her good sense. Through all her enthusiasm, this daughter of the people saw the question clearly, and was able to solve it. She cut the knot which the politic and the men of little faith could not untie. She declared, in God's name, that Charles VII was the true heir, and she set him at ease as to his legitimacy, of which he himself had doubts. That legitimacy she sanctified, taking her king straight to Rheims, and gaining over the English, by the celerity of her movements, the decisive advantage of the coronation.

It was at Domrémy, just between Lorraine of the Vosges and that of the plain, between Lorraine and Champagne; that the beautiful and brave girl was born, who was to wield the sword of France so well.

Joan or Jeanne was the third daughter of a peasant, Jacques Darc,<sup>1</sup> and of Isabella of Romée. She had two godmothers, one of whom was named Jeanne, the other Sibylle. The eldest son having been named James (Jacques), another Péter (Pierre), the pious parents gave one of their daughters the more exalted name of St. John (Jean). Whilst the other children accompanied their father in his field work or tended cattle, the mother kept Joan at home for sewing or spinning. She did not learn to read or write, but she knew all her mother could teach her of sacred things. She acquired religion, not as a lesson or a ceremony, but in the homely popular form of a winter night's tale, as the simple faith of a mother.

Everybody knew her charity and her piety. They saw clearly she was the best girl in the village. What they did not know was that in her the life from above always absorbed the other life, and suppressed all vulgar development. Hers was the divine gift to remain a child in soul and body. She grew up, became strong and comely, but never knew the physical miseries of her sex. They were spared her, to the advantage of her mental growth and religious inspiration.

Joan had her share in the romantic adventures of those restless times. She saw poor fugitives arrive in the hamlet, and the kind-hearted girl assisted towards their reception, gave up her bed to them, and lay down in the hayloft. Her kindred, too, were once obliged to save themselves by flight. Then, when the inundation of brigands had passed off, the family returned and found the village sacked, the house devastated, and the church burned down. Thus she knew what war meant. She understood that anti-Christian state of things, and abhorred that reign of the devil, in which every man died in mortal sin. If, as everyone said, the ruin of the kingdom was the work of a woman, an unnatural mother, it might be that its salvation should proceed from a girl. This very fact was foretold in one of Merlin's prophecies, a prophecy which, variously enriched and modified in the several provinces, had become thoroughly Lorrainian in the country of Joan of Arc. It was a girl of the marches of Lorraine that was to save the realm. The prophecy had probably received this embellishment, in consequence of the recent marriage of René of Anjou with the heiress of the duchy of Lorraine, which was in reality a very fortunate event for France.

One summer's day, a fast day, Joan, being in the garden at noon with her father, close by the church, saw a dazzling light in that direction, and

[<sup>1</sup> The family name was Darc, and the name of the Maid of Orleans was therefore, properly, Jeanne Darc, not Jeanne d'Arc as commonly written; but the latter has the sanction of general usage.]



[1428 A.D.]

heard a voice saying, "Be a good child, Joan, and go often to church." The poor girl was greatly frightened. Another time she again heard the voice and saw the light; but now she discerned it in noble figures, one of which had wings and seemed a sage counsellor. He said to her, "Joan, go to the aid of the king of France, and thou wilt restore him to his kingdom." She answered, trembling all over, "My Lord, I am but a poor girl; I cannot ride the war-horse, or lead men-at-arms." The voice replied: "Thou shalt go to M. de Baudricourt, captain of Vaucouleurs, and he will take thee before the king. St. Catherine and St. Margaret will be with thee to help thee." She remained stupefied and in tears, as if she had already beheld her whole future destiny.

The sage counsellor was none other than St. Michael, the stern archangel of judgment and battle. He returned again, cheered her courage, "and related to her the pity there was in the realm of France." Then came the white figures of female saints, surrounded with innumerable lights, their heads adorned with rich crowns, their voices sweet and melting even to tears. But Joan wept above all when the saints and angels left her. "I should have been very glad," she said, "if the angels had taken me away with them." Joan has told us nothing of the first inward conflict she sustained; but it is evident it took place, and endured a long while, since five years elapsed between her first vision and her departure from the home of her parents.

She encountered not only resistance but temptation in her own family. They tried to marry her, in the hope of bringing her back to a more rational way of thinking. A young man of the village alleged that she had promised him marriage when she was still a child; and as she denied the fact, he cited her before the ecclesiastical judge at Toul. It was supposed she would make no defence, but would submit to be cast by the court and married; but to everyone's great astonishment, she went to Toul, appeared in court, and spoke — she who had always held her peace.

To enable her to escape from the control of her family, it was necessary she should find in her family itself someone to believe her; this was a most difficult problem. Failing to persuade her father, she made a convert of her uncle, who took her away with him, under the pretext of her nursing his wife in her lying-in. She prevailed on him to go to the sire de Baudricourt, captain of Vaucouleurs, and ask his support for her; but the man of war gave the peasant a very bad reception, and told him the only thing to be done was "to slap her well," and take her home to her father. She was not cast down by the rebuff, but determined to depart, and her uncle was constrained to accompany her. The decisive moment was come; she quitted her family and her native village forever; she embraced her friends, especially her dear little friend Mengette, whom she commended to God's keeping; but as for Haumette, the friend she loved above all others, she preferred to depart without seeing her.

She arrived then in the town of Vaucouleurs, dressed in her clumsy red peasant garments, and went along with her uncle to lodge with the wife of a wheelwright who took a liking to her. She had herself taken into Baudricourt's presence, and said to him boldly that "she came to him on the part of our Lord to bid him tell the dauphin to keep his ground steadily, and not give battle to his enemies; for our Lord would grant him succour in mid-Lent. The kingdom did not belong to the dauphin but to our Lord; nevertheless, it was our Lord's will that the dauphin should become king, and that he should hold the kingdom in trust." She went on to say that, in spite of

the dauphin's enemies, he would be king, and she would take him to be crowned. The captain was amazed, and suspecting there was some devilry at work, he consulted the parish priest, who apparently entertained the same doubts. Joan had not spoken of her visions to any churchman. The priest, therefore, accompanied the captain to the wheelwright's house with his stole on, and adjured Joan to depart if she was sent by the evil spirit.

But the people did not doubt; their admiration was extreme; persons flocked from all parts to see her. It appears that Baudricourt sent to ask leave of the king. Meanwhile, he conducted Joan to the duke of Lorraine, who was ill and wished to consult her. He got nothing from her but advice to appease God's anger by becoming reconciled with his wife. He gave her encouragement notwithstanding. On her return to Vaucouleurs, she found a messenger from the king, who brought the permission she desired. The disaster of the battle of the Herrings disposed the king to accept every means of which he could avail himself. Joan had predicted the battle on the very day when it took place. The people of Vaucouleurs, entertaining no doubt of her mission, clubbed together to buy her a horse. The captain gave her only a sword.

It was a rough and very perilous journey she was about to make. The whole country was overrun by armed bands belonging to either party. There was now neither road nor bridge; the rivers were swollen; it was the month of February, 1429.

### *Joan at the Court*

The court of Charles VII was far from being unanimous in the Maid's favour. That inspired girl, just come from Lorraine, and patronised by the duke of Lorraine, could not fail to strengthen with the king the party of the queen and her mother, the Lorraine and Anjou party. An ambush was laid for Joan at some distance from Chinon, and she escaped from it only by miracle.

So strong was the opposition against her that, after she was actually arrived, the council continued for two days to discuss the question whether or not the king should see her. Her enemies thought to postpone the matter indefinitely, by having it decided that inquiries should be made respecting her in her native place. Fortunately, she had friends also—the two queens, no doubt, and above all, the duke of Alençon, who, having recently come out of the hands of the English, was very impatient to carry the war into the north, and recover his duchy. The inhabitants of Orleans, to whom Dunois had been promising this marvellous aid since the 12th of February, sent to the king and claimed the Maid's presence.

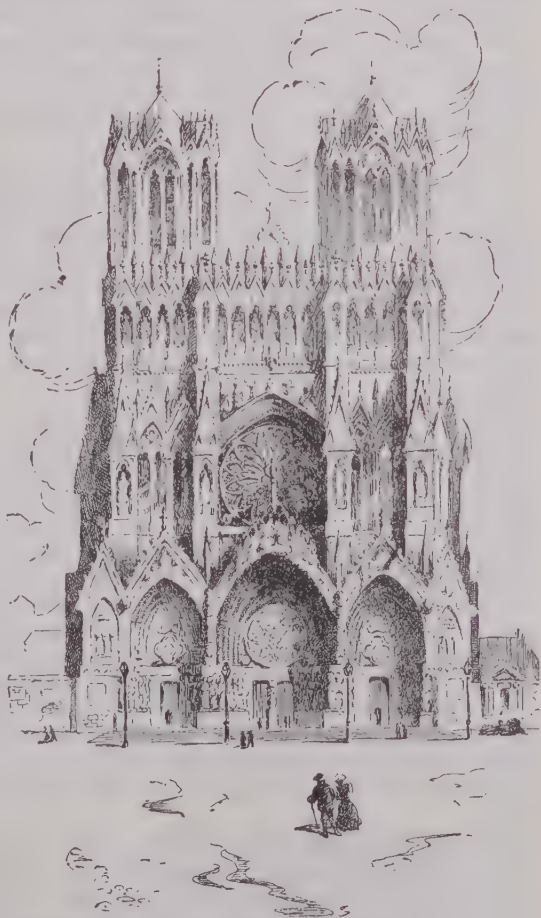
The king received her at last, surrounded with the greatest pomp; which, in all probability, was adopted with the hope of disconcerting her. She presented herself humbly "as a poor shepherd wench," distinguished the king at the first glance from the crowd of lords among whom he had purposely mingled; and though he insisted, at first, he was not the king, she embraced his knees. But as he was not yet crowned, she styled him only dauphin: "Gentle dauphin," she said, "my name is Jehanne la Pucelle. The King of heaven sends you word by me that you shall be anointed and crowned in the town of Rheims, and you shall be lieutenant of the King of heaven, who is King of France."

The archbishop of Rheims, chancellor of France, and president of the king's council, summoned doctors and professors of theology, some of them priests, others monks, and ordered them to examine the Maid. The doctors

[1429 A.D.]

being introduced and seated in a hall, Joan sat down on the end of the bench, and replied to their questions. She recounted the apparitions and the words of the angels, with dignified simplicity. A Dominican met her with a single objection, but it was one of weight: "Jehanne, thou sayest it is God's will to deliver the people of France; if such is his will he has no need of men-at-arms." The observation did not confound her. "Ah! *mon Dieu*," said she, "the men-at-arms will do battle, and God will give the victory." Another person was not so easily satisfied. This was Friar Séguin, a Limousin, professor of theology in the university of Poitiers, "a very sour man," says the chronicle. He asked her, in his Limousin French, "What language did the celestial voice speak?" Joan answered with rather too much sharpness, "A better one than yours." "Dost thou believe in God?" said the enraged doctor; "well then, God will not have us put faith in thy words unless thou show a sign." She answered, "I am not come to Poitiers to perform signs or miracles; my sign shall be to raise the siege of Orleans. Let me have men-at-arms, few or many, and I will go."

The question of her inspiration was made to depend on the test of her virginity. The duchess of Anjou, the king's mother-in-law, accomplished the ridiculous examination, with the aid of some ladies, to the honour of the Maid. Some Franciscans who had been sent to her native place to collect information, brought back the most satisfactory accounts. There was no more time to be lost. Orleans was crying out for help; Dunois was sending message upon message. The Maid was equipped, and a sort of establishment was formed for her. First of all they gave her for squire John Daulon, a brave knight of mature years, who belonged to the count de Dunois, and was the most respectable among his followers. She had also a noble page, two heralds-at-arms, a seneschal, and two valets; her brother, Pierre Darc, had also joined her suite. John Pasquerel, a friar, hermit of the order of St. Augustin, was assigned her for confessor.



THE CATHEDRAL OF RHEIMS



*The Deliverance of Orleans (1429 A.D.)*

When we read the list of the captains who threw themselves into Orleans with Joan of Arc — La Hire, Saintrilles, Gaucourt, Culan, Coaraze, Armagnac; when we see that, independently of the Bretons under Marshal de Retz, and Marshal de St. Sévère's Gascons, Florent d'Illiers, captain of Châteaudun, had brought all the nobles of the vicinity to take part in this short expedition, the deliverance of Orleans seems less miraculous. One thing, however, was by all means wanting to enable these great forces to act with advantage, an essential, indispensable thing — unity of action. Dunois might have created this, had no more been requisite to that end than address and intelligence; but this was not enough. An authority was requisite, one surpassing that of the crown; the king's captains were not habituated to obey the king.

War had changed men into wild beasts, and these beasts required to be turned again to men, Christians, docile subjects. A great and difficult change! Some of these Armagnac captains were perhaps the most furious men that ever existed. It was a ludicrous and touching thing to see the sudden conversion of the old Armagnac brigands. They did not stop short halfway in their amendment. La Hire no longer ventured to utter an oath; but the Maid, compassionating the violence he did himself, allowed him to swear, "by his staff." The devils had all at once been transformed into little saints.

She had begun by insisting that they should renounce their wanton women, and should confess. Then in the course of her march along the Loire, she had an altar erected in the open air, at which she took the communion, and so did they. The first night they bivouacked, she lay down in full armour, as there were no women about her; but she was not yet habituated to such hardships, and she was ill in consequence. As for danger, she knew not what it meant. She wanted to cross over to the north side of the river, and march along the English bank and between the bastilles of the invaders, who, she asserted, would not stir. Her followers would not listen to her advice, but marched along the left bank, so as to pass two leagues above Orleans. Dunois came out to meet her: "I bring you," she said, "the best succour ever sent to anyone, the succour of the King of heaven. It comes not from me, but from God himself, who, at the entreaty of St. Louis and St. Charlemagne, has had pity on the town of Orleans, and will not suffer that the enemy should have both the duke's body and his town at once."

She entered the city slowly at eight in the evening (April 29th), the crowd scarcely allowing her to advance. Everyone strove eagerly to touch at least her horse. They gazed on her "as if they saw God." Talking gently to the people all the while, she proceeded to the church, and then to the houses of the duke of Orleans' treasurer, an honourable man, whose wife and daughter gave her welcome. She slept with Charlotte, one of the daughters.

She had entered the town along with the provisions, but the army marched down-stream again, to cross at Blois. She would, nevertheless, have had an immediate attack made on the English bastilles; but as she could not effect this, she sent a second peremptory message to those on the north side, and then proceeded to repeat her summons to those on the south. Glasdale, the captain, abused her in the coarsest terms, calling her cow-girl and ribald. In their hearts they believed her to be a witch, and were greatly afraid of her.

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They kept her herald, and were thinking of burning him, in hopes that this would, perhaps, break the charm.

The army not arriving, Dunois ventured forth in search of it. The archbishop of Rheims, chancellor of Charles VII, had detained the little army at Blois. The old politician was far from conceiving the existence of such an irresistible enthusiasm, or perhaps he feared it. It was, therefore, much against his will that he came to Orleans. The maid went out to meet him, with the people and the priests singing hymns. The procession passed and repassed before the English bastilles; and the army entered the town, protected by some priests and a girl (May 4th, 1429).

Joan, who, in the midst of her enthusiasm and her inspiration, had much shrewdness of apprehension, very clearly discerned the hostile temper of the new comers. She was right in surmising that there was a design to act without her. As she lay by Charlotte's side, she suddenly started up, exclaiming, "My God! the blood of our people is running on the ground. It was ill done! Why was I not wakened? Quick! my arms, my horse!" She was armed in a moment, galloped off at full speed, and met men already wounded, whom they were carrying back from the field. The fugitives faced round on her arrival. Dunois, who had also not been called, arrived on the ground at the same time. The bastille (one of those on the north side) was attacked again. Talbot strove to succour it; but fresh forces issued from Orleans; the Maid put herself at their head, and Talbot withdrew his men. The bastille was carried. This was her first victory, the first time she looked on a field of slaughter. She sought confession for herself and her followers; and declared that she would take the communion on the morrow, being the feast of the Ascension, and pass the day in prayer.

Advantage was taken of this resolution to hold a council without her, wherein it was determined that this time the besiegers should cross the Loire and attack St. Jean le Blanc, the bastille which most impeded the introduction of provisions into the town, and that a false attack should be made at the same time on the other side. The English then did what they ought to have done before. They concentrated their strength. With their own hands burning the bastille which was to have been attacked, they retired upon the other two on the south side, the Augustins and the Tournelles. The former was instantly attacked and carried, the success in this instance again being partly due to the Maid. The French were seized for a while with a panic, and rushed back towards the floating bridge; but the Maid and La Hire disentangled themselves from the throng, threw themselves into boats, and took the English in flank.

There remained the Tournelles. The victors passed the night before it; but they obliged the Maid, who had eaten nothing all day (it was Friday), to recross the Loire. Meanwhile the council had assembled. The Maid was told in the evening that it had been unanimously resolved that, since the town was now fully victualled, they should wait for a fresh reinforcement to attack the Tournelles. It is difficult to believe that such could have been the real intention of the leaders, for delay was extremely dangerous, since the English might at any moment be succoured by Fastolf. Probably the intention was to deceive the Maid and deprive her of the honour of the triumph she had so powerfully contributed towards securing. She disappointed them.

In the morning she rode to the Burgundy gate with a multitude of men-at-arms and citizens; but the sire de Gaucourt, grand-master of the king's household, kept it shut. The crowd opened the gate, and forced another near it. The sun was rising on the Loire when the whole concourse threw

themselves into the boats. On arriving, however, at the Tournelles, they felt that they wanted artillery, and they sent for some to the town. At last they attacked the outward rampart which protected the bastille. The English defended themselves valiantly. The Maid, perceiving that the assailants were beginning to show signs of weakness, jumped into the ditch, seized a ladder, and was in the act of applying it to the wall, when an arrow struck her between the neck and the shoulder. The English sallied out to seize her, but she was carried off by her own party. She only allowed a little oil to be poured on the wound, and confessed.

Meanwhile no progress was made, and night was at hand. Dunois himself gave orders to sound a retreat. A Basque had taken out of the hands of the Maid's squire that standard of hers which struck such dismay into the enemy. "When the standard touches the wall," said she, "you will be able to enter." "It is touching it." "In then! all is your own." And just as she had predicted, the assailants in a frenzy of enthusiasm climbed the wall "as though by one step." The English were at this moment attacked on two sides at once.

Meanwhile the men of Orleans, who watched the fight from the other side of the Loire, could contain themselves no longer. They threw open their gates and rushed to the bridge, but there was an arch broken; they pushed a rickety plank across the opening, and a knight of St. John ventured to pass over the frail spar in full armour. The bridge was hastily repaired, and the whole multitude hurried to the other side. The English, seeing such a human sea rushing upon them, thought the whole world had come together against them. Their senses grew bewildered; some of them beheld St. Aignan, the patron of the town, others the archangel Michael. Glasdale endeavoured to retreat from the rampart to the bastille, across a small bridge; but it was shattered by a shot, and the Englishman fell into the water and was drowned, before the eyes of the maid he had so vilified. There were five hundred men in the bastille, all of whom were put to the sword.

Not one Englishman remained south of the Loire. Next day, Sunday, the besiegers on the northern side abandoned their bastilles, their artillery, their prisoners, and their wounded comrades. Talbot and Suffolk conducted the retreat steadily and in good order. The Maid would not allow them to be pursued, since they retired of their own accord; but before they withdrew out of sight of the town, she had an altar erected on a plain, at which mass was celebrated, and the people returned thanks to God in the presence of the enemy (Sunday, May 8th). The effect of the deliverance of Orleans was prodigious; everyone beheld in it the agency of supernatural power. Many attributed it to the devil, but the majority to God; it began to be generally believed that Charles had right on his side.<sup>c</sup>

### *Joan of Arc leads the King to Rheims*

However discomfited and paralysed by the panic of their soldiers, as well as by the great diminution of their numbers in the siege, the English generals would not retreat from the Loire, but withdrew, Suffolk to Jargeau, up the stream of the river, Talbot to Meung, lower down its current. They were unmolested for a month. The French were lost in jubilation. Joan left Orleans on the 13th of May, and hurried back to the court at Tours to press the king for an army to proceed to Rheims.<sup>d</sup>

To be crowned at Rheims would have been a decisive victory for Charles over his young competitor Henry VI. It would have made him a real king



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of France. But once again the politicians believed themselves the wiser, and the coronation was not to be thought of until the English were driven from the Loire.<sup>b</sup>

Early in June, however, Joan was able to muster eight thousand combatants, of whom twelve hundred were knights, most of them townsmen of Orleans.<sup>c</sup> Suffolk, who had thrown himself into Jargeau, was besieged and the place stormed. Beaugency, too, was taken before Lord Talbot could receive the succours which Sir John Fastolf was bringing him from the regent. The constable De Richemont, who had long kept aloof within his own estates, came, in spite of the king and the Maid, to lend his aid to the victorious army.

A battle was imminent; Richemont came to share the honour it might afford. Talbot and Fastolf had formed a junction of their forces; but it is a curious fact, illustrative both of the condition of the country and of the fortuitous character of the war, that no one knew where to find the English army in the wilderness of La Beauce, which was then covered with cop-pices and thickets, until they were discovered by a stag, which, being pursued by the French vanguard, rushed into the ranks of the English.

The latter were on their march, and had not set up their defensive line of stakes as usual. Talbot alone was for fighting, furious as he was, since the defeat at Orleans, at having shown his back to the French. Fastolf, on the contrary, who had gained the battle of the Herrings, had no need of an engagement to retrieve his reputation, and said, like a sensible man, that with a disheartened army it was better to remain on the defensive. The French men-at-arms did not wait for the end of the discussion, but charged headlong, and met with no great resistance. Talbot fought with desperate obstinacy, hoping perhaps to be killed, and succeeded only in getting himself made prisoner. The pursuit was murderous; the bodies of two thousand English were strewn over the plain.

After this battle of Patay (28th or 29th of June), it was now or never the time to venture on the expedition to Rheims. The politicians wanted to remain still on the Loire, and make sure of Cosne and La Charité. This time they talked in vain; no timid counsels could now be listened to. Every day brought people flocking in from all the provinces, attracted by the fame of the Maid's miracles, and believing only in her, and in her purpose forthwith to convey the king to Rheims. There was an irresistible outburst of the pilgrim and crusading spirit. The indolent young-king himself at last yielded to the popular flood, and suffered himself to be borne along by that vast tide that set in towards the north; and off they started all together, willingly or perforce—the king, courtiers, the politic and the enthusiastic, the madmen and the sages. They were twelve thousand when they began their march, but their numbers augmented continually as they advanced; every hour brought them additional strength; and those who had no armour followed the holy expedition in plain doublets, as archers or sword-and-buckler men, even though they were of gentle blood.

The army marched from Gien on the 28th of June without attempting to enter it, that town being in the hands of the duke of Burgundy, whom there were reasons for treating with favour. Troyes had a mixed garrison of Burgundians and English, who ventured to make a sortie on the first appearance of the royal army. There seemed small chance of storming a large town so well guarded, and that too without artillery. There was only one old Armagnac councillor, the president Macon, who was of a contrary opinion, well knowing that in such an enterprise prudence was on the side

of enthusiasm, and that men must not reason in a popular crusade. "When the king undertook this march," said he, "he did so not by reason of the great armed force or the abundance of money he possessed, nor because the achievement seemed to him possible; he undertook it because Joan told him to advance and be crowned at Rheims, and that he would encounter little resistance by the way, such being the good pleasure of God." The Maid then presented herself at the door of the council-room, and assured them they would be able to enter the town in three days. "We would willingly wait six," said the chancellor, "if we were sure what you say is true." "Six? You shall enter to-morrow!"

She seized her standard; the whole army followed her to the ditch, and they threw into it all they could lay their hands on, fagots, doors, tables,



A FRENCH KNIGHT, TIME OF JOAN OF ARC

rafters, with such rapidity that the townspeople thought the ditches would very soon disappear altogether. The English began to be dazzled and bewildered as at Orleans, and fancied they saw a cloud of white butterflies fluttering round the magic standard. The citizens on their part were in great dread, recollecting that it was in Troyes the treaty had been concluded which disinherited Charles VII, and fearing that an example would be made of their town. Already they were taking refuge in the churches, and crying out that the town must surrender. The fighting men, who desired nothing better, parleyed and obtained leave to depart with what they had.

What they had was chiefly prisoners, Frenchmen. Charles VII's councillors, who had drawn up the capitulation, had stipulated nothing with respect to those unfortunate persons. The Maid alone thought of them. When the English marched out with their prisoners in irons, she stood at the gates and cried out, "In God's name, they shall not carry them off!" She stopped them, in fact, and the king paid their ransom.<sup>c</sup>

Charles simply passed through Troyes, neither did he stop at Châlons, which opened its gates with alacrity; and, on July 13th, he arrived before Rheims. Two Burgundian nobles, the sires of Châtillon and of Saveuse, were in command, but they had no men. They assembled the townsmen, and asked them to hold out for six weeks only; at the end of that time they guaranteed that the dukes of Burgundy and of Bedford would arrive with so powerful an army that it would easily raise the siege. The townfolk refused to run the risk, persuaded the two captains to retire, and sent a deputation to the chancellor of France who was at the same time archbishop of Rheims, begging him to enter his episcopal town. On July 17th Charles was at last crowned in accordance with the usual ritual, anointed with oil from the holy ampulla of Saint-Rémy and lifted up to his seat by the ecclesiastical peers.

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*Joan defeated at Paris (1429 A.D.)*

Joan had done the two great things which her 'voices' told her to do: she had delivered Orleans, and had caused the king to be crowned; she now wished to return to her village. "On her entrance into Rheims," says the *Chronique de la Pucelle*,<sup>h</sup> "seeing how all the poor people of the country cried 'Noel!' and wept from joy and gladness, and how they came to the king singing *Te Deum laudamus* without response or anthem, she said to the chancellor of France and to Dunois: 'In God's name this is a good and pious people, and when it shall be my time to die, I should like it to be in this country.'

"Then the said count Dunois asked her: 'Joan, do you know when you will die and in what place?' She answered that that was as God willed; and said moreover to the said lord: 'I have fulfilled what my Lord commanded me, and I wish that he would send me back to my father and mother to keep their sheep and cattle.'

But her rôle was not ended, for the English still held a large part of the kingdom. Joan, with the same firmness which had made her go to Orleans and to Rheims, asked to be allowed to march to Paris. The king's counsellors could not accustom themselves to these heroic deeds of daring which, at certain moments, are more estimable than prudence; they decided first to take the small towns on the road to Paris. These opened their gates of their own free will. The royal army entered Laon, Soissons, Comoumiens, Provins, Senlis, and St. Denis without trouble. But when they came to Paris the opportunity had passed.<sup>b</sup> Bedford had sent for the duke of Burgundy to secure Paris, and he came at the invitation, but almost alone; all the use the regent could make of him was to have him figure in an assembly of notables, where he harangued, and repeated once more the lamentable history of his father's death. This being done, he took himself off, leaving Bedford, by way of aid, only some Picard men-at-arms; and even for this slight assistance, he required to have the town of Meux given to him in pledge.

There was no hope save in Beaufort. That priest was king in England. His nephew, Gloucester, the protector, had ruined himself by his own follies. In order to uplift the cardinal's power to the highest pitch, it was necessary that Bedford should be brought as low in France as Gloucester was in England; that he should be reduced to such exigency as to call for Beaufort's presence, and that the latter should come at the head of an army to crown Henry VI. That army Beaufort had in readiness. With it he was to secure Paris, convey young Henry thither, and crown him.

It was not until July 25th, nine days after Charles VII had been duly anointed and crowned, that the cardinal entered Paris with his army. Bedford did not lose a moment, but set out with these troops to observe Charles VII. Twice they were in presence of each other, and some skirmishes took place. Bedford, fearing for Normandy, kept watch over it, and during this time the king marched against Paris (August). This was contrary to the wish of the Maid, whose voices told her not to advance beyond St. Denis.

It was an imprudent enterprise; the French nevertheless carried a rampart. The Maid went down into the first ditch, and crossed the shelving bank between it and the second, and found the latter full of water, up to the foot of the wall. Heedless of the arrows, that fell like hail about her, she shouted to her men to bring fascines, and meanwhile sounded the depth of the water with her lance. She was almost alone, a mark for every arrow,



and one passed through her thigh. She strove to bear up against the pain, and remained on the spot to encourage the troops to mount to the assault. At last, having lost much blood, she retired to the cover of the outer ditch, and it was not until ten or eleven at night she could be prevailed on to return to her quarters. She seemed to feel that this decisive check under the very walls of Paris would ruin her beyond recovery.

Fifteen hundred men were wounded in this attack, which she was wrongfully accused of having advised. She was now vilified by her own party as well as by the enemy. She had not scrupled to make the attack on the day of our Lady's Nativity (September 8th), to the great scandal of the pious town of Paris. The court of Charles VII was still more shocked at this irreverent deed. The libertines, the politic ones, the blind worshippers of the letter and sworn foes to the spirit, all declared bravely against the spirit the moment it showed signs of weakness. Negotiations were resolved on, contrary to the Maid's advice, at the instigation of the archbishop of Rheims, chancellor of France, who had never been cordially in her favour. He proceeded to St. Denis, to ask for a truce; perhaps he had secret hopes of prevailing with the duke of Burgundy, who was then in Paris.

Regarded with ill will, and badly supported, the Maid carried on the sieges of St. Pierre le Moutier and La Charité during the winter. Though almost abandoned before the former, she nevertheless stormed and took it. The siege of La Charité proceeded slowly and languidly; a panic broke out among the besiegers, and they dispersed.

### *Capture of Joan of Arc (1430 A.D.)*

Meanwhile the English had induced the duke of Burgundy to give them effectual aid. The weaker they were, the more hope he had of being able to retain the strongholds he might take in Picardy. The English, who had just lost Louviers, offered him his own terms, and he, the richest prince in Christendom, no longer hesitated to stake men and money in a war, the profit of which he hoped to appropriate. A bribe to the governor put him in possession of Soissons. Then he laid siege to Compiègne, the governor of which was also a man of very questionable integrity; but the inhabitants were too strongly committed to the cause of Charles VII to let their town be given up. The Maid threw herself into it, and on the very same day made a sortie in which she nearly surprised the besiegers. But the latter rallied in a moment, and pressed hotly upon the besieged, up to the rampart and the bridge. The Maid, having remained in the rear to cover the retreat, was not able to get within the walls in time—whether it was that the bridge was blocked up by the crowd, or that the gates were already closed. Being identified by her costume, she was soon surrounded, seized, and dragged from her horse. Her capturer, a Picard archer, brought her to his master, the bastard of Wandomme, who sold her to John of Ligny, who belonged to the illustrious house of Luxemburg and was the duke of Burgundy's vassal.<sup>c</sup>

Now this John of Luxemburg had need of the duke of Burgundy in order to inherit peacefully the domains of Ligny and St. Pol, to the detriment of his elder brother. The duke of Burgundy, in order not to be disturbed when seizing Brabant, Brussels, and Louvain, in spite of the rights of his aunt Margaret, needed the assistance of the English. The English were inclined to allow anything provided Joan of Arc was given up to

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them.<sup>b</sup> It was absolutely necessary to get her out of the hands of the Burgundians. She had been taken on the 23rd of May; on the 26th a message was sent from Rouen in the name of the vicar of the Inquisition summoning John of Ligny to give up the woman, she being suspected of witchcraft.<sup>c</sup> A violent tempered man, a Burgundian, who was willing to do anything in the hope of obtaining the archbishopric of Rouen, Pierre Cauchon, bishop of Beauvais, undertook to prove it by a trial in due form.<sup>b</sup>

The university stepped forward, and wrote to the duke of Burgundy and to John of Ligny (July 14th). Cauchon, in his exceeding zeal making himself the agent and courier of the English, carried the letter with his own hands to the two dukes. At the same time he summoned them as a bishop to deliver over to him a prisoner over whom he had jurisdiction. In this strange proceeding, we find him pass from the part of a judge to that of a negotiator, and make offers of money; though the woman in question cannot be considered a prisoner of war, the king of England will give John of Ligny and the bastard of Wandomme 200 or 300 livres' yearly rent, and a sum of 6,000 livres to those in whose keeping she is. Towards the end of the letter he advances as far as 10,000 livres, "as much," he says, "as would be given for a king or a prince according to the custom of France."

Thus on all sides that world of interest and covetousness was opposed to the Maid, or at least indifferent as to her fate. The good Charles VII did nothing for her, the good Duke Philip gave her up to her mortal foes. It was in vain John of Ligny's wife threw herself at his feet, and implored him not to dishonour himself.<sup>1</sup> He was not free; he had already received English money, and he gave up Joan, not directly indeed to the English, but to the duke of Burgundy, who took her to Arras, and then to the keep of Crotoy.

Compiègne was delivered on the 1st of November. The duke of Burgundy had advanced as far as Noyon, as though it were to meet the disgraceful blow more nearly and in person. He was again defeated shortly afterwards at Germigny (November 20th). At Péronne Sainttrilles offered him battle, but he durst not accept it. These humiliations no doubt confirmed the duke in his alliance with the English, and fixed his determination to give up the Maid to them.

At the moment when the English had the Maid at last in their hands,<sup>2</sup> and could begin her trial, their affairs were in a very bad condition. Far from having recovered Louviers, they had lost Château Gaillard; La Hire, who took it by escalade, found Barbazan a prisoner there, and let loose that redoubtable captain. The towns were going over of their own accord to the side of Charles VII, and the citizens were driving out the English. The men of Melun, so close to Paris, ejected their garrison.

The rapid downhill course of English affairs was only to be checked by some strong machinery, and such had Beaufort ready in the trial and the coronation of Henry VI. The latter entered Paris on the 2nd of December. The university had been made to write on the 21st of November to Cauchon, accusing him of tardiness, and requesting the king to begin the trial. Cauchon was in no hurry, thinking it hard, apparently, to begin the work, whilst the payment was as yet uncertain. It was not until a month later that he obtained authority from the chapter of Rouen to proceed in that diocese. He opened the proceedings at Rouen, on the 9th of January, 1431.<sup>c</sup>

[<sup>1</sup> His aunt, the saintly Joan of Luxemburg, was also most energetic in her efforts to have Joan released.]

[<sup>2</sup> The count of Ligny received the money before October. The duke of Burgundy handed Joan over to the English on the 21st of November.]

*Trial of Joan of Arc*

He based the accusation on the four following points: infringement of the laws of the church, by making use of magic practices; by taking up arms, contrary to her parents' wishes; by wearing clothes which were not those of her sex; and lastly, by announcing revelations which were not sanctioned by ecclesiastical authority. Thus a poor girl of nineteen was alone, without protection against judges who were sold to her enemies, who arbitrarily suppressed every proof of her innocence, who prevented her appealing to the pope or to the council, who sought to embarrass her by absurd and misleading questions or by extremely delicate ones, and who were often disconcerted by her heroic replies.

The maid was finally brought before her judges on the 21st of February. "Joan," they asked her, "do you believe you have found salvation?" "If

I have not, may God grant it me; if I have, may God preserve me in it!" "Did you not say that standards made by the soldiers in imitation of yours would bring them good luck?" "No; I only said, 'advance boldly among the English,' and I advanced also." But she declared that she had never killed anyone. "Why was her standard carried to the church at Rheims at the coronation, more than those of the other captains?" "It had borne the burden, it was only just that it should receive the honour." "What was the idea of those people who kissed your hands, your feet, your clothes?" "The poor people came to me gladly, because I did them no ill; I supported them and defended them to the best of my power." "Do you think you were right to leave without permission from your mother and father? Ought one not to honour one's father and mother?" "They have forgiven me." "Did you not think you were sinning in acting in this manner?" "God commanded it; if I had had one hundred fathers and one hundred mothers I should have gone." "Do you think your king did right in killing or having killed Monseigneur of Burgundy?" "It was a great pity for the kingdom of France: But, whatever may have been between them, God sent me to help the



COSTUME OF A FRENCH PEASANT, AT THE TIME OF JOAN OF ARC

king of France." "Do St. Catherine and St. Margaret hate the English?" "They love what our Lord loves, and hate what he hates." "Does God hate the English?" "I know nothing of the love or hatred which God has for the English; but I know well that they will be driven from France, except those who perish here." "Is it not a mortal sin to admit a man to ransom and then put him to death?" "I have not done so."

The judges laid stress on the man's clothing which Joan had assumed contrary to the laws of the church, which she was still wearing, and which she



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would not relinquish. The wretches affected not to understand what the poor girl did not dare to tell them — that in camp, even in prison, this dress had been, and still was, her protection.<sup>b</sup>

### *The Twelve Articles*

Between the 2nd and 4th of April the judges, on the advice of the members of the university, caused the seventy points of accusation brought forward by the prosecutor to be summed up in twelve articles. There were two doctors of Paris, Nicholas Midi and Jacques de Touraine, who worked on this — one on the plan, the other on the final form. The twelve articles reviewed the trial in a spirit very hostile to Joan, while it eliminated the prosecutor's accusation of impostures and brutalities. On the 12th of April twenty-two doctors and licentiates deliberated together on the twelve articles. They left the question hanging between a matter of human invention and an inspiration of Satan.<sup>f</sup>

We give herewith these twelve articles and follow them with the findings of the faculty, as they are given in the report of the trial, edited by M. Quicherat.<sup>g</sup>

I. And in the first place, a certain woman states and affirms that, when she was thirteen years of age or thereabouts, she herself saw, with her own corporeal eyes, St. Michael consoling her, and sometimes St. Gabriel appearing in bodily form; sometimes, also, she saw a great multitude of angels: and afterwards, SS. Catherine and Margaret showed themselves visible in bodily form to the same woman, and she also sees them daily and hears their voices, and has embraced them at times, and kissed them, touching them sensibly and corporeally. She truly saw the heads of the said angels and saints, but concerning their other parts or their garments she was unwilling to say anything. And that the aforesaid SS. Catherine and Margaret sometimes spoke to her at a certain spring near a large tree, commonly called "the fairies' tree,"<sup>1</sup> concerning which spring and tree there was a common report that the "fates of the ladies" frequent there, and that many fever-stricken persons go to the said spring and tree for the sake of recovering health, although they are situated in a profane place. These she frequently worshipped there and elsewhere and paid them reverence.

She says, moreover, that the aforesaid SS. Catherine and Margaret appear and show themselves to her crowned with very beautiful and costly crowns, and from the aforesaid time and oftentimes subsequently spoke to the same woman concerning the command of God, that it behoved her to go to a certain secular prince promising that by the help of the same woman and by her labours the said prince would recover by force of arms great temporal dominion and worldly honour, would obtain victory over his enemies, and that the same prince would receive the said woman and would bestow on her arms together with an army of soldiers for the carrying out of what was promised. Furthermore, the said SS. Catherine and Margaret instructed the same woman concerning the command of God, that she should assume and wear male attire, which she has worn and still wears in persevering obedience to this

[<sup>1</sup> From the door of her father's dwelling she looked on an old oak wood. The fairies haunted that wood; their favourite spot was a certain spring near a great ash called the "fairies' tree." The children used to hang garlands on it and sing to it. These somewhat ladies and mistresses of the forest could no longer, it was said, assemble at the spring; they had been excluded from it for their sins. The church, however, always retained a jealous fear of the old local divinities, and the curé used to go once every year, and read a mass at the spring, in order to drive them away.<sup>c</sup>]

kind of command insomuch that the woman herself has said that she would rather die than abandon this kind of dress, saying this simply at different times, and occasionally "unless it were the command of God." She even chose rather not to be present at the offices of mass and to go without the holy communion of the Eucharist at times ordained by the church for receiving the sacrament, than to resume female and put off male attire. They were also protectors of the said woman in this matter that, without the knowledge and against the will of her parents, when she was seventeen years of age or thereabouts, she left her father's house and associated with a number of soldiers, frequenting with them by day and by night, never or rarely having another woman with her. And many other things did the said saints tell and teach the same woman, by reason of which she says that she has been sent by the God of heaven and by the victorious church of the saints now enjoying beatitude to whom she commits all her good deeds.

She declines, however, and refuses to submit her deeds and words to the church militant, having been oftentimes required and admonished concerning this; saying that it is impossible for the same woman to act contrary to those things which she affirmed in her process, that she had acted by the command of God, nor would she render account concerning these things to the conclusion or judgment of anyone living, but only to the judgment of God; and that they revealed to the same woman that she herself will be saved in the glory of the blessed ones and she would attain the salvation of her soul if she should keep her virginity, which she vowed to them on the first occasion when she saw and heard them. By the occasion of which revelation she asserts that she is as certain of her own salvation in the kingdom of heaven as if it were already a present fact.

II. Further, the said woman declares that the sign which the prince had to whom she was sent, and by which he was influenced to believe her concerning her revelations and to receive her for the purpose of carrying on war, was that St. Michael came to the same prince accompanied by a multitude of angels of whom some had crowns and others had wings, with whom were SS. Catherine and Margaret. This angel and the woman were walking above the earth along a way like unto steps and an arch stretching a great way, other angels and the aforesaid saints accompanying them; and a certain angel delivered to the same prince a very costly crown of purest gold and the said angel bowed himself before the said prince showing him reverence. On one occasion she said that, when her prince had the sign given him, she herself thought that he was then alone although several others were near enough at hand; and on another occasion that, as she believes, one archbishop received that sign of a crown and delivered it to the aforesaid prince, several temporal lords being present, witnessing it.

III. Further, the aforesaid woman knew and was assured that he who visits her is St. Michael, by the good advice, comfort, and good doctrine which the aforesaid St. Michael gave and made for the same woman; and in that he named himself, saying that he himself was Michael. And similarly she knows St. Catherine and St. Margaret distinctly from each other through this — that they name themselves and salute her. On account of which things, concerning the appearance of St. Michael to her, she believes that he is St. Michael himself, and she believes that the words and deeds of that Michael are true and good as firmly as she believes that our Lord Jesus suffered and died for our redemption.

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IV. Further, the said woman declares and affirms that she herself is certain concerning certain future things that are wholly coming to pass, and will happen, just as she is certain about those things which she indeed sees done before her; and boasts that she has and has had information concerning certain hidden things by means of revelations as far as the meaning of the word extends through the voices of St. Catherine and St. Margaret — namely, that she will be liberated from prison and that the French will do a fairer deed in her company than was ever done for the whole of Christianity; that, furthermore, she has recognised by means of revelation, as she says, some men whom she had never seen before without anyone pointing them out to her, and that she has revealed and discovered a certain sword which was hidden in the earth.

V. Further, the said woman declares and affirms that according to the command of God and that which is well pleasing to him she has assumed and worn and continually wears and clothes herself with a dress after the fashion of a man. And further, she declares that from the time that she held it to be the command of God to take male dress, it behoved her to get a short tunic, a hood, a jerkin, breeches, and boots with many tags, the hair of her head being cut off round over the tops of her ears, leaving nothing upon her body which represented or pointed out the feminine sex beyond those things which nature conferred on the same woman for the distinction of the feminine sex. And that she oftentimes received the Eucharist when wearing the aforesaid dress. She neither has wished nor does she wish to resume feminine attire. Having been oftentimes lovingly questioned and admonished about this, she has said that she would rather die than leave off male attire, sometimes simply saying so, and sometimes, “unless it were by God’s command.” And that if she were in male attire among those for whose sake she at other times armed herself and did as she used to do before her capture and detention, this would be one of the greatest benefits which could happen for the whole kingdom of France; adding that for nothing in the world would she take an oath of not wearing male attire and not arming herself, and in all aforesaid she declares that she has done and does do well in obeying God and his commands.

VI. Further, the said woman confesses and asserts that she has caused to be written many letters in some of which on the one hand these names, Jesus Maria, were added together with the sign of the cross, and at times she superadded a cross, and then she was unwilling that that should be done which she ordered to be done in her letters. In other letters, on the other hand, she caused to be written that she herself would have those put to death who were not obedient to her letters or her counsels and that “it will immediately be seen who has the greater authority from the God of heaven”; and she frequently declares that she has done nothing except by the revelation and commandment of God.

VII. Further, the said woman declares and confesses that when she was seventeen years of age or thereabouts, she went of her own accord and by revelation according as she says to a certain esquire whom she had never seen, before leaving her father’s house against the wish of her parents; who, as soon as they were aware of her departure, were almost out of their mind. The said woman requested indeed this esquire that he should lead her or cause her to be led to the prince of whom it has been before spoken. And then the



said gentleman, a captain, delivered to the said woman a man's dress together with a sword at the request of the woman herself, and deputed and ordered one soldier, one esquire, and four serving men to conduct her; who when they had come to the aforesaid prince the said woman said to the same prince that she herself wished to head the war against his enemies, promising that she would place him in great power and would overcome his enemies; and that she had been sent for this purpose by the God of heaven, saying that in the aforesaid she did well by the command of God and by revelation.

VIII. Further, the said woman declares and confesses that she, no one forcing or compelling her, threw herself down from a certain very lofty tower, preferring rather to die than to be delivered into the hands of her enemies, or than to live after the destruction of the city of Compendium (Compiègne); she declares too that she could not avoid this kind of fall and yet that the aforesaid SS. Catherine and Margaret prevented her from casting herself down, to offend whom she declares is a great sin. Yet she knows well that this kind of sin has been forgiven her after she has made confession of it. And concerning this she declares that she has had a revelation.

IX. Further, the said woman declares that the aforesaid SS. Catherine and Margaret promised her that they themselves would lead her into paradise if she kept well the virginity which she vowed to them both in body and in soul. And concerning this she declares she is as certain as if she were already in the glory of the blessed ones. Nor does she think she has committed works of mortal sin; for if she were in mortal sin, it seems to her that the aforesaid SS. Catherine and Margaret would not visit her as they daily do visit her.

X. Further, the said woman declares and affirms that God loves certain men determined and named hitherto travellers, and loves them more than he does the same woman. And she knows this through the revelation of the SS. Catherine and Margaret who speak to her frequently in French, and not in English, since they are not on their side. And since she has known by revelation that their voices were on behalf of the prince above mentioned, she has not loved the Burgundians.

XI. Further, the said woman declares and affirms that she has oft-times shown reverence to the aforesaid voices and spirits whom she calls Michael, Gabriel, Catherine, and Margaret, by uncovering the head, bending her knee, kissing the earth over which they walked, and by vowing to them virginity and at times by embracing and kissing the same Catherine and Margaret; and that she has touched them corporeally and sensibly, and has besought of them counsel and help by invoking them at times, although they frequently visit her when not invoked, and she acquiesces in and obeys their counsels and commands and has acquiesced from the beginning without seeking advice from anyone, for example, from father or mother, curate, or prelate, or any other ecclesiastic. And nevertheless she firmly believes that the voices and revelations which she has had through male and female saints of this sort come from God and by his ordering, and she believes this as firmly as she believes the Christian faith and that our Lord Jesus Christ suffered death for us; adding that if an evil spirit appeared to her, who pretended that he was St. Michael, she would know well how to distinguish whether he were St. Michael or not. The same woman also declares that at her own request, no other person compelling or requiring it of her, she

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swore to the SS. Catherine and Margaret, who appeared to her, that she would not reveal the sign of the crown which was to be given to the prince to whom she was sent. And in conclusion she said that "unless she had license to reveal it."

XII. Further, the said woman declares and confesses that if the church should wish that she should do anything contrary to the command which she declares has been given her by God she would not do that for anything, affirming that she knows well that those things which are contained in her process come by the commandment of God, and that it were impossible for her to do anything contrary to them. Nor was she willing to refer, concerning these things, to the judgment of the church militant or to any man in the world, but to one Lord God alone, whose commands she will always do; especially as to the subject-matter of the revelations and those things which she declares she has done by revelation. And she declares that she has not made this answer and other answers of herself alone, but she has made and given these answers by command of the voices and revelations made to her; although the article of faith, "one holy Catholic church," was ofttimes explained to the said woman by judges and others there present, explaining to her that every faithful pilgrim is bound to obey and to submit his deeds and words to the church militant, especially in the matter of faith and that which touches holy doctrine and ecclesiastical sanctions.

### *The Findings of the Faculty*

I. And in the first place as to the first article, the faculty declares by means of doctrine that the manner and matter of the revelations, the quality of the person and place, together with other circumstances, having been finally considered, they are either fictitious lies, seductive and pernicious, or the aforesaid apparitions and revelations are superstitions, proceeding from malignant and diabolical spirits, Belial, Satan, and Behemoth.

II. Further, as to the second article, that that which it contains does not seem true; yea, the latter is a presumptuous lie, seductive, pernicious, fictitious, and derogatory to the dignity of angels.

III. Further, as to the third article, that the signs contained in it are not sufficient and the said woman believes lightly and asserts easily. Furthermore in the statement which she makes she believes wrongly, and errs in the faith.

IV. Further, as to the fourth article, that in it is contained a superstition, a soothsaying and presumptuous assertion, together with empty boasting.

V. Further, as to the fifth article, that the said woman is blasphemous towards God and a despiser of God in his sacraments; a prevaricator of divine law and holy doctrine and of ecclesiastical sanctions; of evil wisdom, she errs from the faith and is an empty boaster, and is to be held suspected of idolatry and the curse of herself and of her garments by imitating the custom of the Gentiles.

VI. Further, as to the sixth article, that the said woman is a traitress, crafty, cruel, and thirsting after the shedding of human blood, seditious

and provoking to tyranny; a blasphemer of God in his commands and revelations.

VII. Further, as to the seventh article, that the said woman is undutiful to her parents, a prevaricator of the precept concerning honouring parents; scandalous, blasphemous towards God, and errs in the faith and makes a rash and presumptuous promise.

VIII. Further, that in the eighth article is contained weakness of mind tending to despair, that is to say, to suicide and to presumptuous and rash assertion concerning the pardon of sin held out; and that the said woman has an evil opinion of the freedom of human judgment.

IX. Further, that in the ninth article is contained a presumptuous and rash assertion and a pernicious lie, and she contradicts herself in the preceding article and has an ill knowledge of the faith.

X. Further, that in the tenth article is contained a presumptuous and rash assertion, superstitious divination, blasphemy against SS. Catherine and Margaret, and transgression of the precept concerning the love of your neighbour.

XI. Further, as to the eleventh article, that the said woman, supposing that she had the revelations and apparitions of which she boasts with certain beings according to the first article, is an idolatress, an invoker of demons, and errs in the faith, asserts rashly, and has made an unlawful oath.

XII. Further, as to the twelfth article, that the said woman is a schismatic, having an evil opinion of the unity and authority of the church; an apostate and hitherto errs obstinately in the faith.

Here follows a deliberation and determination by manner of doctrine of the Venerable Faculty of degrees in the University of Paris upon the twelve articles concerning the words and deeds of Joan, commonly called La Pucelle, above annotated and described; which deliberation and determination the said faculty submits to the order and judgment of the great pontiff of the holy apostolic seat and of the holy general council. If the said woman being of right mind obstinately affirm the propositions declared in the above written twelve articles and in performance abide by the deeds contained in the same, it seems to the faculty of degrees, having diligently examined the aforesaid propositions, speaking in love by manner of council or doctrine:

I. That the said woman has become schismatic, since schism is unlawful division, through her disobedience from the unity of the church, and separates herself from the obedience of the church militant, in that she says, etc.

II. Further, that the woman herself errs in the faith: contradicts the article of faith contained in the lesser symbol "one holy Catholic church"; and, as says St. Jerome, by contradicting this article she acknowledges herself not only unskilful, malevolent, and uncatholic, but heretical.

III. Further, that the woman herself is also even apostate, both because with an evil purpose she caused to be cut off from her the hair which God



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gave her for a covering ; and also because, for the same purpose having given up female dress, she imitated the dress of men.

IV. Further, that the woman herself is a liar and a soothsayer when she says that she was sent by God and spoke with the angels and saints and did not make it known by the operation of a miracle or special witness of Scripture ; as when the Lord wished to send Moses into Egypt to the children of Israel, in order that they might believe that he was sent by him he gave them a sign that he should turn his rod into a serpent and the serpent into a rod again ; that John the Baptist also should reform them, he brought forward a special testimony of his mission from Scripture, saying : “ I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness ; make straight the way of the Lord, as saith the prophet Esaias.”

V. Further, that the same woman, by her presumption of authority, and concerning right, errs in the faith both firstly, since she herself is anathema by canonical authority and has continued in the same state for a long time ; and secondly, because she says she would rather not receive the body of Christ and not make her confession at the time appointed by the church than put off her male attire and resume the dress of women ; she is therefore most vehemently suspected of heresy, and is to be diligently examined concerning the articles of faith.

VI. Further, the same woman also errs in that she says that she is as certain that she will be led into paradise as if she were already in the glory of the blessed ones ; since, in this journey, whether the traveller be worthy of praise or tribulation is unknown but is recognised by the supreme Judge alone. Wherefore, if the aforesaid woman be charitably exhorted and duly admonished by a competent judge to return of her own will to the unity of the Catholic faith and publicly to abjure her errors at the will of the aforesaid judge, and be unwilling to show suitable satisfaction, she is to be abandoned to the power of the secular judge under obligation to receive vengeance in proportion to the quality of her crime.<sup>i</sup>

### *The Sentence and its Execution*

Her condemnation was decided beforehand ; but they wanted to obtain from her some words implicating Charles VII, and they employed all means for this purpose ; they sent for the executioner to come to the prison ; then they said that all was ready for the torture. She was very ill during holy week. Threats had little effect on this heroic mind ; they resorted to promises, to the most pernicious for her — that of being taken from the hands of her English gaolers and given over to men of the church. She yielded, and signed the recantation which was presented to her, without even knowing what it contained : and then, out of mercy and moderation, she was only condemned to spend the rest of her days in prison, on the bread of affliction and water of sorrow, to weep over her sins.<sup>b</sup>

She was admitted by the ecclesiastical judge to do penance, nowhere else of course than in the church prisons. The ecclesiastical *in pace*, hard as it was, would at least take her out of the hands of the English, protect her from their insults, and save her honour. What were her surprise and horror when the bishop said coldly, “ Take her back to the place whence you brought her ! ”

Nothing was done; thus deceived, she could not fail to retract her retraction. But even had she been willing to persist in it, the rage of the English would not have allowed her. They had come to St. Ouen, where the sentence had been delivered, in hopes at last to burn the witch; they waited in breathless expectation; and were they now to be sent off in this way, with nothing for their pains but a scrap of parchment, a signature, and a grimace? At the moment when the bishop suspended the reading of the

sentence, stones flew about the platforms without respect for the cardinal. The doctors were in danger of their lives when they set foot on the ground; bare swords were everywhere pointed at their throats; the most moderate of the English confined themselves to insulting words: "Priest, you do not earn the king's money." The trembling doctors, shuffling away as fast as they could, said, "Be not uneasy, we shall surely catch her again." It was not merely the common soldiers, the English mob, that showed this thirst for blood. The respectable people and the lords were not less rancorous. The king's man and his tutor, Lord Warwick, said, like the soldiers, "The king fares badly; the girl will not be burned" (May 23rd, 1431).

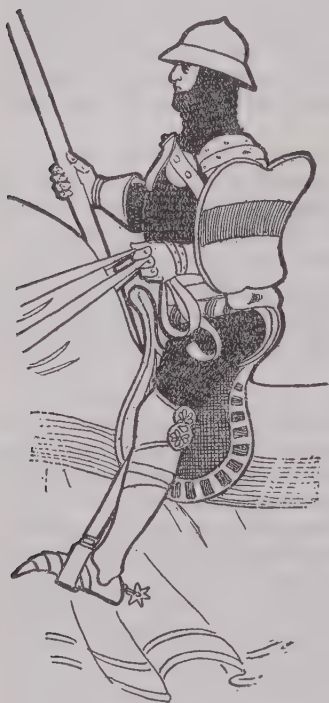
The poor girl, exposed to such danger, had hitherto possessed no other defence than her male attire; but strange to say, no one had ever chosen to understand why she wore it. Her friends and her enemies were alike shocked at her doing so. In the beginning she had been obliged to explain herself to the women of Poitiers. After her capture, when she was in the custody of the ladies of Luxemburg,<sup>1</sup> those good dames begged her to dress as became a decent girl. If the women understood nothing of this female question, how much less did the priests! They quoted the text of a council

of the fourth century, which anathematises this exchange of garments. They did not perceive that this prohibition applied especially to an epoch which had scarcely emerged from pagan impurity.

On Friday and Saturday the unfortunate prisoner, deprived of her male attire, had much to fear. According to the statement of her confessor, to whom she revealed the fact, an Englishman, not a soldier, but a gentleman, a lord, bravely undertook to violate a chained girl and, failing in the attempt, loaded her with blows.

"When the morning of Trinity Sunday was come, and it was time for her to rise (as she has related to him who speaks) she said to the English, her guards, 'Un-iron me that I may rise.' One of them took off the woman's garments that were on her, emptied the bag in which was the male dress, and said to her, 'Get up.' 'Sirs,' said she, 'you know it is forbidden me; certainly I will not take it.' This dispute lasted until noon, and at last, by

[<sup>1</sup> The mother and aunt of the count of Ligny, who took a tender interest in the Maid while she was in his keeping.]



A FRENCH KNIGHT, TIME OF JOAN OF ARC

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reason of bodily necessity, she was obliged to go out and take that dress. On her return, they would not give her any other, notwithstanding all her supplications."

In reality, it was not for the interest of the English that she should resume the garb of a man, and thus annul the retraction so laboriously obtained; but at that moment their rage knew no bounds. Saintrailles had just made a bold attempt on Rouen. It would have been a fine exploit to seize the judges on their bench, and carry off Beaufort and Bedford to Poitiers. The latter had another narrow escape of being captured on his return between Rouen and Paris. There was no safety for the English so long as that infernal girl lived, who was doubtless continuing her diabolical arts in prison. It was necessary she should die.

The assessors being instantly sent for to the castle to see the change of dress, found in the courtyard some hundred English, who stopped their way. Thinking that if these doctors entered, they might spoil all, they brandished axes and swords in their faces, and drove them out, calling them Armagnac traitors. Cauchon, getting in with great difficulty, assumed a gay air to please Warwick, and said, laughing, "She is caught." On Monday he returned with the inquisitor and eight assessors to interrogate the Maid, and ask her why she had resumed that garb. She offered no excuse, but bravely accepting her danger said that this dress suited her better so long as she should be guarded by men; that moreover, word had not been kept with her. Her saints had said to her that it was great pity to have abjured to save her life. At the same time she did not refuse to put on female garments again. "Let me be consigned to a mild and safe prison," she said, "I will be good and do all the church shall desire."

On Tuesday the judges got together, at the archiepiscopal palace, some sort of an assemblage of assessors, some of whom had been present only at the first sittings, and the rest at none; they were men of every kind—priests, lawyers, and three were even physicians. The judges reported to them what had taken place, and asked their opinions. The opinion they gave, very different from what was expected, was that the prisoner ought to be brought again into court and have her act of abjuration read again to her. It is doubtful that this was within the power of the judges. Judge or judgment was in fact no longer a thing possible amidst naked swords and raging soldiers. Bloodshed was inevitable; the judges perhaps were not far from seeing their own spilt. They drew up a hasty citation to be served the next morning at eight; her next appearance was only to be for the purpose of being burned.

In the morning, Cauchon sent her a confessor, Brother Martin l'Advenu, "to announce death to her and induce her to penitence. And when he announced to the poor girl the death she was to die that day, she began to cry out woefully, sinking with faintness, and tearing her hair. 'Alas! am I to be treated so horribly and cruelly, and must my body, whole and entire, which was never corrupted, be now consumed and reduced to ashes? Oh! oh! I would rather be beheaded seven times than be thus burned! Oh! I appeal to God, the great Judge of the wrongs and grievances they do me!'"

At nine she was dressed in women's clothes and placed on a car, with Friar Martin l'Advenu on one side of her, and the *huissier* Massieu on the other. Isambart, the Augustine monk, who had already displayed so much charity and courage, would not quit her. The Maid had never despaired until now. Even whilst saying, as she did at times, "the English will put me to death," she did not in reality believe it. She did not imagine



she could ever be forsaken. She had faith in her king, and in the good people of France. She had said expressly, "There will be in the prison or at the condemnation some tumult by which I shall be delivered — delivered with great victory!" But though the king and the people should fail her, she had another aid, far more potent and sure — that of her friends on high, the good and precious saints. What then were her thoughts when she saw that she was really to die — when, mounted on the cart, she passed along through the trembling crowd, guarded by eight hundred Englishmen armed with lances and swords? She wept and bewailed her fate, but never accused either her king or her saints. But one phrase escaped her lips, "O Rouen, Rouen, must I die here!"

The end of this dismal journey was the Vieux Marché, the fish market. Three platforms had been erected there. On one was the episcopal and royal chair, the throne of the cardinal of England, surrounded by the seats of his prelates; the other was destined for the performers in this melancholy drama, the preacher, the judges, and the bailiff, and lastly the culprit. Some way off from these was seen a great platform in plaster filled and heaped with wood; materials had not been spared upon the pile: it struck terror by its height. This was done not merely for the purpose of rendering the execution more solemn; there was another intention — namely, that the great height of the pile should make it inaccessible to the executioner except from below, where he was to light it, and thus prevent him from abridging the sufferer's agony and despatching her, as usual, before the flames reached her. There was no thought here of defrauding justice and giving a dead body to the fire; it was meant that she should be literally and truly burned alive, and that placed on the summit of that mound of wood she should be visible above the circle of lances and swords to every spectator on the ground. Burning slowly before the eyes of a gaping multitude there was reason to expect that she would at last yield to some weakness, and utter something that might be given out as a recantation; at the very least it was probable that some incoherent words would escape her, which might be interpreted as her judges desired; perhaps that in womanly terror and despair she would descend to ignoble prayers and cries for mercy.

The hideous ceremony began with a sermon. Master Nicholas Midi, one of the lights of the University of Paris, preached from this edifying text: "When a member of the church is sick the whole church is sick." That poor church could only be cured by cutting off a limb. He concluded with the formal phrase: "Joan, go in peace; the church can no longer defend thee."

Then the ecclesiastical judge, the bishop of Beauvais, benignly exhorted her to think of her soul and to recollect all her misdeeds, that she might be moved to contrition. The assessors had decided that it was incumbent in law to read her abjuration to her again; but the bishop did not do so, fearing that she would contradict and remonstrate. But the poor girl had no thought of thus battling with lawyers' subtleties for her life; her mind was far differently engaged. Before even she had been exhorted to contrition she was on her knees invoking God, the Virgin, St. Michael, and St. Catherine, pardoning all and asking pardon, and saying to the by-standers, "Pray for me." She particularly requested each of the priests to say a mass for her soul; and all this she did in a manner so pious, humble, and affecting, that the emotion spread from man to man, and none present could restrain their feelings; the bishop of Beauvais wept, the bishop of Boulogne sobbed, and at last the English themselves shed tears, and Beaufort as well as the rest.

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The judges soon recovered from their momentary fit of humanity, and the bishop of Beauvais, wiping his eyes, began to read the sentence. He recapitulated to the culprit all her crimes, schism, idolatry, invocation of fiends, and set forth how she had been admitted to repentance, and how, "seduced by the prince of lies, she had relapsed, O grief! as a dog returns to his vomit. Therefore we pronounce you a rotten member, and as such cut off from the church. We give you over to the secular power, entreating it at the same time to moderate its sentence, and to spare you the pain of death and mutilation of your limbs."<sup>1</sup>

Thus abandoned by the church she cast herself in full confidence on God. She asked for the cross. An Englishman handed her a wooden cross which he had made out of a stick; she received it not the less piously, kissed it, and put that rough emblem of salvation under her clothes next her skin. But she would rather have had the church cross to keep before her eyes until death. The good *huissier* Massieu and Brother Isambart exerted themselves to fulfil her wishes, and the cross was brought her from the parish of St. Sauveur. While she was embracing it, and Isambart was exhorting her, the English began to think the business very tedious; it was noon at least; the soldiers grumbled, and the captains called out, "Holla, priest! are you going to keep us here to dinner?" Then losing patience and not waiting for the order of the bailiff, though he alone had authority to send her to death, they sent up two sergeants to take her out of the hands of the priests. She was seized at the foot of the tribunal by the soldiers, who dragged her to the executioner, and said to him, "Do thy office." This fury of the soldiery excited horror; many of the by-standers, and even of the judges, rushed from the ground to avoid seeing any more of it.

When she was on the ground among those English who laid hands on her, nature gave way and the flesh was troubled. Again she cried, "O Rouen, thou art then to be my last abode!" She said no more and sinned not with her lips, even in that awful moment. She accused not her king or her saints. But when she was on the top of the pile, and saw that great town and that motionless and silent multitude, she could not help saying, "Ah, Rouen, Rouen, I fear me much thou wilt have to suffer for my death!" Wonderful gentleness of soul! she who had saved the people, and whom the people forsook, expressed but compassion for them in her dying moments.

She was bound beneath the infamous inscription, and on her head was placed a mitre, on which was written: "Heretic, relapsed, apostate, idolator." Then the executioner applied the fire. She saw it from above and shrieked. The monk who was exhorting her did not pay attention to the flames; and she, forgetting herself, became alarmed for him and made him go down. What plainly proves that until then she had retracted nothing expressly is that the wretched Cauchon was obliged (doubtless by the imperious Satanic will of him that presided) to approach the foot of the pile, obliged to look his victim in the face, and try to elicit something from her. She repeated to him mildly what she had already said: "Bishop, I die by you. Had you placed me in the church prisons this would not have happened." Of course it had been expected that, thinking herself abandoned by her king, she would at last accuse him and speak against him; but she defended him still: "Whether I have done well or done ill, my king is in no wise implicated therein: it was not he who advised me."

[<sup>1</sup> The regular formula for the sentence of giving over a heretic to the secular arm.]

Meanwhile, the flames were ascending. At the moment they reached her the poor creature started and called out for holy water; this apparently was a cry of terror. But immediately collecting herself she uttered no names but those of God, her angels, and her saints. She testified her faith in them: "Yes, my voices were of God; my voices have not deceived me!" That grand expression of hers is attested by the compulsory and sworn witness of her death, the Dominican who ascended the pile with her, whom she sent down from that dangerous post, but who continued speaking with her from below, listened to her words, and held up the cross to her sight.

We have yet another witness of this holy death, a witness of very grave character, who was himself doubtless a saint. This man, whose name history ought to preserve, was the Augustine monk already mentioned, Brother Isambart de la Pierre. He was near perishing in the course of the prosecution for having given counsel to the Maid, and yet though so conspicuously obnoxious to the English, he voluntarily ascended the cart with her, procured her the parish cross, and stood by her in the midst of the furious crowd, both on the platform and at the stake. Twenty years after the event the two venerable men, humble monks, devoted to poverty and with nothing to gain or to fear in this world, depose as follows: "We heard her in the fire invoking her saints and her archangel; she repeated the Saviour's name. At last, dropping her head, she cried aloud, 'Jesus.'"

"Ten thousand men wept." Some English alone laughed or tried to laugh. One of the most violent among them had sworn to fling a fagot on the pile; she was expiring at the moment he deposited it, and he was taken ill. His comrades carried him off to a tavern to revive his spirits with drink, but he could not recover his equanimity. "I saw," he cried distractedly, "I saw a dove escape from her mouth with her last sigh." Others had read in the flames the word Jesus which she repeated. The executioner went that evening in utter dismay to Brother Isambart, and confessed, but could not believe that God would ever forgive him. One of the king of England's secretaries said openly as he returned from the horrid scene, "We are undone; we have burned a saint!"<sup>c</sup>

#### THE REHABILITATION OF JOAN OF ARC (1456 A.D.)

For a long time the people refused to believe in Joan's death.<sup>1</sup> The memory of her who had been both the heroine and victim of patriotic and national sentiment became more and more popular, and several years after the English had been driven from France and her predictions accomplished, there arose a desire that her memory should be avenged.

When Charles VII entered Rouen in 1450 he had ordered the revision of the trial. Cardinal Estouteville, archbishop of Rouen and papal legate, began investigation in the name of the church. But for political reasons, and so as not to irritate the English, it was judged better to have the request for rehabilitation come from Joan's own family, as a private matter. Two doctors designated by the court of Rome examined the request, declared it founded on the most serious motives, and concluded if the church must hesitate to

[<sup>1</sup> In 1436 rumour spread through France that it was not La Pucelle that the English had burned at Rouen. In fact, a woman whose resemblance to Joan was astonishing had presented herself to her two brothers and was acknowledged by them. In 1438 and 1439 this "false Joan" headed a body of armed men and was enthusiastically received by the people of Orleans. Brought before the king, she admitted the imposture, was imprisoned, afterwards released and came, according to report, to a bad and shameful end.]



[1431 A.D.]

pronounce on Joan's visions, it could not charge them with crime. Upon these conclusions Pope Calixtus III appointed three prelates and an inquisitor to form a court of revision over which the archbishop of Rheims presided.

The new judges began their labour. All the witnesses still living who had known Joan appeared before them. Military leaders who had fought with her—as Alençon and Dunois—gave testimony to her memory. Three clerks who had exercised their office at the trial in Rouen furnished proof of irregularities that had been committed. No defender of the former proceedings appeared. Thereupon the court, giving the most simple explanation of all that had determined the former judges, found a hundred and one reasons for nullity. In consequence the new judges quashed, in 1456, the decree of their predecessors—as stained with illegality, fraud, violence, and manifest partiality. They declared the twelve articles of the condemnation false, calumnious, and full of fraud—while recognising that the manner in which they had been drawn up might easily have deceived the good faith of those that acted upon them. They declared the trial iniquitous—that Joan had been judged by her enemies. The church thus restored that which an ecclesiastical tribunal had struck down. The sentence of rehabilitation was published in every town of France; Orleans raised on a bridge over the Loire a statue to her liberator. Rouen held expiation processions in honour of her victim.<sup>k</sup>

#### A BRITISH ESTIMATE OF JOAN'S SERVICES

Those writers who consider Joan of Arc not merely as a female Mohammed, but as a heaven-sent saviour, do not enhance the virtue or the beauty of her own natural character, whilst they exaggerate the depression, and derogate from the martial spirit of the French, by representing them as only to be saved at the time by an avatar. It does not appear that France was in such imminent danger, or was likely to be conquered, even had Orleans fallen by a handful of English, very unequal to the subjugation of the country.

If the starting up a great prince or warrior, like Henry V, on the throne of England had brought disaster upon France, his premature death, with the consequent abstraction of English aid and English vigour from the duke of Bedford, was a greater blow to English ascendancy than any supposed mission of Joan of Arc. If the French were defeated at Agincourt and Verneuil, this was mainly owing to the yeoman middle classes, which formed the strength of the English army, whilst a similar class in France was kept out of the ranks of the national defence. But the sieges of Rouen and of Orleans had restored to the French peasant and the French townsman the right and the habit of wielding a sword by the side of the gentleman. What Joan of Arc did was to restore their confidence; this was her good fortune or her mission. The disinherited and degraded middle and lower classes rose to defend and save the monarchy, which counts and barons had allowed to fall with themselves into the mire. This was the revolution, this the new spirit that saved France from the English, and not the trumped-up miracle of La Pucelle. It was the red right arm of French manhood which did that act, and not the prophecies of Merlin, the visions of saints, or the embroidered banner of the virgin of Domrémy.<sup>g</sup>



## CHAPTER IX

### “THE CONVALESCENCE OF FRANCE”

[1431-1461 A.D.]

Confused as was the long period of the last years of Charles VII, it may nevertheless be thus summarily defined—the convalescence of France. France recovered and England fell ill. — MICHELET.<sup>b</sup>

THE sorceress, the she-devil, was burned; the charm was doubtless broken, the spell removed; there was nothing now to prevent the English from conquering the kingdom of France. Nevertheless, before they should recover the power in fact they deemed it right to have the power in law on their side—to legitimise the young Henry VI by having him crowned. The coronation to which Charles VII had been led by an agent of the devil being, by that means itself, null and void, they wished to have for their little prince a coronation perfectly orthodox and irreprehensible.

The ceremony took place the 17th of December, 1431; not at Rheims, which the English no longer held, but at Paris. An English prelate, Beaufort, the cardinal-bishop of Winchester, officiated, to the great discontent of the bishop of Paris; for assistants there were English lords, not a single French prince. There was no liberation of prisoners, no reduction of taxes, no largesse to the people. “A bourgeois marrying off his daughter,” says the Bourgeois de Paris,<sup>i</sup> “would have done better.”<sup>c</sup> The child king was found to have little intelligence or grace, and the day after Christmas he was taken from Paris to Rouen, and thence to England.<sup>d</sup>

Paris was far from prosperous under foreign domination. Public officials were ill paid. The university was no longer recruited, except from the English and Burgundian provinces. It lost its pupils; it lost still more when, a month after his arrival, Bedford established schools of civil and canon law at Caen, in the midst of the English provinces. Charles responded by creating, in his turn, a university at Poitiers, and by according new privileges to the schools of Angers.<sup>e</sup>

It was now that period when the feeble bond that still united the duke of Burgundy to the English began to give way. His sister, Bedford’s wife, died in November, 1432. The duke of Burgundy had never had much reason to like the English, nor had he more to fear them. Their war in France was becoming ridiculous.<sup>b</sup>

[1431-1432 A.D.]

The marshal De Boussac, as the result of a conspiracy, was almost able to seize Rouen. His advance guard was already in the castle when his bands began to quarrel over the division of the booty, and the English drove them off. Dunois was more successful at Chartres; he had an understanding with a preacher of renown. The latter announced that he would preach every day in a certain church; the entire English garrison assisted devoutly at the sermon while the French took the town. The English, from whom so important a place had been taken, were not even able to capture a hamlet. A certain French captain, John Foucauld by name, was stationed at Lagny and greatly harassed the neighbourhood of Paris. The duke of Bedford and the earl of Warwick went to besiege the place. They soon made a breach in the wall, but when they saw the besieged bravely awaiting them, they returned to Paris, where they arrived on Easter eve, "apparently to confess," says the Bourgeois de Paris, maliciously, in his journal. Meanwhile several soldiers of fortune in the service of the king of France had seized St. Valéry, Gerberoy, St. Denis, and other places (1432).<sup>c</sup>

The Parisians, delighted at this retreat of Bedford from Lagny, made themselves no less merry on the subject of his second marriage. At fifty years of age he wedded a girl of seventeen, "sprightly, fair, and gracious," a daughter of the count of Saint-Pol, one of the duke of Burgundy's vassals, and that abruptly and furtively without saying a word to his brother-in-law. The duke would not have consented to the match. The Saint-Pols, raised by him for the purpose of guarding his frontier, were beginning to play that double game which was to be their ruin; they were giving the English a footing in the dominions of the duke of Burgundy.

Beaufort saw more clearly that if the alliance with Burgundy were broken off, the war would change its aspect; that it would become far more costly, and that the church would infallibly have to bear the expense. A beginning had been made with the church of France, from which it was sought to wrest all the pious donations it had received for sixty years. In this state of anxiety, he exerted himself strongly for peace, and had it arranged that a conference should take place between Bedford and Philip the Good. He succeeded in making the two dukes advance towards each other as far as St. Omer. But this was all; once in the town, neither of them would take the first step. Though Bedford ought to have seen clearly that France was lost for the English if he did not bring back the duke of Burgundy to their party, he remained peremptory on the point of etiquette; as the king's representative, he awaited the visit of the king's vassal, who never moved. The rupture was definitive.

France, on the contrary, was gradually becoming reunited, a result brought about chiefly by the efforts of the house of Anjou. The old queen, Yolande of Anjou, the king's mother-in-law, brought him back the Bretons; and in concert with the constable Richemont, the duke of Brittany's brother, she dismissed the favourite, La Trémouille.<sup>1</sup>

It was more difficult to allure the duke of Burgundy, who was supporting the pretender Vaudemont, in Lorraine, against René of Anjou, Yolande's son.<sup>2</sup>

[<sup>1</sup> The fall of La Trémouille was due to a conspiracy aroused by his lethargy, through which the English in 1432 were able to regain Montargis and take several important towns. "M. de la Trémouille," says De Brantôme, "was so happy as to prove a faithful and worthy servant to three kings. He was an excellent and worthy captain, and for this reason he had the honour and happiness to be known as 'the knight without fear and without reproach.' Splendid title indeed for him who can keep it, and wear it to the end of his life!"

[<sup>2</sup> Vaudemont was the nephew and René the son-in-law of Duke Charles I who had just died. René was appointed heir by Charles' will, but Vaudemont persisted in his pretensions, alleging Lorraine to be a masculine fief.]



That prince, who has remained in the memory of the Angevins and Provençals by the name of "the good king René," possessed all the amiable qualities of old chivalric France; and with them, too, its imprudence and levity. He suffered himself to be beaten and taken prisoner at Bulgnéville, by the Burgundians (July, 1431). The duke of Burgundy restored him to liberty, under security.<sup>b</sup>

Philip the Good might well have congratulated himself on a victory which clipped the wings of the royalists in Lorraine, but he made no use of it, and now showed himself disposed for pacific measures. In September, 1431, at the very moment that the royalist captains were preparing to invade Charolais and Burgundy, he signed at Chinon a two years' truce with Charles VII for his frontiers of Réthelois, Picardy, Burgundy, and Charolais.<sup>c</sup> The English had no good reason for their complaints of Philip's loyalty in this; if he had concluded a separate truce for his own states, he did not treat for peace on their behalf or without them. The English ambassadors were called to take part in all negotiations; but it was very evident, at the conferences of Auxerre (July, 1432) and those held in the village of Simport (now Seineport) in March, 1433, that while peace was now almost an easy matter between Charles VII and Philip on account of the great concessions to which the king resigned himself, it was next to impossible between Charles VII and Henry VI.<sup>f</sup>

The princes were becoming friends, and there was nothing to hinder the people from doing likewise, if they had the will. Paris, governed by Cauchon and other bishops, tried to get rid of them and expel the English. Normandy, even, that little French England, at last grew weary of a war of which it was made to bear the whole burden. A vast rising took place, in 1434, among the rural population of Lower Normandy; the leader was a peasant named Quatrepièdes; but there were knights also engaged in the affair, which was not a mere Jacquerie. The English could not fail soon to lose the province.

#### THE TREATY OF ARRAS (1435 A.D.)

They seemed themselves to look on their prospects as desperate. Bedford abandoned Paris. The poor town, smitten by turns with famine and pestilence, was too hideous an abode. The duke of Burgundy, nevertheless, ventured to visit it with his wife and son, on his way to the great assembly at Arras, where the terms of a treaty of peace were to be arranged. The Parisians welcomed him, and implored his aid, as though he had been an angel from God. The assembly in question was one of all Christendom, including ambassadors from the council, the pope, the emperor, the sovereigns of Castile, Aragon, Navarre, Naples, Milan, Sicily, Cyprus, Poland, and Denmark. All the French princes, and all those of the Low Countries, attended in person or by deputy; so did the University of Paris, and a number of good towns. All these personages being assembled, England herself arrived, in the person of the cardinal-bishop of Winchester. The conferences opened August 5th, 1435, in the chapel of St. Waast.

The first question to be considered was the possibility of an accommodation between Charles VII and Henry VI. But how was it to be effected? Each of them claimed the crown. Charles VII offered Aquitaine, and even Normandy, which was still in the hands of the English. The latter required that each party should retain what it then had, with the exception of mutual exchanges for the purpose of rendering the possessions of each more compact.

[1435 A.D.]

Nothing could be made of the English, and they were allowed to depart from Arras. Everyone turned towards the duke of Burgundy, beseeching him to have pity on the realm and on Christendom, which suffered so much from these long wars. But he could not make up his mind; his conscience and his knightly honour were engaged, he said; he had given his signature; besides, was he not bound to take vengeance for his father's murder? The pope's legates told him he might make light of such scruples, for they had power to release him from his oaths. But this did not yet satisfy him. Ecclesiastical law not seeming sufficient, recourse was had to civil law, and a fine case was drawn up, in which, to leave the minds of the jurisconsults the more free, the parties were designated by the names of Darius and Ahasuerus. The English and the French doctors gave such opinions as might have been expected of them respectively; but those of Bologna, whom the legates brought forward, declared, in conformity with the French lawyers, that Charles VI had no power to conclude the Treaty of Troyes.

The duke of Burgundy allowed the suppliants to argue and implore. But, in reality, the desired change had already taken place in him; he was weary of the English. The Flemings, who had so often forced their counts to remain united with England, were becoming hostile to that nation; they suffered from the forays of the garrison of Calais, and were maltreated when they went to that great wool market. England was then becoming a rival and enemy of Flanders; had she been friendly to that country, her friendship would henceforth have availed little. The duke of Burgundy had gained the barrier of the Somme, through the English alliance, and rounded and completed his Burgundy; but their alliance could no longer guarantee him the possession of his new acquisitions. Divided as they were, it was with difficulty they could defend themselves. Bedford alone could maintain some sort of balance between Winchester and Gloucester; but he died, at Rouen in September, 1435, and his decease was a further alleviation to the conscience of the duke of Burgundy. Thenceforth the treaties concluded with Bedford, as regent of France, appeared to him less sacred; such was the strictly literal mode of viewing things in the Middle Ages; he deemed himself bound during the lifetime of him to whom he had given his signature.

The duke of Burgundy's two brothers-in-law, the duke de Bourbon and the constable De Richemont, contributed not a little to fix his wavering purposes. They plied him so hard that he vouchsafed at last to yield to their entreaties and grant mercy. The Treaty of Arras cannot be characterised by any other phrase. The king asked pardon of the duke for the murder of John the Fearless, and the duke did not pay him homage; thereby he became



A FRENCH NOBLEMAN, FIRST PART OF FIFTEENTH CENTURY

himself king, as it were. He retained for himself and his heirs all he had acquired: on the one side Péronne and all the fortresses on the Somme, on the other Auxerre and Mâcon.

The explanations and reparations for the death of Duke John were very humiliating. The king was to say, or have it said, that at that time he was very young, had as yet little knowledge, and had not been sufficiently advised to see duly into the matter, but that at present he was about to use all diligence in searching out the guilty parties. He was to found a chapel in the church at Montereau, and a convent for twelve Carthusians; and to erect, moreover, on the bridge where the act had been perpetrated, a stone cross, which was to be kept in repair at the king's expense. The ceremony of forgiveness took place in the church of St. Waast. The dean of Paris, Jean Tudert, threw himself at the feet of Duke Philip, and cried him mercy, on the king's part, for the murder of John the Fearless. The duke appeared moved, raised and embraced him, and told him there should never be war between King Charles and himself. The duke de Bourbon and the constable then swore a peace, as did the French and Burgundian ambassadors and lords.

But the reconciliation would not have been complete if the duke of Burgundy had not concluded a definitive arrangement with the brother-in-law of Charles VII, René of Anjou. René, not having been able to adhere to the terms of the first treaty, had preferred returning to prison. Philip the Good released him and gave him back part of his ransom money, in consideration of the marriage of his niece, Mary de Bourbon, with René's son. Thus were the houses of Burgundy, Bourbon, and Anjou united with each other and with the king. That of Brittany still vacillated; the duke did not declare himself; he found great profit in the war; it was said that thirty thousand Normans had taken refuge in Brittany. But whether the duke was English or French, his brother Richemont was constable of France: the Bretons followed him cheerfully; the Breton bands were the main force of Charles VII, and were called the *bons corps*.

#### THE FRENCH RETURN TO PARIS (1436-1437 A.D.)

This self-reconciliation of France drove the English distracted; their wrath blinded them, and they plunged as it were wilfully into their ill fortune. The duke of Burgundy wished to keep some terms with them, and offered them his mediation; but they rejected it, and plundered and killed the Flemish merchants in London. Flanders becoming incensed in its turn, the duke seized the opportunity to lead the communes to the siege of Calais.<sup>b</sup> For this he collected a large army in 1436, the Flemings, especially the Ghenters, answering his call to the number of forty thousand, and promising not merely to second his enterprise, but to accomplish it themselves. They found the task, however, so much beyond their power, that they grew disheartened, accused the Burgundians of betraying them, and marched off leaving the duke to extricate himself with his other forces as best he could.<sup>g</sup>

The Burgundian party turned round like the duke; those of Paris, of the *halles* even, the Burgundian quarter *par excellence*, called in the king's forces and his constable, and installed them in the town. The English, who had still fifteen hundred men-at-arms there, and at first made a show of resisting, shut themselves pitifully in the Bastille, and then, apprehensive of famine, obtained leave to embark and descend the river to Rouen. The people, who had been harshly governed by three bishops on behalf of the English, pursued



[1436-1438 A.D.]

them with hootings, and shouted, "Fox! fox!" after the bishop of Thérouanne, the chancellor of the English. The Parisians were loath to let them off so cheaply, for they calculated that the ransom of so many rich nobles would bring in at least 200,000 livres; but it would have been necessary to besiege the Bastille, and the constable himself was at his shifts, money failing him. The king had only 1,000 livres to give him for the purpose of retaking Paris (1436).<sup>b</sup>

At length, in November, 1437, Charles made his solemn entrance into his capital, from which he had been an exile nearly twenty years. The constable rode on the monarch's right hand, the count de Vendôme on his left, and the royal cavalcade was met at the Porte St. Denis by "the seven virtues and the seven mortal sins, well clad, mounted upon various beasts." Charles had previously reunited the parliament of Poitiers to that of Paris, and the new judges and councillors returned to take their seats, and thus restore Paris to the rank of judicial capital of the *languedoil*.<sup>g</sup>

#### THE PRAGMATIC SANCTION (1438 A.D.)

In that vast and multitudinous wretchedness, amid so many ruins, two things were still standing—the nobility and the church. The nobility had served the king against the English, gratuitously served a beggared king; it had consumed much of its own wealth, at the same time that it devoured the people's substance, and it looked for compensation. The church, on its part, represented itself as very poor and afflicted; but there was this notable difference, that its poverty consisted in the suspension of its revenues—in general the capital remained. The king, indebted to the nobility, could discharge his obligations only at the church's expense, either by forcing it to pay for him, which seemed difficult and dangerous, or rather by gently and indirectly, for the sake ostensibly of the ecclesiastical liberties, re-establishing the elections in which the lords had the paramount influence, and thus enabling them to dispose of benefices. These were often bestowed by the pope on the partisans of England; Charles VII had no inducement to respect his claims. He adopted in his *pragmatique* of Bourges (July 7th, 1438) the decrees of the council of Bâle, which re-established elections, and recognised the rights of the noble patrons of churches to present to benefices. These patrons, descendants of the pious founders or protectors, regarded the churches as portions severed from their fiefs, and desired nothing better than to protect them still, that is to say, to put their own men into them, by causing them to be elected by the monks or canons.

What delighted France in its then extreme poverty was that the *pragmatique* would stop the outgoing of money from the kingdom. The absence of gold was acutely felt. Under Charles VII it was really necessary as an instrument of war and a means of rapid action. The bankers were turning their speculations in that direction; previously occupied with the exchange of Rome and the transmission of the ecclesiastic tithes, they were about to draw on the English that bill of exchange which was paid with Normandy.

One thing, however, was to be feared, namely, that a church so completely closed against papal influence might become not national but purely seigniorial. It was not the king or the state that would inherit what the pope lost, but the lords and the nobles. At a period when organisation was still so feeble, it was not very practicable to act with effect from a distance; now at every election the lord was on the spot to present or recommend, and the chapters obsequiously elected his nominee; the king was very far away.

It was a question whether the nobility were worthy of being intrusted with the chief active part in the affairs of the church — whether the lords on whom really devolved the choice of pastors and the responsibility for the salvation of souls were themselves the pure souls whom the Holy Spirit would enlighten in so delicate a matter.

#### THE ATROCIOUS CRIMES OF THE BARONS

In his sief the baron of the twelfth century, haughty and stern as he might be, had yet a rule of conduct which, though unwritten, seemed but the more inviolable. This rule was “usage,” custom. In his most violent proceedings he saw himself accosted by his men, who said respectfully to him: “Messire, it is not the ‘usage’ of the good people here.” The fear of God and respect for usage, those two bridles of the feudal times, were broken in the fifteenth century. The lord was no longer a resident on his estate, and knew neither his people nor their customs. If he returns, it is with soldiers to raise money abruptly; he falls on the country occasionally like storm and hail, everyone hides at his approach, and the whole district is seized with a panic.

This lord, though bearing his father’s seigniorial name, was not the more a lord for all that; he was commonly a rough captain, a barbarian, scarcely a Christian. Often he was a leader of *houspilleurs*, *tondeurs*, or *écorcheurs*, like the bastard de Bourbon, the bastard of Vaurus, a Chabannes, or a La Hire. *Écorcheurs* (flayers) was their right name: ruining the ruined, taking away the shirt from him who had been left with nothing but a shirt to cover him; and if nothing remained but the skin, then stripping off the skin.

It would be a mistake to suppose that it was only the captains of the *écorcheurs*, the bastards, the lords without lordship, that were so ferocious. The grandees and the princes had acquired a strange appetite for blood in these hideous wars. What shall we say when we see John of Ligny, of the house of Luxemburg, exercising his nephew, the count of Saint-Pol, a boy of fifteen, in massacring fugitives?

They treated their relations just as they did their enemies; in fact, as regarded safety, the enemy was better off than the relation. It would seem as though there were no fathers, no brothers in those days. The count d’Harcourt keeps his father a prisoner all his life; the countess de Foix poisons her sister, the sire de Giac his wife; the duke of Brittany starves his brother to death, and that publicly — the horror-stricken passer-by heard his piteous voice imploring a morsel of bread for charity. One evening, on the 10th of January, Count Adolphus of Gelderland drags his old father out of bed, marches him five leagues on foot through the snow without hose, and throws him into a subterranean dungeon (1440). The son, indeed, might have said in his own behalf that parricide was matter of usage in the family. But we find it likewise in most of the great houses of the time, in all those of the Low Countries, in those of Bar, Verdun, Armagnac, etc.

#### *Gilles de Retz*

People were well inured to these things, but one such that came to light stupefied all men with wonder and horror. The duke of Brittany being at Nantes, the bishop, who was his cousin and his chancellor, was emboldened by his presence to proceed against a great lord of the neighbourhood, regarded with singular awe, a Retz of the house of Laval, which was itself a branch

[1426-1440 A.D.]

of the Montforts, of the lineage of the dukes of Brittany. Such was the terror inspired by that name that it had silenced every tongue for fourteen years.

The accusation was a strange one. An old woman called La Meffraie used to travel about the country and the heaths, and make up to the children who kept cattle or begged. Caressing and cajoling them, but all the while keeping her face half covered with a piece of black gauze, she used to entice them to the château of the sire de Retz, and they were never seen again. This Gilles de Retz was a very great lord, rich both in patrimony and by his marriage into the house of Thouars, besides which he had inherited the wealth of his maternal grandfather, John de Craon, lord of La Suze, Chantocé, and Ingrande.

There was found in the tower of Chantocé a tunful of calcined children's bones, the remains, it was calculated, of some forty victims. Similar discoveries were made in the château de la Suze, and in every other place where he had made his abode. Murder accompanied him wherever he went. The number of children slaughtered by this beast of extermination is estimated at 140. How slaughtered, and why? In the answer to this question lay something more horrible than death itself. They were offerings to the devil. He invoked the fiends Barron, Orient, Beelzebub, Satan, and Belial, praying them to grant him "gold, knowledge, and power."<sup>1</sup>

He was condemned to the flames and placed at the stake, but not burned. Out of deference for his powerful family and the nobility in general, he was strangled before the flames reached him. The body was not reduced to ashes. "Damsels of high condition," says Jean Chartier,<sup>h</sup> went to the meadows of Nantes, where the execution had taken place, raised the body with their noble hands, and, with the aid of some nuns, gave it very honourable burial in the Carmelite church (1440).

Barbarism had returned, only without what was good in it, simplicity and faith. Feudalism had come back, but without its traits of devotedness and fidelity, and its chivalry. These ghosts of buried feudalism appeared like damned souls bringing unknown crimes to earth from their infernal abode. It mattered not that the English withdrew; France still continued the work of self-extermination. The provinces of the north were becoming a desert; the waste heaths were spreading. In the centre, Beauce was becoming overrun with briars and thickets; two armies sought and could hardly find each other there. The towns in which the whole population of the rural districts sought refuge, absorbed that miserable multitude, and yet remained not the less desolate. A vast number of houses were empty, says the Bourgeois de Paris,<sup>i</sup> and many a door was closed to open no more. The poor took from those houses whatever they could for firing. Paris was burning Paris. We may judge of the other towns from this one, the most populous of all, the town in which the government had held its seat, and where resided those great corporations, the university and the parliament. Famine and wretchedness had made it a focus of disgusting contagious maladies, the nature of which was not very accurately discriminated, but which were called at random the plague. Charles VII had a glimpse of that hideous thing which was still called Paris, was struck with horror, and hurried away. The English did not try to return thither. The two parties withdrew as if by a

[<sup>1</sup> Just how much of truth there is in this tale of Gilles de Retz, it would be difficult to determine. The motive alleged for the crimes snacks of the familiar witchcraft stories. A perversion of a type well known to psychiatrists might offer a more plausible explanation, supposing the facts to be assured.]



common understanding. The wolves alone were voluntary visitors, entering at evening in search of carrion; for as they no longer found food in the fields, they were rabid with hunger, and attacked men. The contemporary historian, who no doubt exaggerates, alleges that in September, 1438, they devoured fourteen persons between Montmartre and the Porte St. Antoine.

These terrible miseries are expressed, very feebly indeed, in the *Complaint of the poor Commonalty and the poor Labourers*. It is a medley of lamentations and threats; the starving wretches warn the church, the king, the burghers and merchants, and, above all, the lords, that "the fire is very near their hôtels." They call the king to their aid. But what could Charles VII do—that king of Bourges, that weak and mean-looking personage,<sup>1</sup> how could they expect him to impose respect and obedience on so many audacious men? With what forces was he to put down the *Écorcheurs* of the rural districts, and the terrible petty kings of châteaux? They were his own captains;<sup>2</sup> it was with them and through them he was waging war against the English.

#### CHARLES BEGINS THE WORK OF REFORM (1439 A.D.)

On the 2nd of November, 1439, Charles VII ordained in the states of Orleans, and at their request: that henceforth the king alone shall nominate the captains; that the lords, as well as the royal captains, shall be responsible for the acts of their men; and that both alike must answer before the king's functionaries, that is to say, that henceforth war shall be subjected to the control of justice. The barons shall no longer take anything beyond their seigniorial rights, under pretext of war. War becomes the king's affair, and he undertakes, in consideration of 1,200,000 livres a year granted him by the states, to maintain fifteen hundred lances with six men to each. By and by we shall see him back this cavalry with a newly created infantry of the communes. Contraveners shall obtain no grace; should the king pardon, his servants should take no heed thereof. The ordinance subjoined a more direct and more efficacious threat: the spoils of the contraveners

[<sup>1</sup> Henri Baude<sup>o</sup> has a different conception of the personality of the king. He says: "Charles was a man of handsome figure, tall, and of good temperament; of sanguine complexion; humble, gentle, gracious, and of pleasant temper, liberal and not prodigal. He was solitary, living soberly, loving joyously, frank, decorous, and humane. He loved ladies in all honesty, and held all women in honour. His amusements were chess and shooting with the crossbow, and he rose early. The day after he entered a town and the day before he left it he went to the principal church. His oath was 'St. George! St. George!' He took only two meals a day. He spoke and drank little. He had a courteous gravity, tempered familiarity, and effective diligence. His word was the word of a prince and kept as law. He thought continually of the affairs of his kingdom and the relief of his people. He heard three masses a day, that is to say, the high mass with music and two low masses, and said his prayers every day without fail. At meals he was alone at table, and few persons in his room; and his doctor was always there, and honest people and valets who spoke of gay subjects or told old stories in which he took delight.

"Naught cared he for false wisdom. At the yearly feasts, a bishop or abbot was seated at the head of his table, he in the centre, and at the end of the table one of the nobles of royal blood. When the table was spread there was none so great that did not leave the room, and all was so well arranged that none presumed to remain. He loved all virtuous people; was true and certain in promise and in all his acts. When he knew a man of virtue he took him. He had in his house and in his service the children of the princes, great nobles, and barons of his kingdom. He had around him, his chamberlains and others, the most handsome persons of the kingdom."]

<sup>2</sup> Many of these captains of *écorcheurs* have left lasting traces in the memory of the people. The Gascon La Hire has given his name to the knave of hearts. The Englishman, Matthew Gough, whom the chroniclers call Mathago, has remained, we believe, as a puppet and bugbear for children in certain provinces. The history of Gilles de Retz, greatly softened down, has furnished matter for a tale: he is the original of Blue Beard.

[1432-1440 A.D.]

shall belong to whoever shall take them. This was a tremendous clause ; it armed the peasant, and sounded, as it were, the tocsin in the village.

What partially explains the boldness of the measure is that the self-styled royal captains, the pillagers and *écorcheurs*, had recently damaged their own strength. They had attempted an expedition to Bâle with the hopes of extorting ransom-money from the council, but instead of this they were themselves very roughly handled on their march by the peasants of Alsace ; and then, seeing the Swiss ready to receive them, they returned with their tails between their legs. The king, who had taken Montereau, valiantly leading the assault in person (1437), took Meaux with his artillery (1439) ; then feeling himself in strength, he listened to the complaints made against the soldiery, and lent a gracious ear to the lamentations of his good subjects. Acts of justice were done with rapid despatch ; the constable De Richemont, willingly exchanging his functions for those of provost-martial, hanged and drowned all along his route. His brother, the duke of Brittany, did not delay to strike that great blow, the sentencing and burning of Marshal de Retz. This first instance of justice done upon a lord was effected only in God's name, and with the aid of the church ; but it was, nevertheless, a warning to the nobility that their impunity was at an end.<sup>b</sup>

The most important effect of the memorable meeting of the states-general of 1439 was to render further meetings of that body unnecessary. In effect, the king was given the exclusive right to raise troops and to levy taxes. This virtually amounted to the creation of a permanent army, and, by implications, to the imposition of a perpetual tax. So at least the king interpreted it. From then on the king, having no need of the authorisation of the estates for the imposition of taxes, took good pains to dispense with its services. In point of fact it assembled but once more during the remaining period of his reign.<sup>p</sup>

Who were the intrepid advisers that urged the king upon this course of proceeding ? Who were the servants that could have prompted him to these reforms, and procured for him the name given by contemporaries : Charles “the well served” ?

Along with the princes in the council of Charles VII, the count of Maine, the cadet of Brittany, and the bastard of Orleans, there were also petty nobles, the brave Saintrailles, and those wise and politic men, the Brézès, nobles, but men who were nothing without the king. We find in it two burghers, Jacques Cœur, the money-changer, and the master of the artillery, Jean Bureau, both very humble *roturier* names. Bureau was a man of the robe, a master of the accounts. He threw down his pen, and by this remarkable transformation exemplified the truth that an able mind can apply itself to anything. Henry IV reformed the finances through a man of the sword ; Charles VII waged war through a financier. Bureau was the first who made an able and scientific use of artillery.

War needs money, and Jacques Cœur contrived to supply it. Whence came he ? We are sorry to know so little of his early career. All we know is that in 1432 we find him engaged in commerce in Beirut in Syria ; sometime afterwards we see him at Bourges in the capacity of money-changer to the king. This great trader had always one foot in the East, and one in France. Here, he made his son archbishop of Bourges ; yonder, he married his nieces or other female relations to the masters of his galleys. On the one hand he was continuing his Egyptian traffic ; on the other he was speculating on the maintenance of armies and the conquest of Normandy.

Such were the able and humbly-born councillors of Charles VII. If it be asked who brought them about him, and what was the influence that made him yield to their advice, it will be found, if we are not mistaken, that it was a woman, his mother-in-law, Yolande of Anjou. We see her in possession of power from the beginning of this reign; it was she who caused the Maid to be received with favour; and it was with her on one occasion that the duke of Alençon arranged the preparations for a campaign. This influence, balanced by that of the favourite, seems to have been without a rival from the moment the old queen had given her son-in-law a mistress whom he loved for twenty years (1431-1450). This was Agnes Sorel.

#### AGNES SOREL; THE *PRAGUERIE* (1440 A.D.)

Agnes la Sorelle or Surelle — she assumed for arms a gold *sureau* (elder tree) — was the daughter of a gownsman, Jean Soreau, but she was noble by the mother's side. She was born in honest Touraine. The *naïveté* of Agnes was early transplanted into a land of craft and policy, Lorraine. She was brought up with Isabella of Lorraine, with whom René of Anjou espoused that duchy. Isabella, the wife of a prisoner, waited on the king to beseech his aid, bringing her children with her and also her good friend from childhood, the demoiselle Agnes. The king's mother-in-law, Yolande of Anjou, who stood also in the same relation to Isabella, was, like her, a woman of masculine mind; and they both agreed to attach Charles VII forever to the interests of the house of Anjou-Lorraine. The gentle creature was given him for his mistress, to the great satisfaction of the queen who wished at any cost to remove La Trémouille and the other favourites.

Everyone knows the little story how Agnes said one day to the king that, when very young, she had been informed by an astrologer that she was to be loved by one of the most valiant kings in the world: she had thought that this was Charles, but she now saw clearly it was the king of England, who took so many fine towns from him in defiance of his beard; therefore to the king of England she would go. Stung by these words, the king burst into tears, "and quitting his hunting and his gardens, he took the bit in his teeth," and to such purpose, that he drove the English out of the kingdom.

The pretty verses by Francis I<sup>1</sup> prove that this tradition was of earlier date than Brantôme.<sup>1</sup> Be this as it may, we have an equivalent testimony in favour of Agnes from a hostile pen, that of the nearly contemporary Burgundian chronicler, Olivier de la Marche.<sup>m</sup> "Certest Agnes was one of the most beautiful women I ever saw, and did in her quality much good to the realm." And again: "She took pleasure in bringing under the king's notice young soldiers and gentle companions, by whom the king was afterwards well served."

Charles VII thought wisdom charming when preached by such lips; old Yolande in all probability spoke through Agnes, and no doubt she had the principal part in all that was done. More politic than scrupulous, she had welcomed with equal readiness the two girls that came to her so *à propos* from Lorraine, Joan of Arc and Agnes, the saint and the mistress, who both in their several ways were of service to the king and the realm.

This council of women, *parvenus*, and *roturiers*, it must be confessed, did

<sup>1</sup> More honour, gentle Agnes, thou hast won,  
For that thy voice our France recovered,  
Than could be achieved by cloister-prisoned nun,  
Or holiest beadsman to the desert fled.



[1440 A.D.]

not command much reverence, or greatly tend to set off to advantage the unroyal figure of Charles VII. To sit as judge of the realm on the throne of St. Louis, and be like him the guardian of God's Peace, he ought apparently to have surrounded himself with people of a different sort. The league of the three ladies, the dowager queen, the queen, and the mistress, was not edifying in anybody's eyes. What was Richemont? An executioner. Jacques Cœur? A trader in Saracen lands. A Jean Bureau, a limb of the law, "an inkhorn," had made himself a captain, was riding all over the kingdom with his cannon, and not a fortress could stand before him; was not that a shame for the men of the sword? The foxes had become lions. Thenceforth the knights were to account to the knights at law—the most noble lords and the high justiciars were to tremble before the underlings of justice!

So much was this the tone of feeling prevalent among the nobles, not excepting those who were most immediately in contact with Charles VII, that even Dunois quitted the council after the famous ordinance. "The cool and tempered lord," as Chartier<sup>h</sup> calls him, repented of having served his king too well. This bastard of Orleans had begun his fortunes by defending the town of Orleans, his brother's appanage, in which service he had very adroitly employed the heroic simplicity of the Maid. After having grown great through the king, he wished to grow great against the king. The misfortune was that his brother the duke was still in England; but the ancient enemy of the house of Orleans, the duke of Burgundy (converted no doubt by Dunois), was labouring to get that future chief of the malcontents out of the hands of the English.

The duke of Alençon threw himself headlong into the affair; the Bourbons and the Vendômes lent their hands to it. The ex-favourite, La Trémouille, whom Richemont had removed, readily engaged in it. The most eager of all were the leaders of the *écorcheurs*, the bastard de Bourbon, Chabannes, and Le Sanglier ("the wild boar"). In truth, the matter was one that most nearly concerned them; the lords had their honours and jurisdictional prerogatives to contend for; but as for them, they had their necks to save; the gallows stared them in the face.

Nothing was now wanting but a leader. As the duke of Orleans could not be had, the malcontents took the dauphin, a mere child in point of age, but it was thought that a name would be sufficient. The supposed child, who was already Louis XI, had made his first efforts in arms, as he made his last, against the very party of the lords that chose him for their chief. At fourteen years of age he had been commissioned to pacify the marches of Brittany and Poitou. His first capture had been that of one of Marshal de Retz's lieutenants; such a commencement did not promise the grandees a very trusty friend. Friend or not, he accepted their offers. This dauphin of France resembled Charles VII in no respect, but took rather after his grandmother, who was sprung from the houses of Bar and Aragon.

The king was keeping his Easter at Poitiers, and was at dinner, when word was brought him that St. Maixent had been seized by the duke of Alençon and the sire de la Roche; whereupon Richemont said to him in Breton fashion, "Remember King Richard II, who shut himself up in a fortress and got taken." The king thought the hint a good one, mounted his horse, and galloped with four hundred lances to St. Maixent. The burghers had been fighting four-and-twenty hours for their king, when he came to their relief. De la Roche's men were decapitated or drowned, according to Richemont's custom, but Alençon's were let go. The small fortresses of Poitou did

not hold out; Richemont carried them one by one. Dunois then began to reflect, and he calculated too that the first who should leave the rest would be allowed good terms. He came, was well received, and congratulated himself on the course he had adopted, when he saw the king stronger than he had supposed, with 4,800 cavaliers, and 2,000 archers at his back, without having been obliged to weaken the garrisons in the marches of Normandy.

More than one of Dunois' party thought as he did. Many an *écorceur* of the south took the king's pay, and fought against the *écorceurs* of the north. Charles VII drove back the duke de Bourbon upon the Bourbonnais, securing the good will of the towns and châteaux by prohibiting all pillage. He assembled the states of Auvergne, and got them to declare loudly that the rebels were hostile to the king, only because he protected the poorer classes against the plunderers. The princes, abandoned by their followers, and obtaining no support from the duke of Burgundy, came in and made their submission; first Alençon, then the duke de Bourbon and the dauphin. As for La Trémouille and two others, the king would not receive them. The dauphin

hesitated about accepting a pardon which was not extended to his friends, and said to the king, "I find then, my liege, that I must go back to them, for I have promised so." The king replied coldly, "The gates are open for you; Louis, and if they are not wide enough, I will have sixteen or twenty fathoms of the wall pulled down for you."

This war, so well conducted, was not less wisely terminated. The duke de Bourbon was deprived of his possessions in central France (Corbeil, Vincennes, etc.) and the dauphin was dismissed from court, and assigned an establishment on the frontier, in Dauphiné. Thus he was isolated, and allotted his separate portion; there was no getting rid of him, except by giving him a little royalty, in advance of his hereditary expectations.

This *praguerie* of France (it was so called after the name of the great Bohemian *praguerie*), although it was so quickly ended, nevertheless produced some disastrous results. The military reform was postponed. The English were emboldened to attack Harfleur, which they took and retained. They released the duke of Orleans at the request of the duke of Burgundy (1440). When the ancient enemy of his house thus exerted himself to take him out of captivity, the king could not decently refuse likewise to guarantee the ransom-money, and aid in the deliver-



FRENCH NOBLEMAN, MIDDLE OF  
FIFTEENTH CENTURY

ance of the dangerous prisoner. He proceeded straight on his return to the duke of Burgundy, who threw the chain of the Golden Fleece<sup>1</sup> over his neck, and gave him his niece in marriage. Against whom was formed this close union of two enemies, if not against the king? He took the hint.

[<sup>1</sup> The order of the Golden Fleece was instituted at Bruges in 1429, by the duke of Burgundy, Philip the Good, in honour of one of his mistresses, Marie de Cumberghe, whose red tresses had been the object of many pleasantries. On the extinction of the Burgundian house the grand-mastership passed to the Habsburgs.]

[1440-1442 A.D.]

First of all, he obtained from the states a tenth to be levied on all the clergy of the realm. He recalled Tannegui du Châtel, the mortal enemy of the house of Burgundy. Then concentrating all his forces towards the north, he proceeded along the frontier, doing justice upon the Burgundian, Lorrainian, and other captains, who were desolating the land. Among those who made their submission, there was a man of turbulence, the most audacious of plunderers; audacious both from the strength his birth gave him, and because he was the common agent of the duke de Bourbon and the duke of Burgundy; this was the bastard de Bourbon. He did not get off so cheaply as he had expected. The king handed him over, Bourbon as he was, to the provost, who put him on his trial just like any other robber; and after being well and duly found guilty, he was put in a sack, and thrown into the river.

Another lesson, not less instructive, was given. The young count of Saint-Pol, relying on the protection of the duke of Burgundy, dared to intercept some of the king's cannon on the march, and carry them off; the king deprived him of two of his best fortresses; Saint-Pol hastened to the king and besought pardon, but he could obtain no favour, except by submitting to the decision of the parliament on the litigated question of the Ligny inheritance.

#### EFFECTIVE PROGRESS AGAINST ENGLAND (1441-1444 A.D.)

Meanwhile the English, all this time so near Paris, and so strongly established on the lower Seine, had advanced up the river and seized Pontoise. Lord Clifford, who had surprised that important and formidable post, kept possession of it in person. The inveterate obstinacy of the Cliffords acquired but too much notoriety in the wars of the Roses. Besides the English, there were in Pontoise numerous deserters, who knew they had no quarter to expect.

Invincible pertinacity of purpose was displayed on both sides. The duke of York, regent of France, now came to the aid of Clifford, whom he was afterwards to put to death in the civil wars. He brought with him an army from Normandy, revictualled the place, and offered battle (June); Talbot was with him. The king let the English pass, fell back, and returned. Talbot also returned, and again threw provisions into the town (July). The duke of York once more marched his army back, but could not yet bring on an engagement. He was allowed to roam over the ruined Île-de-France as much as he pleased, and waste his strength in those useless evolutions. When they had exhausted and harassed themselves, in four times revictualing Pontoise, Charles VII seriously resumed the siege; Jean Bureau battered the walls with admirable activity; two murderous assaults were made, that lasted five hours; first a church, that served as a redoubt, was carried, and then the place itself (September 16th, 1441). Thus men, who dared not meet the English in the plain, attacked and defeated them by storm.

The recapture of Pontoise was a deliverance for Paris, and for the whole country around; cultivation could thenceforth recommence, the means of subsistence were secured. Yet the Parisians evinced no gratitude to the king; they felt but their present miseries and the burden of the taxes; these were beginning to affect the brotherhoods even, and the churches, which were loud in their complaints. There was no want of willingness on the part of the princes to take advantage of these discontents. The duke of Burgundy, without himself appearing, assembled them in his own home at



Nevers (March, 1442). The duke of Orleans, with whom he did as he pleased, since he had delivered him, presided for him over the meeting, which consisted of the dukes de Bourbon and d'Alençon, the counts d'Angoulême, d'Etampes, and de Dunois. The king frankly sent his chancellor to this conclave which was held against him, and notified to them that he would readily hear what they had to say.

Their demand and alleged grievances very plainly showed what were their secret views. The princes, therefore, in their love for the public welfare, and for the good people of France, set forth before the king the necessity of making peace. They called for the repression of the brigands.

The king's reply, which was sedulously made public, was overwhelming, and the more so as its tone was calm and moderate. He answers specially, respecting the taxes, that the aids had been consented to by the lords on whose property they had been levied; that as to the tallages, the king had "notified" them to the three estates, although in matters so urgent, when the enemy was in occupation of one portion of the kingdom, and was destroying the rest, he had a good right to levy tallages of his royal authority. "It is not necessary to that end," he says, "to assemble the estates; it is but a burden for the poor people who have to pay the charges of those who attend. Many notable persons have requested that these convocations should cease."

The king, leaving the malcontents to waste time in their meeting at Nevers, was then performing a grand and useful journey all through his kingdom, from Picardy to Gascony, everywhere establishing peace, especially in the marches, in Poitou, Saintonge, and the Limousin. Strengthened in the north by the recovery of Pontoise, he went to make head against the English in the south. The count d'Albret, being hard pressed by them, had promised to surrender if the king did not come on the 23rd of June to "keep his day," and await them on the *lande* of Tartas. They liked the condition, not believing that he could arrive in time, much less that he would offer them battle. On the appointed day they saw the king of France and his army on the *lande* (June 21st, 1442). All these Gascons, who had imagined themselves far beyond the king's reach in a world of their own, were beginning to feel that he was everywhere. They came and did homage, performed feudal service, and the king rendered justice to them.

He did this conspicuously in an important case the following year (March, 1443). The estates of Comminges supplicated Charles VII on behalf of the aged countess de Foix who had been imprisoned by her husband. He frightened the count de Foix, liberated the old countess, divided the usufruct of Comminges between the husband and wife, and adjudged the property to himself. This startling act of justice struck great awe into all those lords who had hitherto been so independent.

This was not all. In order to remain always among them as judge, the king gave them a royal parliament, which was to reside in Toulouse. This judicial royalty of the south was altogether free of the parliament of Paris; it judged in accordance with the law of the country, the written law, and was not dependent on anyone, but was self-elected. Until such time as this great body could establish order and justice in Languedoc, Charles VII authorised the poor to take justice into their own hands, and hunt down the brigands and vagrant soldiers.

He could not remain long absent from the north. Dieppe, which had been recovered by a fortunate and bold stroke, was in danger of being lost again. A great fleet and an army were every moment expected from England; it was urgently necessary to anticipate their arrival. The dauphin

[1443-1444 A.D.]

got permission to undertake this service along with Dunois; many Picard and Norman gentlemen also volunteered. The Bastille was taken. The duke of Somerset, the English commander, returned to Rouen to rest from his toils and take up his winter quarters.

That winter, whilst Somerset was enjoying his victorious repose, the dauphin Louis was rapidly traversing the whole kingdom, to ruin and destroy the best friend of the English. The count d'Armagnac, dissatisfied by the way in which Countingmes had been disposed of without giving him a share, had attempted to seize the whole country. He reckoned on the English, and particularly on the duke of Gloucester, who in fact wanted to marry Henry VI to a daughter of the count. The dauphin set out in winter, made his way over snows and swollen rivers, and found the game in its lair, everything that bore the name of Armagnac shut up in one place. Gloucester and the war party, though they had encouraged Armagnac, were unable to defend him. They had enough to do to defend themselves in England against the bishops, and the partisans of peace, Winchester and Suffolk, who had gained the upper hand.<sup>b</sup> Painful as it was to their pride they were obliged at conferences held at Arras, in 1444, to beg for a truce and the hand of a French princess, Margaret of Anjou, for their young king Henry VI, placing also a new enemy at their gates through the marriage of the dauphin Louis with Margaret of Scotland, daughter of James I.



COSTUME OF A NOBLEWOMAN, MIDDLE OF FIFTEENTH CENTURY

#### EXPEDITION TO SWITZERLAND AND LORRAINE

Charles VII only granted that truce in order the better to complete the work of reform begun in 1439.<sup>c</sup> But there was a third people very embarrassing during the truce, the war-folk namely. What could be done was to induce them to go and rob elsewhere, to quit ruined France for thriving Germany, and make a pilgrimage to the council of Bâle, to the rich and saintly towns of the Rhine, and the fat ecclesiastical principalities.

Just then the king received two applications for aid, the one from the emperor Frederick III against the Swiss, the other from René, duke of Lorraine, against the cities of the empire. The king was equally favourable to both proposals, and generously promised aid for and against the Germans.<sup>d</sup>

Switzerland had founded and consolidated its independence of Austria and the empire in three battles — Morgarten, Sempach, and Näfels — in which a handful of peasants had heroically vanquished great feudal armies. The French nobility was always ready for positive warfare, but that of Germany

showed itself more circumspect and the Austrian provinces were reduced to setting, by means of wretched intrigue, the Swiss cantons one against the other, and then if possible to intervene. This time Frederick III reckoned to make the Armagnacs of Charles VII intervene for him.

*The Battle of Sankt Jakob (1444 A.D.)*

Charles hastened to set in motion, in as orderly a fashion as possible, an army of 14,000 French and 8,000 English, Scotch, Brabanters, Spaniards, and Italians. The commander-in-chief was the former leader of the praguerie—the dauphin Louis. This terrible band turned the Jura in fairly good order, and entered Switzerland by crossing the little river Birse. The Swiss, who were then besieging Zurich, were able to send only 2,000 men to meet the enemy. These brave fellows had expected only to skirmish and knew not with what force they had to deal. A messenger had come from Bâle to warn them of the numbers of the French, but they had killed him; and in the brutal pride their former successes had inspired, they threw themselves head-foremost on the first corps they met (1444). Their bravoura did not save them. After making a desperate resistance in a hospital and behind the dilapidated walls of a garden, their position was forced and they perished, every one. The dauphin had such respect for the brave men that fought so well that he went no further and made a treaty of alliance with the Swiss. As for the *écorceurs*, they found nothing to take away from these poor mountaineers and many turned towards Alsace and Swabia.<sup>c</sup>

The dauphin's return, and the report of the check the Swiss had suffered, considerably advanced the affairs of Lorraine. The towns which sheltered themselves under the name of the empire saw that, if the emperor and the German nobility had called in the French to the heart of the German countries, to save Zurich, they would not come and fight the French on the marches of France. Toul and Verdun acknowledged the king as protector.

Metz alone resisted. That great and aspiring town had others dependent on it, and was encompassed by from twenty-four to thirty forts. Épinal, however, had from the beginning seized the opportunity to emancipate itself, and had put itself into the king's hands. The forts having afterwards surrendered, the Metz men made up their mind to negotiate. They represented to the king that "they were not of his realm or lordship, but that, in his wars with the duke of Burgundy and others, they had always received and comforted his men." Thereupon, by order of the king, Master Jean Rabateau, president of the parliament, propounded many arguments to the contrary. The grand question of the limits of France and the empire could not be settled thus incidentally, and during a truce to the English war. The matter remained undecided. The king contented himself with drawing on the finances of the wealthy town of Metz.<sup>b</sup>

MILITARY AND FINANCIAL REFORMS (1443-1448 A.D.)

These two expeditions had disembarassed the king of the most riotous among his adventurers, and broken in the rest to an elementary discipline; it was at last possible to put into execution the ordinance of Orleans. In 1445, the army was consolidated into fifteen companies of one hundred lances; to each lance six paid men were reckoned—a man-at-arms and his esquire, three archers and a *coutillier*, all mounted. By these were the cities



[1443-1448 A.D.]

garrisoned, the largest having only from twenty to thirty lances; in this way the inhabitants remained stronger than the soldiers, and in a position to check any disorder. The demand for positions in the army was so great that numerous old stagers followed the companies about that they might be ready to snap up the first vacancy. All the others were obliged to retire immediately to their homes without disturbing the peace, under penalty of being given up to justice as vagabonds. Such was the progress of order that they obeyed and at the end of the fifteen days nothing more was heard of them; as for those who had enlisted, they submitted to a rigorous discipline. Charles VII had thus at his disposition a picked troop of nine thousand horse.

By another ordinance, that of April 28th, 1448, the king secured to France an advantage which she had hitherto furnished to foreigners—to the Genoese, at need—but had never herself possessed: a regular and permanent infantry. Each of the sixteen thousand parishes of the kingdom was obliged to furnish the king "a good comrade," said the ordinance, "who has seen service." He had to furnish at his own expense his *brigandine*, a light coat of armour of iron plates joined together; a short coat, light helmet, dagger, sword, cross-bow, and quiver of arrows. He was obliged to drill on all feast days, and be ready to serve the king at any time he should be called upon to do so; he received in payment four francs a month when in service and exemption from all taxes and subsidies, excepting the *aide* and the *gabelle*.

The free archer did not become at once a model soldier; military genius was not developed in a day in a nation so long without arms. But while Villon depicts for us one of those archers dropping on his knees before a scarecrow, taking it for a gendarme, entreating pardon, and beginning to feel extremely ill, satiric poetry is not history; a century later, in 1554, the same archers, incorporated in the provincial legions of Francis I, gained against the first army in the world—the Castilian veterans—a battle that had been once lost by the men-at-arms; still another century, and in 1643, changing their quivers for guns, they had developed into the foot-soldiers that fought at Rocroi.

All these reforms were subordinate to that of the finances, set in motion in 1443 by Jacques Cœur. To establish a reciprocal control by the regulators of finances over one another; to oblige individual receivers to account to the receiver-general and the latter in his turn to the chamber of accounts; to force the king's officers—the ministers of finance, the master of the horse, the treasurer of wars, and the commander of artillery—to render monthly accounts to the king in person—these were excellent and admirable reforms, thanks to which Charles VII found himself in a position to create in France an institution that the most powerful of his predecessors had been unable to establish—a military force dependent only on the king, and protecting him, instead of leaving him at the mercy of the barons' evil humours, as had heretofore been the case. Since Charles V, the ordinary indirect taxes, such as that on salt, on merchandise, and on liquors, had been permanent. Since Charles VI, the land tax (the *taille*), for payment of the soldiers, had become permanent—that is, it continued to be levied without the vote of the estates. But the king gave guarantee for the proper administration of financial justice by declaring sovereign the *cour des aides*, which alone had the right to interpret ordinances pertaining to the taxes and was the last resort of all civil and criminal processes growing out of the administration of the finances.

Though it was not yet possible, in the fifteenth century, to reduce all France to one uniform law, she was at least beginning to emerge from the arbitrary customs of a justice exercised, above all in the north of France,

according to unwritten laws. Charles VII thought — and the thought is an honour to him — that it was essential that all the laws of a kingdom should be written and “agreed upon by the lawyers of each country,” and examined and authorised by the supreme court and by the parliament, so that it would not be possible to deviate from the text thus officially inscribed. To him was due this innovation.

#### THE CLOSE OF THE HUNDRED YEARS’ WAR

Having accomplished these reforms, Charles found himself sufficiently strong to finish with the English. A certain Francis de Surienne, an Aragonese adventurer in the service of the English, wishing to garrison one of the Norman villages possessed by the English, found himself repulsed on all sides. The soldiers, having received from Henry VI neither pay, provisions, nor munitions, were unwilling to share with this foreigner their already insufficient resources. The Aragonese, finding the doors of the allies closed to him, provided for the needs of his company after the fashion of the greater number of the military leaders: during the season of peace he fell upon Fougères, a rich city of Brittany, and gave it over to his men to plunder in lieu of their arrears of pay.

Immediately the king of France and the duke of Brittany demanded of the English governor of Normandy reparation and an indemnity of 1,600,000 crowns damages. They demanded an impossibility. The indemnity not arriving, the French set out to collect it for themselves at Pont-de-l’Arche, Gerberoy, Verneuil. Dunois entered the province with an efficient army which the Burgundians and Bretons joined voluntarily. Pont-Audemer, Lisieux, Mantes, Vernon, Évreux, Louviers, St. Lô, Coutances, and Valognes were taken or surrendered by the inhabitants without striking a blow.

England was then beginning her Wars of the Roses, which during thirty years were to cover her with blood and ruins. The parliament, not as yet daring to take action against the king, fastened upon his minister, the duke of Suffolk, and troubled itself little about Normandy, since the reverses there were new and potent arguments against the accused. The governor, Somerset, instead of concentrating his forces, divided them into twenty garrisons, and sent ambassadors to open negotiations; but, knowing no better how to make treaties than how to make war, he forgot to invest them with authority. Order, proficiency — all that had hitherto contributed to their success was now on the side of the French: to the French Victory went over. On October 18th, 1449, they appeared beneath the walls of Rouen.

In a moment all the inhabitants of Rouen were armed, but armed against the English, who took refuge in the citadel. Somerset was there, and the veteran Talbot, and numerous lords, officers, and soldiers; but it must be remembered that it would have been impossible to resist at once both the population and the French army. There was talk of a treaty, but on what conditions! — that, in addition to Rouen, Caudebec, Villequier, Lillebonne, Tancarville, Harfleur, — that is to say all the lower course of the Seine, — should be delivered up to the king of France; and that a hostage should be furnished in the person of the famous Talbot himself — the English Achilles.

The governor of Honfleur refused to recognise this capitulation. The city was taken in the middle of winter (December, 1449); Harfleur met the same fate. The English, pushed to extremities, sent a knight of great renown, Thomas Kyriell, with 6,000 men. It was a last effort. Landing at Cherbourg, Kyriell sought to join the duke of Somerset at Bayeux, by way of

[1450-1453 A.D.]

the shore ; the French followed, and on April 15th, 1450, near the village of Formigny, the constables of Richemont from one side, the count of Clermont from the other, vigorously attacked him. Kyriell's soldiers fought bravely, but were defeated and left 4,000 on the field. This insignificant number sufficed to blot out from the minds of the French the 30,000 dead at at Crécy, the 12,000 captive at Poitiers and at Agincourt. Vire, Bayeux, Avranches, Caen, Domfront, and Falaise fell into the hands of Charles.

The numerous garrison of Cherbourg counted upon having nothing to fear, thanks to its own strength and above all to the neighbourhood of the sea. From this side it was taken. The French cannoneers established seven batteries in the sea itself ; when the tide rose they left their cannon well anchored on the beach and protected by oiled skins ; when the tide fell they returned to them. It was the English who, first of all, had turned against the French, at Crécy and Agincourt, this terrible arm of the artillery ; the latter now manipulated it better than themselves. Cherbourg capitulated, and in a year the whole of Normandy was taken. Also the French army presented a novel spectacle : disciplined and obedient, it now lived on its pay and not by plunder.

A month later, Dunois, Saintrailles, Chabannes, and the brothers Jean and Gaspard Bureau, who directed so advantageously the French artillery, marched with 20,000 men against Guienne. Bourg-sur-Gironde, Blaye, Castillon, Libourne, St. Émilien, offshoots from Bordeaux, which the English had loaded with privileges as they had that city, were easily taken. The inhabitants of Bordeaux, so well disposed to the England who bought their wines, attempted a sortie, fled upon catching sight of the enemy, and entered like the others into negotiations. The French granted nearly all that was asked of them. This was the 5th of June, 1451 ; the surrender was delayed until the 23rd. On that day, the herald of the city having cried with a loud voice for succour from the English for the people of Bordeaux, and no one replying, the gates were opened to the French.

However mild the conquerors were, the great town soon regretted that English domination so far removed as to be scarcely felt. Now it had to pay taxes and furnish soldiers, the harbour was deserted, the shops were encumbered with unsold tuns. If an English army had appeared, no matter how weak, Bordeaux would have thrown herself into its arms. Such an army now appeared.

The government of Henry VI, or, to speak more correctly, of Margaret of Anjou, had need of a great success abroad in order to establish itself at home. Talbot, earl of Shrewsbury, now eighty years of age, was charged with bringing Guienne again under the English rule. The first steps were easy. The inhabitants of Bordeaux themselves introduced the English into their town, September 22nd, 1452 ; almost the whole province followed their example, and the king of France had to recommence his conquest. With the spring of 1453 his troops were marching into Guienne ; on the 14th of July they laid siege to Castillon.

### *The Battle of Castillon (July 17th, 1453)*

The royal army, the greater part of which, including the artillery under the Bureau brothers, was concentrated in the camp, nearly two thousand feet long by one thousand wide, occupied also an abbey, which was later on the priory of St. Florent, and which overlooked Castillon ; on the plain of Mount Horable, near to the village of Capitoulans, were the Bretons of Count



d'Étampes, to the number of 240 lances under the command of the knights of Hunaudaye and Montauban. The night of the 16th of July was passed in fortifying the camp, which was surrounded by deep trenches and defended by powerful artillery. Talbot on the morning of the 17th attacked the abbey, defended by eight hundred free archers under the command of Jacques Rouhault and Pierre de Beauvau. The archers, terrified by the impetuosity of the English, who shouted the war-cry of their old leader, abandoned the



FRENCH NOBLEWOMAN, EARLY FIFTEENTH CENTURY

abbey and retreated in the direction of the entrenched camp, followed by the enemy. On hearing of the approach of Talbot, Jacques de Chabannes left the camp and advanced at the head of two hundred lances. Aided by Rouhault and Beauvau, he protected the retreat of the archers. A very brief engagement took place; one hundred men were killed on either side. Rouhault, thrown from his horse, owed his safety only to the devotion of his archers, to whom he had sworn that he would live and die with them. Chabannes, surrounded at one moment, was delivered by his men.

Finally it was possible to effect the retreat. Talbot rallied his men and regained the abbey. There, seizing the provisions abandoned by the French, he broke open the casks and distributed wine to his soldiers; it was still early in the day; the earl of Shrewsbury (Talbot) had mass performed by his chap-

lain. The holy sacrament was about to be celebrated, when news was brought that the French were abandoning their enclosure and fleeing. "Never," he exclaimed, "will I hear mass till I shall, to-day, have overthrown the band of Frenchmen which is before me"; and he gave orders to advance. The English advanced uttering their war-cry, "Talbot, Talbot, St. George!" Mounted on a little nag, the old captain was dressed in a simple red velvet cassock. Vain attempts were made to stop him, he was told that it was a false rumour, and that it would be better to await quietly the onset of the enemy; he answered his standard-bearer, who gave him this advice, by insults, and drove him away, it was said, by a sword-cut across the face. On arriving at the palisade Talbot began to shout, "On foot, on foot, all!" His men-at-arms, supported by the archers, who arrived gradually and fell into rank, were received by a formidable discharge; three hundred catapults, howitzers, culverins, and ribaudequins, the firing of which was directed by the famous gunner Giribault, threw their projectiles, which slew a large number of victims. The English hesitated. Talbot brought them back, and

[1453 A.D.]

formed them in testudo; sheltered behind their bucklers they attacked the entrenchments. Talbot succeeded in planting the banner of St. George on the summit of the trench. A terrible conflict took place; for more than an hour they fought hand to hand.

Suddenly, from the neighbouring heights, the sires de Montauban and de la Hunaudaye descended with their Bretons, and took the enemy in the rear; this movement decided the issue of the combat. The English stopped to face this fresh body of troops. The terrible tempest of the artillery did not cease to rain down on them. Seizing the opportunity, the French dashed from the camp, some on foot, some on horse, and charged with fury. Talbot, though wounded, held out. A blow from a culverin struck him on the leg and threw him under his horse. The French archers surrounded him and pierced him with their arrows. His son, who had vainly endeavoured to persuade him to flee, died at his side, trying to protect him. The English, seeing the fall of their chief, fled in disorder. Some wished to regain their vessels or to cross the Dordogne at the ford of Rozan; the others took the road to St. Émilion. A body of about two thousand men under the leadership of the Gascon nobles fell back in good order on Castillon and succeeded in penetrating into the town. The French, tired, worn out, breathless, renounced the pursuit of the enemy; only the count de Penthhièvre, with his troops, gave chase to the fugitives in the direction of St. Émilion. The English army was overwhelmed; thirty knights and four thousand soldiers perished; in the heat of the action they were killed without mercy. It is said that even in our day bones are found in the plain which was the scene of this sanguinary struggle. On the French side the loss was considerable; some of their leaders, Admiral de Bueil, Jacques de Chabannes, Pierre de Beauvau, were wounded, but not seriously. In spite of the reinforcements brought by the Gascon nobles, Castillon could not oppose a long resistance; the town capitulated July 20th. From there the army marched immediately against St. Émilion and Libourne, which opened their gates.<sup>n</sup>

Cadillac and Blanquefort followed suit. The royal army closed in around Bordeaux. The free archers overran the country; the ships loaned by La Rochelle and Brittany blocked the mouth of the Gironde. Bordeaux, threatened with famine, sent deputies to Charles VII. In their presence Jean Bureau made it a point to say to the king: "Sire, I have been reconnoitring for proper positions for our batteries; if such is your pleasure, I promise you on my life that in a few days I shall have demolished the town." The envoys understood that this time they must accept what conditions the king would make. He stripped Bordeaux of her privileges, exacted a contribution of 100,000 crowns and ordered the banishment of twenty guilty citizens with the confiscation of their wealth; finally the construction of two citadels to guarantee the fidelity of the town in the future. The sire de l'Esparre, who had called in the English, promising a rising of all the nobility of the province, lost his head. On the 19th of October, 1453, Charles VII entered Bordeaux in triumph—the Hundred Years' War was over. The English held nothing in France except Calais and two small neighbouring towns.<sup>c</sup>

Thus after a century's struggle was decided the impossibility of English monarchs holding France, under whatever pretensions or rights. The French had outgrown those times when the sovereignty over them could be transmitted to foreigners, or divided with them by the mere laws of feudal heritage or proprietary descent. All that the ablest kings and bravest

warriors of England could do was to hold their ground upon the continent. Any lack of talent, suspension of vigilance, or remissness of energy on their part restored military superiority to the French upon their own soil, and insured with this their independence.

It was fortunate for both countries that such a decision had taken place, and that it should be final. The circumstances as well as the result of the war now rendered it so. The re-conquest of all the French provinces by Charles was not, like that of Philip Augustus or Philip the Fair, the work of trickery or deceit. It had been achieved in fair and stand-up fight, and, what was more remarkable, with forces on either side almost balanced in number. The French were not more numerous than the English at Formigny; and Talbot, when he fell at Castillon, led a greater army than that which defeated him. It was the French free archers, too, and peasant soldiers, who fought more than the knights on that field. Experience had taught the mistake of attempting to ride down the hardy sons of the soil by mounted gentry. English and French met on these last fields equal in courage and in strength. But as the French soldiers were now more carefully selected, disciplined, and organised, they were victorious over those of England, distracted as it was by civil war, sending forth armies as distracted as its government.<sup>7</sup>

#### THE LAST YEARS OF CHARLES VII

About this time the services of the wise counsellor we have already mentioned—the great merchant and shipper, Jacques Cœur—were lost to the state. After the conviction of Jean de Xaincoings, receiver-general of the realm, for embezzlement in 1451, Jacques Cœur was accused of malversation in his office of treasurer of the crown. He was said to have heaped up incredible riches; and on some occasions he made a display of his wealth which in a great measure compensated for the evil proceedings, if such they were, by which he gained it. He furnished funds for fleets and armies out of his private stores, when they could not otherwise be had; and continued his sage advices to the king, inculcating economy and repose. Charles was still indolent and self-indulgent when no great national effort was to be made. He allowed the prosecution of his faithful servitor, accepted the sentence of death which was passed upon him, and only started up to the kindness and generosity of his character when he remembered his services, and granted him his life (1453). The rest of the treasurer's story is very strange. Jacques Cœur escaped from prison and found refuge at Rome, was appointed admiral of the Italian fleets against the Saracens, trafficked in goods and money while sweeping the infidels from the sea, and died in the island of Chios, 1456, richer and more honoured than he had ever been in Paris. The king must have seen, when it was too late, that he had banished a financier whose advice on public affairs was cheaply paid for by the acquisition of private riches.<sup>8</sup>

#### *Quarrels with Burgundy and with the Dauphin*

The expulsion of the English from the continent, where they no longer held any town save Calais, left the king of France in the presence of his powerful rival, the duke of Burgundy, who reigned over dominions no less vast, and after a manner quite as independent.

After the English had been driven from Normandy, Philip of Burgundy began to feel the hostility of Charles and of his court. Whenever his subjects,



[1451-1453 A.D.]

especially of towns, had cause of complaint against him, they appealed to the king of France and his parliament as suzerain. Ghent would not submit to the *gabelle* (or salt tax) imposed by Philip, and the people appealed to the king of France, who pretended that the *gabelle* peculiarly belonged to the suzerain, and a French embassy soon arrived to arbitrate between the duke and the Ghenters. The duke altogether set aside the demand of *gabelle*, but insisted merely on the fact of the chiefs of trades and the demagogues having usurped the entire power in Ghent, even the administration and the election of magistrates. The French envoys took completely the duke's view of the difference, and gave an award, obliging the people of Ghent to admit the ducal bailiffs to a share of authority, to pay a large fine, give up the rallying emblem of the white *chaperon*, and desist from holding the meetings of the united trades.

In the following year, 1452, the French court returned to the charge and sent fresh ambassadors, not approving of the facility with which their predecessors had abandoned and condemned the democracy of Ghent. But at that time occurred the descent of Talbot on the Garonne, and the attention and efforts of Charles were necessarily turned in that direction. Duke Philip saw his opportunity. He must crush the rebellious towns ere Charles succeeded in expelling the English from Guienne. He raised a large army, brought it to Ghent, and captured several small places round it, cruelly hanging every prisoner. Treachery is reported to have been employed to induce the citizens to come forth to battle on the open plain. But 40,000 armed inhabitants of the Flemish capital, so often victorious in the field, scarcely needed any incentives to march to the relief of their towns and garrisons. Duke Philip was engaged in the siege of Gavre, from which the commander escaped to Ghent, craving succour, if the fortress was to be saved. The citizens accordingly mustered to the number of 30,000 and marched to attack the Burgundians. The encounter took place on the 23rd of July, 1453; it began by the cannon on both sides. The Ghenters were most of them slain, 20,000 being left on the field; and the duke, on beholding the heaps of slaughtered men, felt, for the first time, that these were his subjects, the sources of his wealth and the sinews of his strength.

In the same year Muhammed II carried Constantinople by assault, and extinguished the Greek empire in the East. The catastrophe, alarming to Italy and Germany, might well have aroused the king of France. Charles VII was not the hero of a crusade; the sphere of his activity and ambition did not extend so far. Yet, when the duke of Burgundy, in a solemn festivity at Lille, made a public vow to lead his armies against the Turks, when all his noblesse became associated in the same vow, and when the pope and emperor joined in the enterprise, Charles was mortified; nor was his jealousy diminished when Philip, after this vow, set forth in person to visit the Swiss and the Germans, in order to negotiate alliances and aid in his great design.

However wisely the councillors of King Charles had conducted his military operations, and his negotiations with England and with Burgundy, the spirit of their domestic administration was narrow in the extreme. The princes of the blood, however cautious and apparently submissive, looked with jealousy and anger upon those upstarts of the king's court who so completely eclipsed and set them aside.

The king and his council, therefore, looked upon the duke of Burgundy's proposed crusade as merely a scheme for enhancing his importance, and placing himself at the head of the princes of Europe and of a formidable army,

and they resolved to attack and crush those of his subjects whom he supposed to be associates and fellow-conspirators with Duke Philip. The principal of these was his son Louis, who lived independently, but not tranquilly, in Dauphiné, now warring, now intriguing with the duke of Savoy, and omitting no opportunity of gaining followers and procuring money.

The first of the dauphin's friends whom the court attacked was the count d'Armagnac, who afforded every pretext for Charles' interference. He was living in incest, excommunicated by the pope, and guilty of many crimes. Unable to resist Charles' lieutenants, Armagnac was soon reduced, his seventeen castles were taken, and he was driven across the Pyrenees. The court then resolved to make an example of the duke of Alençon. The prince was noted for his gallantry and independent spirit, which had won the admiration of Joan of Arc. He had been foremost as a partisan against the English, yet was an object of suspicion to Charles. Dunois was sent to arrest and bring him to the king's presence, who accused him of conspiring to receive the English into his fortresses. According to some he made an indignant answer to the king; according to others he confessed his treason, and gave information of the designs of his confederates.

By what was elicited from the duke of Alençon, the king's suspicion and anger were increased against his son Louis, whom he resolved to leave no longer in possession of the revenues and government of Dauphiné, at least unless he submitted. In April, 1456, the king signified his intention of resuming the government of that province. The dauphin would not put himself in the power of the council, the members of which he believed capable of any crime. Nor would Charles receive his son into favour, except upon his complete submission. The march of an army, led by his declared enemy, Dammartin, alarmed Louis. He at first thought of resistance, but none of the nobles of Dauphiné or of his court would support him in resistance to his father. With a few followers Louis abruptly quitted Dauphiné, as Dammartin advanced into it, and hastened to St. Claude, in Franche-Comté. From thence he informed the king that he was determined to take part in his uncle the duke of Burgundy's crusade against the Turks. He at the same time informed that potentate of his arrival. An answer of welcome speedily came, and Louis proceeded to Brussels. Here the duke embraced him so cordially and so long, as scarcely, so Chastelain<sup>k</sup> relates, to let his feet touch the earth. The dauphin was all in all for a few days; but a quarrel arising between the duke and his son, the latter was brought by his mother to Louis, who undertook to intercede for him, and remonstrate with his sire. This at once interrupted friendship and harmony. The duke saw in the dauphin one who might take his son's part against him. Louis thus found it necessary to retire to the château of Gennape, near Brussels, where he lived on a monthly pension of 2,500 livres allowed him by the duke (1456-1457).

### *Death of Charles VII; the Influence of His Reign*

This was the very result which Charles most dreaded, and which he most carefully should have avoided. But his council feared the reconciliation between father and son: and some of them meditated setting Louis aside altogether, and prolonging their own power by proclaiming his brother Charles, then but a boy. The king would not entertain a project necessarily so fatal to his family and his kingdom. As to Charles, his inward distrust became at last a malady, and almost an insanity. Yet his suspicions were not without grounds; for as his health and strength visibly declined, especially after the

[1457-1461 A.D.]

breaking of a boil in the mouth, the members of his court — even those who had been the bitterest enemies of the dauphin — addressed letters to that prince containing information as to the state of things, and assurances of their own attachment. Even the king's new mistress, the *dame de Villequier*,<sup>1</sup> was amongst those who hastened to seek security in the worship of the rising sun.

The desertion of his own ministers did not escape Charles, who reasoned that those who were so eager to abandon him in his decline might, without scruple, hasten his death. The dauphin is said to have caused some of the letters addressed to him to be placed within reach and view of the king. Charles' terror was equal to his disgust. A captain told him that his physicians had been suborned to administer poison; one was instantly sent to prison, whilst the others fled. In his alarm, Charles refrained from taking sustenance altogether; and when the cause of his consequently weak state was discovered, and it was sought to administer food, his stomach refused to retain it. Thus did one of the most successful and triumphant among monarchs expire of mistrust — of hunger and inanition. Death levels all distinctions: Charles, the restorer of the French monarchy, died the death of a beggar (July 22nd, 1461).

The character of Charles VII is perplexing to the historian; it affords subject of surprise that such great aims, which must have been wisely conceived and steadily pursued, should have been attained by a personage in many respects so weak. We are thus obliged to separate the private habits of the prince from the public life of the monarch. In the one Charles was indolent, self-indulgent, inconstant, and immoral; in the other, active, adventurous, persevering, and patriotic. He first introduced the important novelty of a royal council. Such, indeed, had existed under his predecessor, but it was an assemblage of magnates, not of ministers, the orators and inferior members being the followers or exponents of their chiefs' opinions. Charles VII did nothing without consulting his council. This, perhaps, is the most remarkable characteristic of his rule. And it stands in strong contrast with the habits of his son and successor, who ruled altogether from his own judgment, and who with far greater talents and capacity committed the greatest blunders, and fell far short in all his aims, which his sire contrived to avoid or to accomplish, by merely mistrusting his own omniscience and not disdaining the counsels of others.

The upper classes, their ideas, their spirit, and privileges, were no doubt undergoing in this century a great and remarkable change. This was the gradual metamorphosis from the feudal baron and knight into the courtly *seigneur* and the modern gentleman. As their numbers greatly increased it became impossible for all to preserve the superiority in power and wealth which the ancient holders of fiefs had possessed. The younger brothers of the gentry were obliged to seek for public service and live upon pensions or pay, in military or other capacity. But they carefully preserved themselves from losing caste, by insisting that they alone should fill these numerous offices. Thus the originally restricted class of the nobility in France was spread into the wider caste of the *gentilhomme*, the power and pretensions of the whole being undiminished.<sup>9</sup>

Most important of all, however, was the steady growth in power of the crown. We have seen that Charles VII practically dispensed with the aid of

[<sup>1</sup> Agnes Sorel had died of dysentery on the 9th of February, 1450. The *dame de Beauté*, as she was called, had her enemies, the dauphin among them, and rumours that she had been poisoned were not long in spreading through the court. These were made use of later in many infamous machinations, even against Jacques Cœur.]



the states-general after 1439, and that in so doing he virtually established a standing army and a permanent tax.<sup>a</sup> In reality the taxes were already permanent, or nearly so, but they had been considered as extra revenue; now they became usual. Charles VII in suppressing the vote of the assembly followed the example of Charles V under identical circumstances, and thus rid himself of an obligation which was often only a useless formality, and often a hindrance and restraint.<sup>e</sup>

A more fatal consequence of this usurpation on the part of the crown was that the nobility and clergy, remaining exempt from the tax on land which was only levied on the property of the *roturiers*, ended by taking no interest in the question. They abandoned the great principles supported at the estates of 1355 and 1356, to wit, that no tax could be levied save with the assent of the estates, and that the three orders should be subjected to the same taxes. Liberty established itself in England because the prelates, nobles, and towns remained closely united in their resistance to the encroachments of royalty, all accepting the same burdens and vindicating the same guarantees. In France the nobility and clergy deserted the common cause, handed over the third estate to the arbitrary authority of the crown, and sold the public liberties for a pecuniary advantage. From that moment it was an admitted formula that the clergy paid with their prayers, the nobility with their swords, the people with their money. The third estate, betrayed by the privileged orders, approached the king, applauded all the attacks made by the crown on the rights of the nobles and clergy, and energetically aided it to consummate the ruin of their power, until the moment that it found itself alone, face to face with the crown, and overthrew it. The defection of the clergy and the nobility was the first cause of the establishment of absolute power and of the Revolution which was accomplished 350 years later.<sup>p</sup>

But little enough did Charles VII or his contemporaries concern themselves with such remote consequences of their deeds as are here ominously suggested; and, not to be ourselves blinded to the true historical relations of the times we are treating, let us seek again the atmosphere of the fifteenth century, and in leaving Charles VII take a parting glance at him through the eyes of a contemporary writer, whose quaint phrasing and peculiar smack of piety will remind us that our stage setting is still of the Middle Ages. That the phrases of the courtier are somewhat more flattering than strict justice demands need neither surprise nor concern us. "Charles VII," says Henry Baude,<sup>o</sup> "was loved as much by his subjects as by foreign nations, who came often to him for advice in settling their disputes, and this because of the great justice that he observed. He was feared by the good and by the wicked: by the good, who were afraid to do evil lest it should come to his knowledge; by the wicked who were afraid of his justice." He was obeyed by his vassals and subjects, and well served by old, wise, and well-tutored servants, who knew his disposition to be such that he wished each to have his own. He died in old age [in reality he was but fifty-nine]; and after his death was in great solemnity, weeping, and lamentation honourably buried, and with great regret by men of all estates, in the church of St. Denis in France, with his ancestors. May God in his holy grace receive his soul into Paradise. Amen."



## CHAPTER X

### THE REIGN OF LOUIS XI: THE TRIUMPH OF THE CROWN

[1461-1483 A.D.]

Louis XI, that king more adroit than the most adroit courtier; that old fox furnished with lion's claws; powerful and shrewd, served secretly as in the light, constantly sheltered by his guards as by a shield, and accompanied by his executioners as with a sword. — VICTOR HUGO.

DURING fifteen years, the dauphin, afterwards Louis XI, had maintained a struggle against his father, which had commenced on account of Agnes Sorel and had been continued by mutual distrust. Throughout this struggle the dauphin had shown a most indomitable pride and the utmost tenacity, and in all this delicate and false situation he affected to act as the prince and as the prince who would one day be king. If he rebelled against the king it was against the king only, and not against the crown. Such at least is the attitude revealed by the tone of his letters.

As soon as he succeeded to the throne, he hastened to leave his little court of Gennape and return to France. He asked the duke of Burgundy to lend him an escort of four thousand soldiers in case he should meet with opposition from his father's councillors who might wish to impose their own conditions on him. However, on arriving at Avesnes, the nobility thronged around him to swear allegiance, and, finding his escort unnecessary, he sent it back to the duke. He repaired at once to Rheims to be crowned and at that place the throng became greater. This adulation, which always follows when a new prince succeeds one but little loved, made Louis believe that he would be popular. Perhaps his absence, his exile, which had been interpreted as a protest or a disgrace, had contributed to this apparent popularity. It was, at least, very ephemeral.

Louis XI was thirty-eight years old when he ascended the throne, with his experience of governing and his virtues and vices equally matured by his exile. Like his father, he loved power and did not wish to share it. A contemporary, Chastelain,<sup>b</sup> called him "the universal spider," because he

never ceased weaving a web of which he was the centre, and the threads of which extended everywhere. Not only did he wish to decide everything himself, but he was loath to accept any advice, and the least opposition would make him obstinate. Like his father, also, he was observant, discreet, suspicious, esteeming men but little, rewarding them richly when he had need of their services and forgetting them the day after. He had in this respect the three faults that Chastelain<sup>b</sup> attributes to Charles VII—fickleness, diffidence, and envy. On the other hand he had a wonderful discernment in seeing the use that each person could be to him. Those who served him must serve him absolutely. Independence to him seemed conspiracy. Comines<sup>c</sup> says that he did not like to have serve him “the great ones who could surpass him.” He preferred to choose for his agents men of humble birth whom he took from the lowest of his household, knowing them to be more easy to control and capable of a more blind devotion. Reared in the school of Charles VII, he resembled him very much, in spite of the aversion he had shown toward him. He continued his reign and his policy. He employed the same means to maintain, or to extend the results already attained. If he had any advantage over him, it was the knowledge, which he had acquired by personal experience, of the opposition he would be obliged to combat.

At the same time, to these hereditary traits he joined others. He was distinguished by a feverish activity, a perpetual restlessness, an irresistible taste for intriguing. He would complicate affairs on all sides, then meet the difficulties and make light of them. Chastelain<sup>b</sup> describes him as “scheming new thoughts day and night.” His government was very secret. He sought the shadowy ways, which makes it difficult for one to follow the thread of his diplomacy, the details of which necessarily escape us. He was educated, like most of the princes of his day. He was possessed of great keenness and vivacity—almost too much, as he very often allowed himself to be carried away by it. He had been surrounded, at Gennape, by a small court, vivacious and refined. He had a certain loftiness in his views, notwithstanding all that the historians have said of his littleness and his superstition. In his relations with the pope he showed a sense of nobility and justice. But these sentiments and qualities, which keep him from being regarded altogether as a bad man, had but little influence on his political conduct. His passion to rule, and to carry on secret intrigues, was so strong that it destroyed all scruples, if he had any. He knew no rule save his own will, no goal but success. He had no respect for established things, but followed the necessity of the moment. He sought to attach men to himself only by corruption, believing that the more corrupt they were the more useful they would prove; he was prodigal with money to gain tools in France and traitors in the neighbouring states. In fact the celebrated portrait of *The Prince*, for which he served as one of the models employed by Macchiavelli,<sup>d</sup> gives a just idea of the personal government, arbitrary and mysterious, which existed in the sixteenth century and which most fortunately is no longer possible, at least under the same conditions.

He has received much praise for his ability. He hastened the progress of the unity, and the ruin of the great feudal houses. The crown acquired important provinces during his reign and he greatly augmented the power of France. These results are incontestable, but at the same time we must remember it was not he alone who brought them about; that these results had been preparing for a long time; that the twenty years of Charles VII had done much; that Louis XI had, in the beginning, compromised by his impru-



[1461-1483 A.D.]

dence the conquests of the preceding reign and that his principal merit was to profit, in an incontestable manner, by favourable circumstances. If he has been regarded as a great statesman, it is because, meeting with reverses in the commencement of his reign, he in the end triumphed over his enemies who were less calculating and less prudent than himself. For it is the final success that sways the judgment of posterity, and even the judgment of contemporaries, as is shown by Philip de Comines,<sup>e</sup> that observer so profound, that spirit so penetrating and so cold.<sup>e</sup>

## RELATIONS WITH THE CHURCH

After his coronation Louis looked around the land he was now about to "bring into order," and was alarmed at the condition of the national church. A national church it really deserved to be called; for, while confessing the superiority of Rome in antiquity and rank, it rested firmly on the decision of the Council of Bâle, and acknowledged a power superior to the holy see. It defended, also, freedom of election to vacant benefices, and refused the annates, or first year's income of bishoprics and incumbencies, to the exchequer of the pope. Louis saw that the first advance against the citadel of civil liberty was a return to the obedience of Rome. He gave up at once all the franchises and exemptions wrung with such difficulty by the church of France. He placed it again, bound hand and foot, under the heel of the successors of St. Peter, and even gave advantages to the ecclesiastical ruler which he had never held before. In return for this, the faithful son of the church was sure of the pontiff's support. Though he oppressed his subjects, deceived his friends, and murdered his enemies by treachery, he had shown a most religious regard for the interest of the papacy, and was honoured with the title, which his successors have retained, of "the most Christian king." The least Christian monarch of his time, being elevated by popish gratitude to this lofty position, it was only left for the adulation of the courtiers to bestow upon him the title of "majesty," which great word had not yet been applied to the person of the sovereigns of Europe; but Louis XI set the example of claiming the highest sounding and least deserved epithets, and cheated and grovelled through a long reign of trickery and meanness as his Majesty the Most Christian King. When the church was again governed by a foreign master, whom it was easy for the king to win over to his side, the next important step in the progress of his design was to render the people powerless. For this purpose he did away with the free-archers of the previous reign. No village was allowed its butts and shooting-grounds. The parish was relieved of the expense of finding an "archer good" for the interior defence of the country, and the spirit of emulation in warlike sports was discouraged. But the land was not to be left unprotected. So in addition to his Scottish allies, he took into his pay large bodies of Swiss mercenaries, whose valour had struck him with such admiration at the battle of Sankt Jakob near Bâle.

He now more than doubled the taxes; and as, although saving and grasping from personal disposition, he was liberal and even generous from policy, he derived great support from the absence of a home-force of his own subjects, and the devoted adhesion of penniless mountaineers from the two poorest and most courageous populations in Christendom. We will only insert a word of surprise here with regard to the Swiss, that a people who are honoured throughout the world for the defence of their liberties at home, should be the scorn and shame of all generous minds by furnishing their strength and valour for the maintenance of the worst tyrannies abroad.

## THE WAR OF THE PUBLIC WEAL

The nobility saw the object of the king, and took arms to prevent the extinction of their order, and the diminution of their individual power. A cry is never wanting when people are determined to quarrel, and as the feudal chiefs could not, with any decency, state openly the reasons of their opposition, they placed it upon the two grounds of the sacrifice of French ecclesiastical liberty by the abrogation of the Pragmatic Sanction, and the intolerable weight of taxation which the new king had imposed. This, therefore, was called "the war of the public weal." Princes and feudatories, and all who had a lingering regard for the grand old days of license and free quarters, took up the patriotic cause. Charles of France, the king's brother, was the nominal chief, but the real head of this league was Charles the Bold [properly Le Téméraire or the Rash], at this time called count of Charolais, eldest son of the good Philip, duke of Burgundy. In the list besides him were read the names of Saint-Pol, Brittany, Lorraine, Alençon, Bourbon, Armagnac, and Dunois. In short, the two parties were perfectly aware of each other's intentions, and met face to face. If the league succeeded, Louis' life would have been short, and a regency was openly promised. If Louis was successful, farewell to the great nobility, its independent power and hereditary magnificence; it must sink into an ornament of the court, or be exterminated altogether. It was the life of one or the other which lay upon the scales; and though the swords were sharpest, and the cause apparently the freest on the side of the great vassals, the cunning, the policy, the perseverance were all on the side of the king. Suddenly the oppressors of the towns, and the harsh masters of country populations, affected a deep interest in the common weal. With haughty condescension they assumed the championship of the overburdened commons, and kept them at the same time from coming "between the wind and their nobility," as if contact with them would have stained their coats of arms. But Louis, dressed in very undignified apparel, looking like a small shopkeeper, and affecting no airs of grandeur or superiority, entered into familiar talk with any well-to-do citizen he encountered, joked with him about his family, poked him under the ribs to give emphasis to his innuendoes, and strolled off to have a merry conversation with somebody else. Nobody could believe that so free-spoken a gentleman cared less for the common people than the prince of Charolais, who would have put a townsman to death if he stood in his way; and in a short time the people liked better to pay their taxes to a man who put them at their ease, than to owe their deliverance to a set of champions who despised them in their hearts and insulted them in their manners.

*The Battle of Monthléry and the Treaty of Conflans*

Louis saw his advantage, and tried to gain his object by a battle with the confederates at Monthléry, where neither party was decidedly victorious.<sup>f</sup>

An account of this battle is given by Monstrelet.<sup>g</sup> His description, however, is criticised by his continuator,<sup>h</sup> who professes to draw on other authorities and whose brief account may be quoted. The later chronicler says: "At this battle which was fought on Tuesday the 6th day of July, in the year 1465, the king of France, coming with all haste from beyond Orleans to Paris, halted at early morn at Châtres, under Monthléry, and that having taken scarcely any refreshment, and without waiting for his escort, which was, for its number, the handsomest body of cavalry ever raised

[1465 A.D.]

in France, he so valiantly attacked the army of the count de Charolais and his Burgundians that he put to the rout the van division. Many of them were slain, and numbers taken prisoners. News of this was speedily carried to Paris, whence issued forth upward of thirty thousand persons, part of whom were well mounted. They fell in with parties of Burgundians who were flying, and made them prisoners; they defeated also those from the villages of Vanvres, Issi, Sevres, St. Cloud, Arcueil, Suresnes, and others.

"At this encounter, great booty was gained from the Burgundians, so that their loss was estimated at two hundred thousand crowns of gold. After the van had been thus thrown into confusion, the king, not satisfied with this success, but desirous to put an end to the war, without taking any refreshments or repose, attacked the main body of the enemy with his guards and about four hundred lances: but the Burgundians had then rallied, and advanced their artillery, under the command of the count de Saint-Pol, who did on that day the greatest service to the count de Charolais. The king was hard pressed in his turn, insomuch that at times he was in the utmost personal danger, for he had but few with him, was without artillery, and was always foremost in the heat of the battle; and considering how few his numbers were, he maintained the fight valiantly and with great prowess. It was the common report of the time, that if he had had five hundred more archers on foot, he would have reduced the Burgundians to such a state, that nothing more would have been heard of them in war for some time.

"The count de Charolais, on this day, lost his whole guard,—and the king also lost the greater part of his. The count was twice made prisoner by the noble Geoffroy de Saint Belin and Gilbert de Grassy, but was rescued each time. Towards evening the Scots carried off the king, that he might take some refreshments; for he was tired and exhausted, having fought the whole of the day without eating or drinking, and led him away quietly and without noise, to the castle of Montlhéry. Several of the king's army not having seen him thus led off the field, and missing him, thought he was either slain or taken, and took to flight. For this reason, the count du Maine, the lord admiral De Montaulban, the lord de la Barde, and other captains, with seven or eight hundred lances, abandoned the king in this state, and fled, without having struck a blow during the whole of the day. Hence it is notorious, that if all the royal army who were present at this battle had behaved as courageously as their king, they would have gained a lasting victory over the Burgundians; for the greater part of them were defeated, and put to flight. Many indeed were killed on the king's side, as well as on that of the enemy; for after the battle was ended, there were found dead on the field three thousand six hundred, whose souls may God receive!

"The king of France came to Paris, the 18th day of July, after the battle of Montlhéry, and supped that night at the hôtel of his lieutenant-general, Sir Charles de Melun,—where, according to the account of Robert Gaguin, a large company of great lords, damsels, and citizens' wives supped with him, to whom he related all that had happened at Montlhéry. During the recital, he made use of such doleful expressions that the whole company wept and groaned at his melancholy account. He concluded by saying, that if it pleased God, he would soon return to attack his enemies, and either die or obtain vengeance on them, in the preservation of his rights. He, however, acted differently, having been better advised; but it must be observed, that some of his warriors behaved in a most cowardly manner,—for had they all fought with as much courage as the king, he would have gained a complete victory over his enemies." *p*



Continuing, the chronicler gives an extended account of the events of the ensuing months, during which the allies approached Paris and besieged the city. "The king," he says, "finding that he had many enemies within his realm, considered on the means of procuring additional men-at-arms to those he had, — and it was calculated how many he could raise within Paris; for this purpose, it was ordered that an enrolment should be made of all capable of bearing arms, so that every tenth man might be selected to serve the king. This, however, did not take place, — for such numbers of men-at-arms now joined the king that there was no need of such a measure. The king was very much distressed to get money for the pay of these troops, and great sums were wanted; for those towns which had been assigned for the payment of a certain number of men-at-arms, being now in the possession of the rebellious princes, paid no taxes whatever to the crown, for they would not permit any to be collected in those districts.

"On the 3rd of August, the king, having a singular desire to afford some comfort to the inhabitants of his good town of Paris, lowered the duties on all wines sold by retail within that town, from a fourth to an eighth; and ordained that all privileged persons should fully and freely exercise their privileges as they had done during the reign of his late father, the good Charles VII, whose soul may God pardon! He also ordered that every tax paid in the town, but those on provision, included in the six-revenue farms, which had been disposed of in the gross, should be abolished, namely, the duties on wood-yards, on the sales of cattle, on cloth sold by wholesale, on sea-fish and others; which was proclaimed that same day they were taken off, by sound of trumpets, in all the squares of the town, in the presence of Sir Denis Hesselin, the receiver of the taxes within the said town. On this being made public, the populace shouted for joy, sang carols in the streets, and at night made large bonfires." Such deeds as this illustrate the diplomacy of a king who, whatever else he may have been, was assuredly a consummate politician. Meantime, as practical aids to defence, fires were lighted and a strict watch kept in Paris, and chains were fastened across the principal streets.

The guard kept about Paris was evidently not very strict, for the king was able to go and come at will. There were occasional sallies, but these amounted to nothing more than skirmishes. On the second of September, after several parleys, commissioners were at length named by the king and the confederates to settle their differences. There were numerous meetings which came to no very definite issue, but meantime the statecraft of the king was preparing the way for the final issues.<sup>a</sup>

A truce was proclaimed in the two camps on October 1st; from that day until the 30th, when the articles of peace were registered by the parliament and published, the king continued to show an almost boundless friendship and confidence in his attitude toward the princes and especially toward the count of Charolais. He furnished their camp with supplies, he received their soldiers at Paris, he was present without guards at their military reviews, abandoning himself to their care; finally he acceded to their demands, conditions which seemed to make him wholly dependent upon them.<sup>1</sup> Thirty-six commissioners were appointed by him to reform all the abuses in the kingdom, of which the princes had complained; the past was to be forgotten; no one could blame anyone else for what he had done during the

[<sup>1</sup> In reality, Louis only sanctioned what was already lost. He acceded to conditions as they were, awaiting his time to overthrow them. The peace was a part of his political game. Needless to say he had no scruples as to the carrying out of any terms of the treaty that could advantageously be avoided.]

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war, and all the confiscations proclaimed by the tribunals were revoked. In exchange for Berri the king gave his brother the duchy of Normandy, with the homage of the duchies of Brittany and Alençon, as a hereditary title in the male line. To the count of Charolais he restored the cities on the Somme which he had so recently bought back, reserving for himself only the right to buy them back again, not from him but from his heirs, for the sum of 200,000 gold crowns. He gave over to him, moreover, as a perpetual possession, Boulogne, Guines, Roye, Péronne, and Montdidier. To the duke of Calabria, regent of Lorraine, Mouzon, Ste. Menchould, Neufchâteau, he gave 100,000 crowns in cash and the pay of five hundred lances for a month.

To the duke of Brittany he granted the royal prerogative, which had been a subject of dispute between them, also a part of the aids; he ceded to him Etampes and Montfort and gave presents to his mistress, the same dame de Villequier who had formerly been mistress of Charles VII. To the duke de Bourbon he gave several seigniories in Auvergne, 100,000 crowns in cash, and the pay of three hundred lances; to the duke de Nemours, the government of Paris and of the Île-de-France, together with a pension and the pay of two hundred lances; to the count d'Armagnac, the castellanies of Rouergue, which he had lost, a pension, and the pay of a hundred lances; to the count de Dunois, the restitution of his domain, a pension, and a company of gendarmes; to the sire d'Albret, various seigniories on his frontier. He gave back to the sire de Lohéac the office of marshal with two hundred lances; he made Tannegui du Châtel master of the horse; De Beuil was made admiral; the count of Saint-Pol constable. Finally he pardoned Antoine de Chabannes, count of Dammartin, gave back all his estates, and granted him a company of a hundred lances. Such were the principal clauses of the Treaty of Conflans, which was the most humiliating that rebel subjects ever extorted from a crown, and also the most degrading for the character of the allied princes, because they concluded a war which they had undertaken under the pretext of the public good, by sharing the spoils of the people as well as those of the king.<sup>9</sup>

## POLITICAL INTRIGUES

Louis now commenced one of the games which must have given him as much enjoyment as if he had been playing a game of chess. How to move a castle to resist a knight, or a number of pawns to surround a bishop, how to keep Normandy in order by stirring up the enmity of Brittany, how to paralyse the motions of the young duke of Burgundy — for in 1467 Charolais succeeded his father<sup>1</sup> — by inciting insurrections among the men of Liège — these were the problems worked out in the solitude of his own thoughts;

[<sup>1</sup> Enguerrand de Monstrelet ends his famous chronicle with an account of the death of the duke of Burgundy. He says: "On the 12th day of June, in the year 1467, the noble duke Philip of Burgundy was seized with a grievous malady, which continued unabated until Monday, the 15th, when he rendered his soul to God, between nine and ten o'clock at night. When he perceived, on the preceding day, that he was growing worse, he sent for his son, the count de Charolais, then at Ghent, who hastened to him with all speed; and on his arrival, about mid-day of the Monday, at the duke's palace in Bruges, he went instantly to the chamber where the duke lay sick in bed, but found him speechless. He cast himself on his knees at the bedside, and, with many tears, begged his blessing, and that, if he had ever done anything to offend him, he would pardon him. The confessor, who stood at the bedside, admonished the duke, if he could not speak at least to show some sign of his good will. At this admonition, the good duke kindly opened his eyes, took his son's hand, and squeezed it tenderly, as a sign of his pardon and his blessing. The count, like an affectionate child, never quitted the duke's bed until he had given up the ghost. May God, out of his mercy, receive his soul, pardon his transgressions, and admit him into Paradise!"]

for he boasted that he formed all his plans without the aid of others. The marshal De Brézé said, accordingly, that the horse the king rode was a much stronger animal than it looked, for it carried the whole council on its back. The results of the deliberations of this unanimous assemblage were soon visible in the vengeance which fell on the heads of the late confederacy. Charles of France, when all the others were getting lofty offices and rewards, had been presented with the dukedom of Normandy. The people of Rouen, who had at first taken part against the crown, received the first prince of the blood with acclamations, as a champion of their cause; and the king determined to show them they had chosen the wrong side. He raised an army, and hurried down to Caen; bought and bullied the duke of Brittany, whom he found in that town, out of his friendship with Charles; and then fell upon the capital of the duchy, as if it had been in open rebellion. His right-hand man on this, as on similar occasions, was the famous Tristan l'Hermite, the executioner. Tristan's hands were soon full, for the king, with a vigorous impartiality which showed he was not a bigot to either side, cut off the heads of the aristocracy who had helped the princes, and threw hundreds of the commonalty, who had grumbled at his taxes, into the Seine.

The church, which he had bought over by the sacrifice of the Pragmatic Sanction, and still kept in awe by threatening to restore it—as he had engaged to do by the treaty with the leaguers—was next to be taught that, however much he prized its friendship as a politician, its loftiest officers were the mere creatures of his breath. The system he pursued of excluding the higher orders from civil employments had been introduced into ecclesiastical affairs. Wherever the sharp eye of Louis detected a fitting instrument for his purpose in the person of a penniless adventurer, or townsman of the lowest rank, he was very soon invested with the necessary authority, and perverted justice in the character of president of a court, or vilified religion in the office of a bishop. The son of a small tradesman of the name of La Balue had early shown such amazing want of principle, combined with quickness of talent and audacious self-reliance, that he gained the notice of the king, then his confidence, then his friendship. The pope made great efforts to win over this ornament of the faith, who was now bishop of Évreux, and promised him the cardinal's hat if he persuaded his master to enregister the suppression of the Pragmatic Sanction in the rolls of parliament; and in foolish reliance on the promises of La Balue, sent him the blushing sign of his dignity before the service was performed. La Balue relaxed in his endeavours, as his wages were already received, and gained additional favour with the king for ceasing to trouble him on the subject. The favour continued for a long time, but at last, when Louis, in reliance on his powers of persuasion, and the counsels of his friends, trusted himself again within the power of Charles of Burgundy, and hoped to win him over as he had done in the former interview which destroyed the league of the Public Weal, the advice given by the cardinal was found to lead to very dangerous results.

#### THE STRUGGLE WITH CHARLES THE BOLD

This visit of Louis to the redoubtable Charles was one of the most famous incidents of his reign. Louis went with meagre attendance to Péronne, and placed himself entirely within the power of Charles. He of course had a safe conduct, but considering the morals of the time, this by no means insured him a safe return. His anomalous act has been variously criticised. On its face it seems foolhardy; yet rightly considered it speaks for the keen intel-



[1468 A.D.]

ligence and practical political sagacity of the king quite as much as for his personal courage. The truth seems to be that Louis at this time felt that he could not trust his officers. Dammartin, his right-hand man, was, as we have seen, a soldier who had been in the employ of Louis' father, and therefore at that earlier period had been in antagonism with Louis himself. His exact attitude of mind could not be known to the king, and the loyalty of various other officers was more than questionable. And to win battles loyal soldiers are absolutely necessary. On the other hand, in the field of diplomacy the king, acting as his own emissary, could feel sure of his results, in proportion as he felt confidence in his own powers. And he had every reason to trust his own sagacity. He knew himself more than a match for Charles in matters of intrigue, and in thus putting his antagonist upon his honour, and appearing to trust him, he doubtless felt that he paved the way most advantageously for his future movements. The visit did not turn out triumphantly, as we shall see, but its ill success was perhaps largely due to an incident beyond the king's control. We may best gain an idea of the incidents of this famous visit through the narrative of the celebrated chronicler Comines, who at this time was in the employ of Burgundy and who afterwards became still more famous as the minister to Louis himself. Comines,<sup>c</sup> as Sismondi<sup>g</sup> says, "considered history as a lesson in politics, not as a catalogue of events; but here he confines himself chiefly to the narrative, letting the story point its own moral."<sup>a</sup>

*Comines describes the Visit to Péronne (1468 A.D.)*

It was agreed [says Comines] that the king should come to Péronne. Thither he came, without any guard, more than the passport and parole of the duke of Burgundy; only he desired that the duke's archers, under the command of the lord des Quedes (who was then in the duke's service), might meet and conduct him; and so it was done, very few of his own train coming along with him. However, his majesty was attended by several persons of great quality and distinction, and among the rest by the duke de Bourbon, the cardinal his brother, and the count of Saint-Pol, constable of France, who had no hand in this interview, but was highly displeased at it; for he was now grown haughty, and disdained to pay that respect to the duke which he had formerly done; for which cause there was no love between them. Besides these, there came the cardinal Balue, the governor of Roussillon, and several others. When the king came near, the duke went out (very well attended) to meet him, conducted him into the town, and lodged him at the receiver's, who had a fine house not far from the castle; for the lodgings in the castle were but small, and no way convenient.

War between two great princes is easily begun, but very hard to be composed, by reason of the accidents and consequences which often follow; for many secret practices are used, and orders given out on both sides to make the greatest efforts possible against the enemy, which cannot be easily countermanded as evidently appears by these two princes, whose interview was so suddenly determined that, neither having time to notify it to their ministers in remote parts, they went on performing the commands which their respective masters had given them before. The duke of Burgundy had sent for his army out of Burgundy, in which at that time there was abundance of the nobility; and among the rest the count of Bresse, the bishop of Geneva, and the count of Romont, all three brothers of the house of Savoy (for between the Savoyards and Burgundians there was always a firm amity), and some Germans, who were borderers upon both their territories. And you must

know that the king had formerly imprisoned the count of Bresse, upon the account of two gentlemen whom he had put to death in Savoy, so that there was no right understanding between him and the king.

In this army there were likewise one Monsieur du Lau (who had been a favourite of the king's, but upon some disgust had been kept afterwards a prisoner by him a long time, till at length he made his escape and fled into Burgundy), the lord d'Urfé, since master of the horse to the king of France, and the lord Poncet de Rivière; all which company arrived before Péronne as the king came into the town. Bresse and the last three entered the town with St. Andrew's cross upon their clothes (supposing they should have been in time enough to have paid their respects to the duke of Burgundy, and to have attended him when he went out to receive the king), but they came a little too late; however, they went directly to the duke's chamber to pay their duty, and in the name of the rest, the count of Bresse humbly besought his highness that himself and his three companies might have his protection (notwithstanding the king was in the town), according to the promise he was pleased to make them in Burgundy; and at the same time assured him they were at his service, when and against whomsoever he might command them. The duke returned them thanks, and promised them protection. The rest of this army, under the command of the marshal of Burgundy, encamped by the duke's orders in the fields. The marshal had no more affection for the king than the above-mentioned gentlemen had; for the king had given him the government of Épinal in Lorraine, and taken it from him afterwards to give it to John, duke of Calabria. The king had notice presently of all these persons being in the town, and of the habits in which they arrived, which put him into a great consternation; so that he sent to the duke of Burgundy to desire he might be lodged in the castle, for he knew those gentlemen were his mortal enemies; the duke was extremely glad to hear it, appointed him his own lodgings, and sent to him to bid him fear nothing.

But the king at his coming to Péronne had quite forgot his sending of two ambassadors to Liège to stir them up to a rebellion against the duke,<sup>1</sup> and they had managed the affair with such diligence that they had got together such a considerable number, that the Liégeois went privately to Tongres (where the bishop of Liège and the lord of Humbercourt were quartered with more than two thousand men) with a design to surprise them. The bishop, the lord of Humbercourt, and some of the bishop's servants were taken, but the rest fled and left whatever they had behind them, as despairing to defend themselves. After which action the Liégeois marched back again to Liège, which is not far from Tongres; and the lord of Humbercourt made an agreement for his ransom with one Monsieur William de Ville, called by the French *Le Sauvage*, a knight, who, suspecting the Liégeois would kill him in their fury, suffered the lord of Humbercourt to escape, but was slain himself not long after. The people were exceedingly overjoyed at the taking of their bishop. There were also taken with him that day several canons of the church, whom the people equally hated, and killed five or six of them for their first repast; among the rest there was one Monsieur Robert, an intimate friend of the bishop's, and a person I have often seen attending him armed at all points, for in Germany this is the custom of the prelates. They slew this Robert in the bishop's presence, cut him into small pieces, and in sport threw them

[<sup>1</sup> Legeay, in his *Histoire de Louis XI, son siècle, ses exploits, etc.*, defends Louis against the charge of having incited the Liégeois to revolt, in opposition to most of the other French historians.]

[1468 A.D.]

at one another's heads. Before they had marched seven or eight leagues, which was their full journey, they killed about sixteen canons and other persons, the majority of whom were the bishop's servants; but they released some of the Burgundians, for they had been privately informed that some overtures of peace had already been made, and they were forced to pretend that what they had done was only against their bishop, whom they brought prisoner along with them into their city. Those who fled (as I said before) gave the alarm to the whole country, and it was not long before the duke had the news of it.

It was said by some that all of them were put to the sword; others affirmed the contrary (for in things of that nature, one messenger seldom comes alone); but there were some who had seen the habits of the canons who were slain, and supposing the bishop and the lord of Humbercourt had been of the number, they positively averred that all that had not escaped were killed, and that they had seen the king's ambassadors among the Liègeois, and they mentioned their very names. All this being related to the duke, he gave credit to it immediately; and falling into a violent passion against the king, he charged him with a design of deluding him by coming thither; ordered the gates both of the town and castle to be suddenly shut up, and gave out, by way of pretence, that it was done for the discovery of a certain casket which was lost, and in which there were money and jewels to a very considerable value. When the king saw himself shut up in the castle, and guards posted at the gates, and especially when he found himself lodged near a certain tower, in which a count of Vermandois had caused his predecessor, one of the kings of France, to be put to death,<sup>1</sup> he was in great apprehension. I was at that time waiting upon the duke of Burgundy in the quality of chamberlain, and (when I pleased) I lay in his chamber, as was the custom of that family. When he saw the gates were shut, he ordered the room to be cleared, and told us who remained that the king was come thither to circumvent him; that he himself had never approved of the interview, but had complied purely to gratify the king; then he gave us a relation of the passages at Liège, how the king had behaved himself by his ambassadors, and that all his forces were killed. He was much incensed, and threatened his majesty exceedingly; and I am of opinion that if he had then had such persons about him as would have fomented his passion, and encouraged him to any violence upon the king's person, he would certainly have done it, or at least committed him to the tower. None was present at the speaking of these words but myself and two grooms of his chamber, one of whom was called Charles de Visen, born at Dijon, a man of honour, and highly esteemed by his master. We did not exasperate, but soothed his temper as much as possibly we could. Some time after he used the same expressions to other people; and the news being carried about the town, it came at last to the king's ear, who was in great consternation; and indeed so was everybody else, foreseeing a great deal of mischief, and reflecting on the variety of things which were to be managed for the reconciling of a difference between two such puissant princes, and the errors of which both of them were guilty in not giving timely notice to their ministers employed in their remote affairs, which must of necessity produce some extraordinary and surprising result.

The king thought himself (as I said before) a prisoner in the castle of Péronne, as he had good reason to do; for all the gates were shut and

[<sup>1</sup> King Charles the Simple. He died in prison at Péronne in 929.]



guarded by such as were deputed to that office, and continued so for two or three days; during which time the duke of Burgundy saw not the king, neither would he suffer but very few of his majesty's servants to be admitted into the castle, and those only by the wicket; yet none of them was forbidden, but of the duke's none was permitted to speak with the king, or come into his chamber, at least such as had any authority with their master. The first day there was great murmuring and consternation all over the town. The second, the duke's passion began to cool a little, and a council was called, which sate the greater part of that day and night too. The king made private applications to all such as he thought qualified to relieve him, making them large promises, and ordering 15,000 crowns to be distributed among them; but the agent who was employed in this affair acquitted himself very ill, and kept a good part of the money for his own use, as the king was informed afterwards. The king was very fearful of those who had been formerly in his service, who, as I said before, were in the Burgundian army, and had openly declared themselves for his brother, the duke of Normandy.

The duke of Burgundy's council were strangely divided in their opinions; the greatest part advised that the passport which the duke had given the king should be kept, provided his majesty consented to sign the peace as it was drawn up in writing. Some would have him prisoner as he was, without further ceremony. Others were for sending with all speed to the duke of Normandy, and forcing the king to make such a peace as should be for the advantage of all the princes of France. Those who proposed this advised that the king should be restrained, and a strong guard set upon him, because a great prince is never, without great caution, to be set at liberty after so notorious an affront. This opinion was so near prevailing, that I saw a person booted and ready to depart, having already several packets directed to the duke of Normandy in Brittany, and he waited only for the duke's letters; and yet this advice was not followed. At last the king caused overtures to be made, and offered the duke de Bourbon, the cardinal his brother, the constable of France, and several others, as hostages, upon condition that, after the peace was concluded, he might return to Compiègne, and that then he would either cause the Liégeois to make sufficient reparation for the injury they had done, or declare war against them. Those whom the king had proposed for his hostages proffered themselves very earnestly, at least in public; I know not whether they said as much in private; I expect they did not: and, if I may speak my thoughts, I believe that the king would have left them there, and that he would never have returned.

The third night after this had happened, the duke of Burgundy did not pull off his clothes, but only threw himself twice or thrice upon the bed, and then got up again and walked about, as his custom was when anything vexed him. I lay that night in his chamber, and walked several turns with him. The next morning he was in a greater passion than ever, threatening exceedingly, and ready to put some great thing in execution; but, at last, he recollected himself, and it came to this result: that if the king would swear to the peace, and accompany him to Liège, and assist him to revenge the injuries which they had done him and the bishop of Liège, his kinsman, he would be contented. Having resolved on this, he went immediately to the king's chamber, to acquaint him with his resolutions himself. The king had some friend or other who had given him notice of it before, and who had assured him that his person would be in no manner of danger, provided he would consent to those points; but that, if he refused, he would run himself into so great danger that nothing in the world could be greater.

[1468 A.D.]

When the duke came into his presence, his voice trembled by the violence of his passion, so inclinable was he to be angry again.<sup>1</sup> However, he made a low reverence with his body, but his gesture and words were sharp, demanding of the king if he would sign the peace as it was agreed and written, and swear to it when he had done. The king replied he would; and, indeed, there was nothing added to what had been granted in the treaty at Paris, which was to the advantage of the dukes of Burgundy or Normandy, but very much to his own; for it was agreed that the lord Charles of France should renounce the duchy of Normandy, and have Champagne and Brie, and some other places adjacent, as an equivalent. Then the duke asked him if he would go along with him to Liège, to revenge the treachery they had practised by his instigation, and by means of that interview. Then he put him in mind of the nearness of blood between the king and the bishop of Liège, who was of the house of Bourbon. The king answered that, when the peace was sworn, which he desired exceedingly, he would go with him to Liège, and carry with him as many or as few forces as he pleased. The duke was extremely pleased at his answer, and the articles being immediately produced and read, and the true cross which St. Charlemagne was wont to use, called "the cross of victory," taken out of the king's casket, the peace was sworn, to the great joy and satisfaction of all people; and all the bells in the town were rung. The duke of Burgundy immediately despatched a courier with the news of this conclusion of peace into Brittany, and with it he sent a duplicate of the articles, that they might see he had not deserted them, nor disengaged himself from their alliance; and, indeed, Duke Charles, the king's brother, had a good bargain, in respect of what he had made for himself in the late treaty in Brittany, by which there was nothing left him but a bare pension, as you have heard before. Afterwards the king did me the honour to tell me that I had done him some service in that pacification.

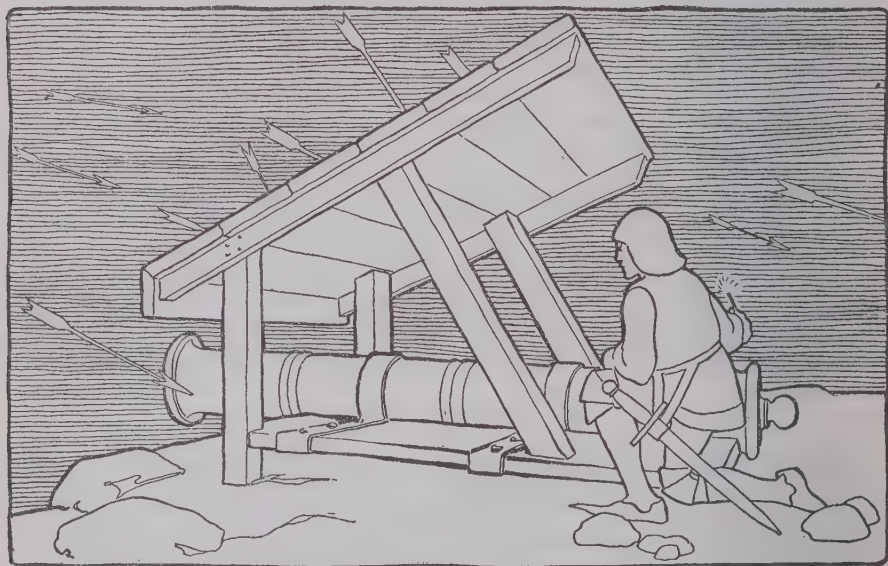
### *The Storming of Liège*

The next day the two princes left together, Charles with his army, Louis with his modest following, increased by three hundred soldiers whom he had sent for from France. They arrived before Liège the 27th of October. Since Duke Charles' last victories the city had neither ramparts nor moats; nothing seemed easier than to enter; but the besieged could not believe that King Louis was a sincere ally of the duke of Burgundy. They made a sortie, crying: "Long live the king! Long live France!" Their surprise was great when they saw Louis advance in person, the cross of St. André of Burgundy on his hat, and heard him exclaim: "Long live Burgundy!" Among the French themselves who were about the king, some were shocked; they could not be resigned to so little pride and to so much effrontery in the deceit. Louis himself paid no attention to their humour and kept repeating: "When pride prances in front, shame and disaster follow close at hand."

The surprise of the people of Liège was turned into indignation. They resisted more energetically and for a longer time than had been expected; confident of their strength, the besiegers guarded themselves badly; the

[<sup>1</sup> "As soon as the king saw the duke enter his chamber, he could not conceal his fear, and said to the duke, 'My brother, am I not safe in your house and in your country?' And the duke answered, 'Yes, sire; and so safe that if I saw an arrow coming towards you, I would put myself in front to shield you.' And the king said to him, 'I thank you for your good will, and will go whither I have promised you; but I pray you that peace may be from this time sworn between us.'"] — OLIVIER DE LA MARCHE.<sup>2</sup>]

besieged increased the number of their sorties. One night Charles was informed that his people had just been attacked in a suburb they occupied and were fleeing. He mounted his horse, gave orders not to awaken the king, betook himself alone to the scene of combat, re-established order, and returned to tell Louis what had happened, the latter appearing very much pleased over the affair. At another time the night was dark and rainy: towards midnight a general attack awakened the whole Burgundian camp; the duke was soon afoot; an instant later the king arrived; the disorder was great. "The people of Liège came out on that side," said some. "No, it was by this gate," said others; nothing was certain, no order was given. Charles was impetuous and brave, but became easily alarmed. His followers were not a little worried not to see him put on a more cheerful countenance before the king. Louis on the other hand was cool and calm, firm in giv-



A FRENCH CANNON, MIDDLE OF FIFTEENTH CENTURY

ing his orders, and prompt to take authority wherever he might be. "Take what people you have," he said to the constable Saint-Pol who accompanied him, "and go in this direction; if they are to come upon us, they will pass on that side." It was discovered afterwards that it had been a false alarm.

Two days later the situation was more serious; the inhabitants of a canton bordering the city, and called Franchemont, decided to make a desperate attempt and to fall unexpectedly upon the very quarter in which the two princes were lodged. One evening, at ten o'clock, six hundred men went out through one of the breaches in the wall, all of them men of stout heart and well armed. The duke's house was the first to be attacked; twelve archers alone kept watch below and were playing at dice. Charles was in bed; Comines quickly helped him on with his helmet and cuirass; they went down the stairs; the archers were with difficulty preventing an entrance through the door; reinforcements arrived; the danger disappeared. The lodging of King Louis had also been attacked; but at the first sound the Scotch archers



[1468 A.D.]

had hastened to the scene, had surrounded their master, and repulsed the attack, without troubling themselves to see whether their arrows killed the people of Liège or the Burgundians who had come to help. Almost all the braves of Franchemont perished in the enterprise they had undertaken. The duke and his chief leaders held a council the next day; the duke wanted to make an attack. The king was not present at this council; when informed as to what had been decided upon in it, he was not in favour of an assault. "You see," he said, "the courage of this people; you know how much slaughter and uncertainty there is in a fight among the streets of a city; you will lose in it many useful men. Wait two or three days; the people of Liège will without doubt come to terms." Almost all the Burgundian chiefs shared the king's opinion. The duke became angry. "He wants to save the people of Liège," he said; "what peril is there in an assault? There is no wall; they cannot put one single piece of artillery into action; I shall certainly not give up making an attack. If the king is afraid, let him go to Namur." The insult shocked even the Burgundians. Louis was informed of it and said nothing. The next day, October 30th, 1468, the order for the assault was given; the duke marched at the head of his troops; the king came up. "Stay behind," said Charles to him, "do not needlessly expose yourself to peril; I will have you informed when it is time." "My brother," returned Louis, "do you march in advance; you are the most fortunate prince alive; I follow you," and he continued to march with him.

The assault was useless; discouragement had taken hold of the people of Liège; the bravest of them had perished. It was a Sunday; the people who were left were not expecting an attack. "The cloth was laid in every house; all were preparing to sit down to dinner." The Burgundians advanced through deserted streets; Louis marched quietly, surrounded by his men and crying, "Long live Burgundy!" The duke came back to join him and together they went to thank God in the cathedral of St. Lambert. It was the only church preserved from the fury and pillaging of the Burgundians; at noon there was nothing more left to take, either in the houses or churches. Louis heaped Charles with congratulations and compliments. The duke was charmed and mollified. The next day as they were conversing together: "My brother," said the king to the duke, "if you have any further need of my assistance, do not spare me; but if you have nothing further for me to do, it is fitting that I return to Paris in order to proclaim in my court of parliament the arrangement we have agreed upon; otherwise it runs the risk of becoming invalid; you know that that is the custom of France. Next summer we must meet again: you will come to your duchy of Burgundy; I shall go to visit you, and we will pass a month together joyously in making good cheer." Charles answered nothing, sent for the treaty which they had concluded shortly before at Péronne, and gave the king his choice of confirming or abandoning it, excusing himself in veiled terms for having thus forced him and led him about. The king appeared to be satisfied with the treaty, and the 2nd of November, 1468, the second day after the capture of Liège, he left for France. The duke accompanied him half a league out from the city. As they were on the point of taking leave of each other, the king said to him: "If perchance my brother Charles, who is in Brittany, is not pleased with the partition I have made him, out of love for you, what do you want me to do?" "If he does not want to take it," answered the duke, "do you take measures to satisfy him; I will leave the matter to you two." Louis asked for nothing more; he returned home free and confident in his own powers, "after having passed the three hardest weeks of his life."<sup>i</sup>

*The Return of Louis to France*

To appreciate the import of the promises which Charles had exacted from the king, it must be recalled that Champagne and Brie, which Louis promised to transfer to his brother, were geographically so situated as to separate—or unite—the duchy of Burgundy and the northern possessions of Charles the Bold. Hence Charles' interest in having this territory controlled by his friend, the king's brother, rather than by his enemy, the king. Quite as obviously, Louis' interests were opposed to such an arrangement, and of course he had no intention of fulfilling his agreement. But he wished to avoid fulfilment in the most diplomatic manner possible. This he accomplished by persuading his weak-minded brother to take the territory of Guienne instead of that specified in the compact with Charles. Thus Louis' brother was separated by all France from the duke of Burgundy instead of being his nearest neighbour; and Champagne continued a barrier, not a bridge, between the Burgundian possessions. So in the end the diplomacy of Louis stood him in good stead, notwithstanding his momentary discomfiture.<sup>a</sup>

Louis' bearing was far from proud when he recrossed the frontier. He had received two great checks from the Burgundian power; in 1465 a check of power, in 1468 a check of honour. Had it been only a question of honour Louis might have easily consoled himself; but, aside from honour, his reputation as an able ruler came into question. It was that which made him ill from shame. He knew his contemporaries. The treason to and the sacrifice of Liège troubled him less than his blunder at Péronne. It was not so much indignation as mockery that he dreaded. Paris received from him an order to neither speak, write, paint, or sing anything of the detested name of "Monseigneur de Bourgoyne," and an order was sent out that all birds, magpies, crows, starlings, who were making the streets resound with allusions to the king's discomfiture at Péronne, should be delivered to a commissioner of the king.<sup>j</sup> At least so runs the story.

When Louis arrived in Paris strange discoveries awaited him. He intercepted letters from his favourite the cardinal. He found that his friend and gossip was the friend and gossip also of the duke of Burgundy, the adviser of all that had happened at Péronne, especially of his forced presence at the siege, the degrading clauses of the final treaty, and the general harshness of his treatment. He found at the same time that the cardinal was in correspondence with his brother Charles, late leader of the league, who was still in resistance to his authority; and, in short, that he was betrayed in every point. The king was offended at the perjury of his subject, but the man was a thousand times more angry at the error in his judgment. The son of the tailor, in the red stockings, had outwitted the son of St. Louis with the crown on his head. La Balue, though prince of the church and bishop of a diocese, was imprisoned in an iron cage, about eight feet square, and kept like a wild beast in his den for eleven years in the castle of Loches. All that can be said in extenuation of this pitiless proceeding was that the man was the disgrace of his order and his country, and that the instrument of his torture (as the natural justice of mankind is so prone to make out in other instances) was of his own invention.

There were some institutions, as well as individuals, which it was now Louis' purpose to get within his power. Edward III of England, reposing upon the laurels of Crécy, had founded the order of the Garter in 1349. John of France, in rapid imitation, as we have already seen, founded the order of the Star. Philip of Burgundy had founded the order of the Golden

[1469-1470 A.D.]

Fleece in 1429, and the principles of all these lordly confederations were derived from the ideas of chivalry which the romances had spread among the people. They were to be brotherhoods of noble knights, bound together by the bonds of mutual honour; they were to succour the weak, bridle the strong, and pay honour, as they fantastically expressed it, by purity of life and courage of conduct, to God and their ladies. But the Garter was a foreign badge; the Golden Fleece was a symbol of his subject and liegeman; the Star had fallen into disrepute from its promiscuous distribution among the favourites of the crown; and Louis XI determined on instituting an order of chivalry himself.

It was to be select in its membership, limited in its number, generous in its professions, and he fondly hoped the Garter and Fleece would soon sink into insignificance compared to the order of St. Michael. The first brethren were named from the highest families in France; the remaining great feudatories, who had preserved some relics of their hereditary independence, were fixed upon to wear this mark of the suzerain's friendship. But when they came to read the oaths of admission, they found that the order of St. Michael was in reality a bond of stronger obligation than the feudal laws had ever enjoined. It was a solemn association for the prevention of disobedience to the sovereign. The members were to swear submission in all things to the chief of the order; they were to enter into no agreements with each other, or anyone else, without the king's consent; they were to submit to such punishment, in case of breach of the rules, as the order might appoint; and, in short, the brotherhood of noble knights sank, in the degrading treatment of its founder, into a confederation of spies. Armed with this new weapon, the king tried its effect on the duke of Brittany, who was discontented with many things that had occurred. If he accepted, he would be bound by the statutes; if he refused, it would be an insult to the dignity of the king. The duke temporised, and consulted the duke of Burgundy. The fiery Charles saw through the design, and swore to defend his neighbour in case of a quarrel with the crown. Louis, nothing daunted, sent the collar of the order to Burgundy himself. Burgundy refused it, and Louis' object was gained. He discovered who was bold or strong enough to stand out against him, and the war began. Not openly—it was not yet time to make it a matter of national honour—but the angry subject and hostile king were perfectly aware of each other's designs.

*Edward IV of England aids Charles the Bold*

Their animosity first broke out in the sides they chose in the great struggle then going on in England, called the Wars of the Roses. Edward of York, representing the direct line of Edward III, had taken arms against the feeble and dissolute Henry VI of the Lancastrian house. Margaret of Anjou had mingled in the fray, and embittered it. We know how fortune alternately swayed to the red and the white of the emblematic flowers. Warwick, who is known in English history as the "king-maker," had just established Edward IV on the throne, and then failed, when he had quarrelled with the monarch he had set up, in restoring Henry. While preparing an expedition for this purpose in France, he had fitted out privateers, who enriched themselves equally on the English and Flemish traders, and then found refuge in the French harbours. Charles of Burgundy complained; Louis retorted with accusations of his having aided the new king of England in his attacks on the coasts of Normandy, and of having accepted the English order of the Garter, though he had refused his own St. Michael. He summoned the vassal



to appear before his parliament in Paris, and the vassal threw the summoners into prison. Louis saw the game now in his hands. He had put his enemy legally in the wrong, and, moreover, he had all the counsellors, and favourites, and warriors, by whom Charles was surrounded, in his pay. We need not, however, waste much pity on the duke. He was nearly in the same situation with regard to the courtiers and officers of the king. When the armies lay face to face, and famine had almost placed the Burgundians in Louis' hands, Charles sent a flag of truce with a statement and proofs of the infidelity of half the princes and feudatories who commanded the royal troops. Charles



FRENCH GUNNER, MIDDLE OF FIFTEENTH CENTURY

of France, now duke of Guienne, was at the head of the deceivers, and was anxious to gain Charles' good-will, in hopes of obtaining the hand of his daughter and heiress, Mary of Burgundy. Battle, with traitors commanding both the armies, would have been madness, and Louis agreed to a truce. Bitterer thoughts than ever, about the pride and falsehood of the nobility, rankled in that ignoble heart. Another incident soon occurred that brought affairs to a crisis. One of his spies, being in the castle of the count de Foix, saw a mass of torn papers in a corner of his room, which had previously been occupied by a messenger of the duke of Burgundy. The man gathered up the fragments, saw a name or two that excited his attention, pasted them all together, and was enabled to present to the king a bond of firm alliance, and the signatures of enemies whom he might well have trembled to see united against him — Edward of England, triumphant at the battle of Barnet, where his enemy Warwick was slain, and now firmly established on the English throne; the duke of Burgundy, Nicholas of Lorraine, the duke of Brittany, and, above all, Charles of France, duke of Guienne. These were all to be on him at once, and, as one of the papers said, were to set so many greyhounds at his heels that he could not know where to fly for safety.

Louis, however, was more of the fox than the hare. He doubled on his pursuers, and tempted the duke of Burgundy with the promise of restoring him some towns on the Somme, and letting him have his full revenge on his

[1471-1474 A.D.]

former favourite, the constable Saint-Pol, who had betrayed him to the king. Charles, on the other hand, was to let Louis do as he chose with the dukes of Brittany and Guienne. The duke of Guienne, indeed, was not likely to be an annoyance much longer to his brother the king, for he was seized of a mortal malady, presumably consumption. He died May 24th, 1472, at Bordeaux. There was a rumour current that he had been poisoned along with his mistress the lady of Monsoreau, by the abbé of St. Jean d'Angély, at the instance of Louis himself. The story of a peach, cut with a poisoned knife and shared by the lovers, became famous. There were many suspicious circumstances, and very likely the king may have watched the progress of his brother's illness "with ill-disguised hope" as Martin suggests; but the fact that the duke had suspected no one during his long illness and had named Louis as his executor may perhaps justify us in giving the king the benefit of the doubt for the nonce. "Examples of fratricide are all too common in this sinister century," says Martin; but he adds, half doubtingly, that "the best justification of the king appears to lie in the long illness of his brother. A man poisoned with fruit does not survive eight months." In any case, the death of the duke removed one of the most important obstacles to Louis' plans for the centralisation of power and the ultimate autocracy of the crown.<sup>a</sup>

Now, then, there was to be war to the knife carried on by the crown against the nobility. Burgundy was bought off by promises and gifts; England was soothed by concessions. But within the boundaries of France itself, no limit was put to the vengeance and cruelty of the king. He arrested the duke of Alençon in full peace, and immured him in a dungeon in Paris. He sent an army into the territories of the count d'Armagnac, and a detachment of it burst into his house, and murdered him in his bed. They also forced his wife, who was pregnant, to drink a mixture which produced immediate death. His brother was thrown into the Bastille, and kept in a cave below the level of the Seine, so that the water penetrated the floor. The wretched prisoner lived for eleven years in this manner, without shoes or proper clothing; and when released at the end of that time, on the accession of Charles VIII, was found to have fallen into a state of fatuity. A short cessation in this career of murder and revenge was produced by a new combination against Louis' life and crown. French honour and patriotism had now fallen so low that the princes and great vassals, in order to get revenge upon their oppressor, agreed to assign the crown of France to Edward IV of England. He was to be crowned at Rheims, and already he bestowed rewards upon his adherents as if he were in possession of the kingdom. The treaty united many contending factions, with but one object in common — the destruction of him whom all now knew to be their destroyer.

### *Gold and Diplomacy make Louis the Victor*

Burgundy and Brittany and Saint-Pol forgot their animosities, and signed the bond. But Louis detected the plot. The old plans were tried, and succeeded. Promises scattered the confederates, and they became distrustful of each other. Edward had disembarked in France at the head of an English army. Louis sent for great bags of coined money from Paris, and signed several papers, with the names in blank, bestowing salaries and pensions for distribution among the English council. He disguised a common lackey as a herald, and sent him to an interview with the invader. The lackey was as clever and subservient as if he had been bred an ambassador, and won over the luxurious king. Louis flattered his ambition and bribed

his avarice. He called him "king of England and France, and lord of Ireland," contenting himself with the title of "king of the French." He gave him 60,000 crowns on condition of withdrawing his forces at once, and promised him 50,000 crowns a year so long as they both lived. Edward was so captivated by the arts and liberality of Louis that he agreed to visit him at Paris. But Louis repented of the invitation he had given, and put him off, for fear he should grow too fond of that most fascinating of towns. "It is better," he said, "the sea should be between us"; and to attain this object no expense was spared. Gifts were heaped upon the officers, and all the public-houses were made free to the retiring army. The English pocketed the money, and marched from pothouse to pothouse with the greatest satisfaction.

At last it was reported to Louis that his invaders were safe home, and he resolved to make use of his victory. The fate of the constable Saint-Pol was sealed. Conscious of his approaching doom, he threw himself on the protection of his former friend, the duke of Burgundy. Charles hated him for his falsehood, but could not reject a suppliant. He told him to take shelter in St. Quentin. Louis, however, was at his heels with twenty thousand men. He fled, and Charles, rash in promise but infirm of purpose, forgot his chivalry, and surrendered him on the threat of hostilities against himself. He was tried for treason at Paris, and condemned to lose his head on the place de Grève. Thousands of the brave and noble have spilt their blood since that time in the great square which faces the Hôtel-de-Ville, and allows a last view of the towers of Notre Dame; but this is the first occasion in which a prince, a near ally of the throne, — for he had married a sister of the queen, — was exposed to the sword of the headsman for a crime against the crown. The supremacy of the king's will was now so well established that there was no further use for secret assassination. A public execution struck more awe into the populace, and kept the nobility in more subjection, than a stab in the dark or a poisoned peach. Tristan l'Hermite, almost equally with Louis, was from henceforward the acknowledged governor of France. But as long as Charles the Bold preserved his independent attitude in Burgundy, the discontented had always a refuge from the justice of the king.

### *Last Deeds of Charles the Bold*

Fortunately at this time the overweening Burgundian became engaged in controversy with the strong-armed highlanders of Switzerland. They had offended him, by refusing compensation for some injury they had done to one of his adherents. To be resisted by a set of republican shepherds was too much for the knightly pride of the most touchy prince in Christendom. A great army was raised, and poured down upon the town of Granson. The inhabitants were put to the sword or drowned in the Lake of Neuchâtel. All the cantons were irritated at the shameless deed, and rushed to rescue or revenge. Charles met them in a narrow defile at the head of his horsemen, who could not act on such unequal ground. The first rank fell back upon the second, the second carried confusion into the rear. The quick-footed Swiss still pressed on, and at last a complete panic seized the Burgundian host. Charles himself spurred out of the confusion, and galloped as far as his horse could go. Never had the eyes of the mountaineers rested on such wealth and splendour as met them in the tents of the discomfited army — silken curtains, golden vessels, barrels of money, and armour of the finest



[1476-1477 A.D.]

polish. A jewel was taken by a soldier from the private chest of the duke, sold to a priest for a florin, sold by him for five shillings, and is now considered the greatest ornament of the French crown, and one of the richest stones in Europe. Louis did not know how to proceed in these astonishing circumstances. He had signed a treaty to maintain the peace towards the duke, and yet could not resist showing his approbation of the Swiss. With the Swiss also he had signed a treaty, by which he was bound to give them aid in men and money whenever they were attacked. He compromised the two obligations by abstaining from assaulting the Burgundian, and from sending assistance to the Swiss. He could not fulfil both stipulations, and it was more economical to execute neither. He gave the mountaineers, however, unmistakable evidence of his sympathy in their cause; and when Charles, in the same year, came forth at the head of another powerful army, Louis encouraged the cantons to resist. The same thing as before occurred, with only the variation of place. Morat was a repetition of Granson. The slaughter of the defeated Burgundians was so great that, till the latter end of the eighteenth century, a vast monument was still to be seen upon the field of battle, built up of the bones of the slain, and called the Bone-Hill of Morat.

The battle of Nancy followed in 1477, and raised the Swiss to the summit of military fame, besides weakening Burgundy so as to render it forever powerless against France. In the midst of winter, ill-provided, and doubtful of the issue themselves, the hosts of Burgundy moved on, and laid siege to the town of Nancy. Charles was no longer the impetuous warrior he had been. He was broken in spirit, and at times almost mad with disappointment and chagrin. He had even summoned to command his army an adventurer from Italy, of the name of Campobasso. Campobasso was, as might be expected, a correspondent of Louis, and had offered to place Charles in his hands.

But Louis played, of course, a double game with the deceiver and his dupe. To show how generous he was, he warned the duke of the insincerity of his general, feeling well assured that his advice would be attributed to dishonourable motives; and accordingly it was thought a weak invention of the enemy, and Campobasso was more trusted than before. Again the Swiss battalions, aided by the forces of René of Lorraine, began to appear. In the midst of a great storm, and in a hard frost, Charles resolved to attack them. Campobasso sent over an offer of his treachery to the gallant mountaineers; but they despised a traitor, and scorned the disgrace of having such an auxiliary. He therefore retired to the rear of the Burgundian line, to intercept the fugitives, and enrich himself with their ransom. There were few fugitives, however, to ransom; for, as the horses slipped upon the icy plain, the victory was easier than at either Granson or Morat. The earth was heaped with corpses, and among them, after a long search, was found the body of the fiery duke, fixed in the snow, and so disfigured that he was only recognised by a scar on his face and the length of his nails, which he had allowed to grow, as a sign of mourning, ever since his calamities began. Not deserving of a very favourable epithet, this harsh and arrogant potentate closed a life of violence with a death of defeat.

But now all men's eyes were turned with earnest expectation to the first move in the great drama of intrigue and policy which his demise was certain to produce. His daughter had been the great card which he had held in his hands for many years. Lady of Hainault and Flanders, and all the Low Countries, she was a bait which none of the princes could resist.

## MARY OF BURGUNDY

Charles had silenced enemies and gathered friends, by a mere hint of the bestowal of Mary's hand. He had played it against the name of king, and promised it to the son of Frederick the emperor, if that successor of the Roman caesars would consent to convert his ducal coronet into a royal crown. The treaties and arrangements, and all the preparations for the betrothal and the creation, would be amusing, if they did not show how low morality and honour had fallen in those days. The emperor said, "Let the young people marry, and I will name you king." But the duke, who gave no credit, said, "Make me king, and I will give your son my daughter." Neither would trust the other. The emperor hurried off by stealth from the place of meeting, when he found the duke had summoned an increase to his escort; and Charles, vowing vengeance, and fearful of ridicule, packed up the royal crown he had brought with him beside the sceptre and mantle, and took his way to his states with no higher rank than when he came. Other expectations had been equally disappointed, and now, in the year 1477, Mary was an orphan twenty years of age, handsome and well-informed, with a portion in her own right which would make any man she chose a sovereign prince, or double the grandeur of the greatest potentate. When Louis heard of the father's death, his first thought was, of course, to secure the daughter's succession. He knelt to all his saints in gratitude for the defeat of his rival, walked on a pilgrimage of grace to a church in Anjou, and vowed silver banisters to the tomb of St. Martin of Tours. Having purified his mind by these religious exercises, he sent a peremptory demand for the restoration of the two Burgundies to the crown, as they lapsed for want of male heirs.

Of this there could be no doubt with respect to the duchy, which had been conveyed by John to Philip the Bold; but the county of the same name was capable of feminine holding, and if Mary had been in a condition to assert her claims, might have refused obedience to the king. Mary, however, was lonely in the midst of all that wealth. She had no disinterested guardian to apply to, and made only a feeble protest when the parliament of Burgundy, purchased or intimidated, recognised its feudal obligation, and transferred its allegiance to the French crown. Holland, however, and Flanders, and Artois, and large territories in Germany, and the disputed cities on the Somme, belonged to her still. If she had given her hand to some gallant soldier who would have defended her states, she might have aroused the chivalrous feelings of all the gentlemen in Europe on her behalf. But this she did not try, knowing too well, perhaps, that chivalrous feelings were limited to books of fiction.

The encumbered heiress wrote in her despair to Louis himself. Louis was her godfather, and she had no other friend. She sent four trusty counsellors to lay her case before him. She begged his protection, and made a confidential request that he would conduct all his correspondence with her through no one but these trusted friends. "You want, of course, to know what I intend to do," said Louis, when he had read the letter on the day of audience; and the four envoys bowed. "I will marry my godchild Mary to my son, the dauphin. I will rule her states in their joint names, till she is old enough to do homage. I will take possession of the male fief at once, and if anyone opposes my decisions, I have forces enough to make my will obeyed." There was no circumlocution here, and the ambassadors were silent with surprise. The dauphin was a sickly boy of eight years old, and their young mistress, as we have seen, was in the flower of her age. The

[1477-1478 A.D.]

king, in return for the visit of the Burgundian envoys, sent an envoy of his own. His barber was a quick-witted, unprincipled adventurer, of the name of Oliver le Daim. He had come originally from Ghent, and was, of course, master of the Flemish tongue. This was the dignified emissary whom France despatched to the highest princess in Europe. He covered his original baseness with a pinchbeck title, and the barber took his northward way under the name of the count of Meulan. But the count of Meulan smelt dreadfully of the shop. He never could get the shaving-basin out of his countrymen's sight; and at his first reception he behaved so unlike a royal ambassador that he was hissed by the audience, not without allusions to the propriety of throwing him out of the window. He was hustled downstairs, and was glad to slip out of his house and out of the town in the darkness of the night, and make his way back to his employer without having presented his letters of recall.

Louis was delighted, for, while these things were going on at Ghent, he had succeeded with the messengers of poor Mary, and did not care if they had hanged the barber-ambassador on a lamp-post in the street. The trusty counsellors, won over by his address and protestations, surrendered Artois to his honourable keeping; and on their return were executed by the states of Flanders, in spite of the prayers and intercession of the princess. The accusation was not for having betrayed their mistress, but for having constituted themselves members of the council of Four, in whom Mary had told Louis she put all her confidence. She had told nobody else, and declared the innocence of her hapless friends. But Louis, with his usual generosity, had forwarded the letter in which his goddaughter made the fatal avowal, and the discovery was almost fatal to herself. The states were republican in tendency, and resolved to submit as little as possible to the governance of a woman. They tormented her with their advice and wearied her with their reclamations, till she fortunately escaped their further importunities by persuading them to consent to her marriage with Maximilian, the son of the emperor, the man to whom her father had resolved to give her in return for the title of king. Louis was quieted for a time by the fear of offending the emperor, but carried on more fiercely than ever his war against feudalism, as represented by the great nobility at home. Burgundy was gone—Artois was his own—Normandy had long been attached to the crown.

The duke of Brittany, uneasy at the rapid extirpation of his brethren, intrigued with England; but Louis intercepted the letters, convicted him by his own handwriting, and forced him to a treaty which rendered him utterly dependent. The duke had seen that a cloud was gathering from the increased religious fervour visible in the king. When a murder or a treachery was on hand, his activity in visiting shrines and vowing church ornaments became remarkable. People trembled when they saw the meanly dressed, slouch-gaited, sallow-faced old man travelling from altar to altar, and sticking his bonnet full of little images of saints, and pouring out flatteries and adulations to the statues of the Virgin. A tale of blood was sure to follow; and in 1478 the wildest expectations of Paris were surpassed by the horror of one of his executions. There had been no such cold-blooded monster since the days of Tiberius. The duke de Nemours was representative of the great house of Armagnac, and was married to a princess of Anjou, first cousin of the king. A headstrong, discontented, and ambitious man, he had joined in the league of the Public Weal, and in many of the intrigues against the monarch since that time. Louis had taken no notice till he could secure his revenge. But two years before this, he had got him in his power, and kept



the unfortunate man in chains. He was now tried for treason and condemned and executed.<sup>f</sup> In after times it was related that the king had placed the children of the culprit beneath the scaffold, that a father's blood might bathe their innocent heads. But this is only a fable of later invention that marks the reaction against the memory of Louis XI. "What is more certain and equally odious, however," says Michelet,<sup>o</sup> "is that one of the judges who were to receive the goods of the condemned, feeling insecure of the heritage unless he had the natural heir in his power, demanded to be given custody of the eldest son of Nemours. The king had the barbarity to deliver up the child, who promptly disappeared."<sup>a</sup> Moreover, the king suspended from office three counsellors who had not favoured the death penalty.<sup>j</sup>

#### WAR WITH MAXIMILIAN

Louis' pilgrimages and prayers must have increased in frequency shortly after this, for a tremendous thought had come into his head, and it would require a vast amount of saintly aid to make it tolerable to his subjects.



A FRENCH KNIGHT OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

This was no less than the trial for felony and treason of the deceased duke of Burgundy. A court was called, the culprit was summoned, barristers were appointed to support the accusation; his whole life was inquired into, his faults pointed out, and malicious antiquarians ascended to the actions of his ancestors; and the murder of the duke of Orleans, in the reign of Charles VI, was urged as an aggravation of his crimes. After so much eloquence and such convincing proofs, the verdict could not be doubtful. The duke of Burgundy was sure to be found guilty of the crimes laid to his charge, and his estates forfeited to the crown. Maximilian, the husband of Mary, took the alarm. He begged his father the emperor to interfere. He was afraid that action would follow the judgment, and tried at least to delay the sentence. The diet of the states of Germany was about to meet, and might take up the cause of their chiefs. Louis therefore allowed the trial to expire, and had merely the satisfaction of showing that a grand vassal was not safe from his insults and vengeance even after death. Yet the daughter and son-in-law of the insulted potentate could not be expected to remain satisfied under so insolent a proceeding. Maximilian collected his forces, and de-

clared war against the king of France.<sup>f</sup>

By uniting all his forces, Maximilian had assembled, at St. Omer, an army of about 27,400. On Sunday, the 25th of July, 1479, he reached Arques, waiting there three days, and on the Thursday following, the 29th of July, attacked and invested Théroutanne. The belief in his numerical superiority, the

[1479 A.D.]

desire to retrieve his repulses in Burgundy, and perhaps also the absence of the king, whom he knew to be occupied in Dijon, decided him to take the initiative. Besides, he could only keep his army together for a limited period. This was certainly the moment to try his fortune.

It was really not until Saturday afternoon, the 7th of August, that the principal action took place. Des Querdes, with six hundred picked men, tried to surround the Flemish on his right. The Flemish men-at-arms hastened to defend the spot attacked. Soon the whole of the cavalry was engaged, and the struggle became serious. But the Flemish, separated from their infantry, were forced to give in and began to flee towards Aire, Théroouanne, and St. Omer. The French thought they had won the battle. Encouraged by this success Des Querdes hotly pursued the fugitives, urged on by the hope of capturing rich prizes. "Philip de Raverstein," says the chronicle, "was wearing a mantle of cloth of gold, so that, mistaking him for Duke Maximilian himself, they pursued him to the gates of Aire, but paid dearly for their mistake."

The battle was far from being over, as Des Querdes imagined. Very few men-at-arms remained to support the French infantry, and Maximilian's hope revived. He redoubled his efforts, aided by the Flemish soldiers and German crossbows. The French archers, already seeing that all exertions to break the enemy's lines were fruitless, began to slacken their efforts and their discouragement was obvious. Just then, the lord de St. André arrived with the garrison from Théroouanne. He could still, in this critical moment, hope for victory. But instead of making for the thick of the combat the new arrivals threw themselves upon the enemy's baggage and provisions, counting upon a rich spoil. The lords of Romont and Nassau, seeing the archers busy pillaging, fell upon them. In this tumult they threw them into disorder. Then Maximilian, whilst his cavalry was escaping, himself caused confusion in the ranks of the French by pursuing them with the small number of knights which he could still command, and remained master of the battle-field. But he was thus obliged to raise the siege of Théroouanne, and could only continue the campaign two months later.

Louis XI was much upset when he heard of this defeat. Perhaps he regretted the absence of his experienced and proven chief, who had defended his frontier so well. Comines,<sup>c</sup> who was then returning from his mission in Italy, has preserved for us the portrait of the king: "I thought the king our master grown older and beginning to break up. However, he conducts his affairs with great common sense. I was with him when he received the news of the battle. He was very downcast, for he is not accustomed to defeat; it even seemed as if everything always happened to suit his pleasure. His common sense helped him in this hour of trouble. At first, he feared that his advantages had been lost; but when he knew the truth, he was patient and decided to act so that such things should not be undertaken without his knowledge again."

As soon as Louis XI was aware of how the men-at-arms, thinking only of making many prisoners, had lost a battle all but won, he ordered that all the prisoners and spoil should be collected, sold at auction, and the money equally divided amongst them all. This was returning to the times of Achilles, to the natural equality of the Homeric ages—an equality too often forgotten in barbarous centuries. Forbidding prisoners to be ransomed on the battle-field was already a great step gained; but again, the chiefs, sure under this system of having prisoners at a cheap rate after the battle, thought less of making any during the combat.

But the archduke, in his turn, had to endure some annoyances. The naval campaign had been disastrous for him. Through the care and perseverance of William de Casenove, known as the vice-admiral Coulon, France was in possession of her first real fleet. For several years past, vessels were being unceasingly constructed, their forms perfected, and their size and strength increased. From henceforth, great battles could be waged upon the sea, even against the strongest. Herring fishing had, for a long time, been one of the principal resources of wealth, and a precious means of existence to the northern nations. The French admiral, taking advantage of the fact that the fishermen of Zealand and Holland were bringing into port the fruit of their labours, went to meet them, attacked them boldly, and brought nearly their entire fleet into the Norman ports. In vain did the Dutch equip other vessels to serve as escorts to the fishing boats. Coulon attacked and dispersed them and brought back more prisoners. Thus the archduke and his followers were cut off at one and the same time both from the cereals of Prussia and from the fish they depended upon.<sup>k</sup>

The defeat of Guinegate humbled the hopes of Louis. The war was no longer prosecuted with vigour. Even the death of Mary of Burgundy, which soon after took place, afforded him no opportunity of adding to his usurpations. A treaty, called the Treaty of Arras, was concluded between him and Maximilian, in December, 1482. Its stipulations were that the dauphin Charles should espouse Margaret of Austria, Maximilian's daughter; and that France should acquire, as her dowry, the county of Artois, and that of Burgundy (or Franche-Comté), with other territories; those possessions reverting to Austria in case no heirs came of the marriage. Independently of these cessions, Louis acquired the duchy or province proper of Burgundy, as well as that of Picardy, as his share of the spoils of Charles the Bold. About the same time, on the death of the good king René, he inherited Provence and Anjou. René II of Lorraine made some efforts to establish a claim, but in vain. Good fortune never crowned political craft more completely than in the instance of Louis XI. That monarch had now brought all his favourite schemes to their completion: his nobles were humbled; his great rival was destroyed.<sup>l</sup>

#### LAST YEARS AND DEATH OF LOUIS

In 1480 Louis XI had a first attack of apoplexy at the château de Montils-Tours, called Le Plessis because it had a fortress with many enclosures. Other attacks followed this one and warned him that his end was approaching. He undertook in 1482 the pilgrimage of St. Claude, but the progress of his malady obliged him to retire to Plessis, which he never left. Here he lingered for eighteen months, seen by no one, having in attendance only a small number of officers and servants, and seeking vainly to quiet by religious devotions his customary restlessness. His illness, while subduing his physical forces, only served to increase the activity of his spirit. The more he felt his power waning the more he wished to make others feel it and he became more tyrannical in proportion to his weakness.

Meanwhile he lived in this seclusion in perpetual suspicion of everyone — not only the princes of the family, but even of the most obscure members of the household, though they had been chosen most carefully. His castle was a prison, well guarded, where he was bound, following the expression of Comines, by strange chains and enclosures, in fear of conspirators. Jealous of his power up to the last hour, “he had himself arrayed in rich vestments, such as had never been the custom before.” His isolation was such that he



[1483 A.D.]

rarely saw even the dauphin, who was brought up far from him, in the château d'Amboise. Little by little his state of weakness effaced the king and left only the man. During this period he returned to himself, and perhaps to new thoughts; for he wished the relief of his people and a peace of six months at least. This was, also, the time of his terrors and superstitions, which have been so much exaggerated, for he retained his clearness of mind and gave proof of it even in the last days of his life. At times the king awoke in him, and made those around him feel that he was master; and he was more jealous than ever of his authority, suffering no one under any circumstances to question it.

He overwhelmed the church with donations in order to obtain acquittal of his offences, just as the ancient Merovingian kings thought to expiate their crimes on their death-beds at a similar price. He surrounded himself with priests whose prayers he desired; he brought from Calabria the famous Francis of Paula (Paola), founder of the order of Minims, for which order he had built a monastery at Plessis. His doctor, Jacques Cottier, took a scandalous part in these liberal actions. He seemed to ask of heaven not so much the salvation of the soul as the prolongation of life. Many hold that this long agony, these physical and moral sufferings, were an expiation. Comines sees in it "a punishment which God had sent upon him in this world that he might suffer less in the next, and that those who succeeded him might have more pity on the people and punish them less than he had." He died the 30th of August, 1483, in his sixty-first year.

The opinions expressed by contemporaries on this king, whose character was so remarkable and strange, were various, but of uniform severity. Comines, whose opinion might be subject to question, as he was his minister, his confidant, and almost his accomplice, has praised but little his prodigious activity, his genius for intriguing, and his singular aptitude for the carrying on of dark schemes in all directions. John de Troyes, although recognising that the power of the country had been strengthened, the kingdom brought more into unity, and new provinces acquired, blames most strongly the means employed, the dilapidation of the finances, the ruin of the people, the excess of arbitrariness, and the injury to the morals of the public. If public opinion was mute during this reign, it does not follow that it was favourable to the king. Of course the evidence that has been preserved is too slight to be able to make a positive assertion, but the theatre and popular verse of the period show the fault-finding spirit that existed.

In truth, Louis XI left the kingdom overwhelmed with burdens, the people unhappy, the prisons full, and discontent everywhere. He is reproached with always having had a large army and never having carried on a brilliant war; with not having respected the liberty of the church; with having ceaselessly violated justice; with having preferably employed corrupt agents who were justly detested; with having acted without definite plans; with being humble in misfortune and insolent in success, commencing enterprises which were never finished. He, however, knew so well how to be master; to bring the will of others into subjection to his own; to inspire in the world, and especially in those who approached him, the sentiments of obedience, fear, and almost admiration for his political genius; in fact, he had so well filled the position of king and of prince that, even after his death and when a strong reaction had set in against his reign, a certain terror continued to be attached to his name. It would seem that no one dared oppose him; Comines himself, who has drawn his portrait with such a master hand, has in this respect a singular discretion.<sup>e</sup>

Guizot, after quoting Comines<sup>c</sup> and Duclos,<sup>m</sup> adds: "I am more exacting than Comines and Duclos; I cannot consent to apply to Louis XI the words "liberal," "virtuous," "good"; he had neither greatness of soul, uprightness of character, nor kindness of heart; he was neither a great king nor a good king; but I hold to the last word of Duclos, 'He was a king.'"<sup>i</sup>

"He was a king." That verdict, at least, no one will dispute; and for a concluding estimate of the character of his kingship, we perhaps cannot do better than to quote the judicious words of Martin :

#### MARTIN'S ESTIMATE OF LOUIS XI

Utility was Louis' sole rule; he never comprehended what power there is in justice. In everything he preferred, sometimes to his own disadvantage, the crooked line to the straight line, stratagem to force, suavity to courage, although when necessary he had the stubborn courage of an indomitable will. He was the incarnate reaction against the Middle Ages, against its morals and its ideality as well as its errors, against its liberties as well as its anarchy. The very devoutness of Louis, the only inconsistency in a character which would otherwise have been incredible, had no more of the grand, austere fanaticism of earlier days; it was a materialistic fetichism that went back beyond the Middle Ages to the time when the barbarian kings gave the saints of heaven half the credit for their enterprises and their aims. Except for this weakness Louis XI was the most illustrious disciple of that policy of which the contemporary Italian despots gave the example and the theory of which Macchiavelli was later to set forth and give his name to. The usurper of the duchy of Milan, the famous Francesco Sforza, had been Louis XI's master and model. Italian education invaded France earlier in politics than in fine arts.

There was one essential distinction between Louis and his masters. He was like them in his means, but different in his end. These tyrants on the other side of the Alps had only a personal, or at best a family end, while Louis pursued a common end. He was the head of a real political society, the head of a nation. On this point, and on this alone, he had a conscience. He had a strong instinct for the future and wished to leave behind a work that would endure after him. This bad man was not a bad Frenchman.

His reign, so troublous, so oppressive, so unhappy for the people, had accomplished wonderful things for the unity of the French nation. It gave to France, Picardy from the sources of the Oise to Burgundy, Provence, Anjou, Maine, Barrois, and Roussillon; and at least a provisional title to Artois and Franche-Comté. It upheld the power of France to the Pyrenees on the west, to the Jura on the east, and to the maritime Alps, and it powerfully advanced the important work of establishing natural frontiers. It had subordinated the power of great and petty lords alike and had placed under the control of the crown a great military force. It had favoured the development of the middle classes and of the industrial and commercial forces of the country. But if the growth of national power under him was immense, if social progress was in certain respects incontestable, it is equally certain that despotism made a like progress. The instruments of autocracy were fortified and perfected by him, and under him the religion of force and of strategy, "the religion of success" as Michelet terms it, everywhere dethroned the religion of duty and of right; nor is it possible to stifle morality everywhere in the political world without profoundly altering the ethics of private life.

[1461-1483 A.D.]

The aurora of a brilliant intellectual dawn was now appearing above the horizon; active minds turn eagerly towards the new light; but France was not in a healthy moral condition to receive the new lessons of the Renaissance.

#### LOUIS' INFLUENCE ON CIVILISATION

It must not be overlooked, however, that Louis had a powerful influence upon his time in other directions than that of mere statecraft. His mind was ever receptive to any novelty that did not contradict his authority. He favoured literature and science; in particular the healing art made progress under the valetudinarian king. In surgery there was at least one great conquest; the operation of lithotomy was performed for the first time under the authorisation of the king, upon a condemned criminal, who recovered and was granted his life. Louis also came to some extent under the influence of the learned Greeks, who after the overthrow of Constantinople, in 1453, scattered over western Europe. Several of these were received at the French court. The king took a certain interest also in the famous discussion between the nominalists and the realists which so long distracted the philosophical world. Acting, it is supposed, under the advice of his confessor, Louis in 1474 took the part of the nominalists and prohibited the works of Ockam, Buridan, and other realists: though three years later the prohibition was removed. Louis showed himself equally receptive in regard to the new art of printing. As early as 1469 three exponents of the wonderful new method of book-making appeared in Paris in answer to the summons of William Fichet, rector of the university, and began their work with the royal sanction. Before the close of Louis' reign many books had been printed in Paris as well as in several of the other large cities of France. The chronicles of St. Denis were published in 1476, together with numerous other religious and classical works. A translation of the Bible appeared in 1477. From this time books multiplied so rapidly that the contemporary poets assure us with hyperbolic enthusiasm that more books are produced from day to day than formerly could be written in an entire year.<sup>a</sup>

The catholicity of interest which enabled Louis thus in the midst of his political activities to become to so considerable an extent a patron of the sciences and arts, furnishes conclusive evidence of the fulness of his mental equipment. It remains to call attention to an even more important contribution made by Louis to the amenities of civilisation. This was in the matter of the establishment of government posts. Here he was an innovator not merely for France but for the modern world; and there have been those enthusiasts who would claim for this feat a place among the three greatest achievements of the fifteenth century — the other two being the invention of printing and the discovery of America. Whatever may be thought of this estimate, there is no question that the creation of the postal service was a most important innovation, and it seems equally little in question that Louis XI was the innovator.<sup>an</sup>

#### *Establishment of Posts in France*

Certain ancient writers have attributed Louis' motives in creating the posts to his paternal solicitude. They say "Louis XI, being anxious about the illness of the dauphin, from whom he was separated, established the posts in order to be informed at almost every moment of the hope or fear which his condition inspired." This is most improbable, given Louis XI's charac-



ter, but it can readily be admitted that his spirit of dissimulation might easily have prompted him to invent and circulate a fable of this kind, in order to distract attention from the end which he really had in view. His restless life, his disputes with his greater vassals, particularly with the duke of Burgundy, his continual intrigues with the principal courts of Europe, at which he had secret agents, suffice to explain the interest he had in establishing posts, by means of which he could satisfy at once his suspicious mind and his ambitious schemes. In character Louis XI's institution resembles the ancient posts, especially the Roman (*cursus publicus*). Louis' only object was to facilitate the exercise of his royal power and to strengthen his authority at the time when the league of the Public Weal was about to be founded with the object of dismembering his kingdom. Therefore it was greatly to his interest to be rapidly informed of all the unforeseen events which might arise. Is it necessary to add that it never entered into the thoughts of Louis XI to institute a public service in his kingdom by which private individuals might profit in any way?

The exact date when the posts began to be placed along the high-roads is not known. According to Nicholas de la Mare even the name of the first postmaster-general is not given; but, says he, as Louis XI's intention was to confide this office to a person of credit, intelligent and capable, it was probably given to the grand equerry of France, whose functions had much more in common with the new charge; the grand equerry had, it is true, the king's messengers already under his orders. The same author says, in another passage, that the king's messengers became so numerous that it was found necessary to create a controller of king's messengers (edict of October, 1479). In the absence of proofs to the contrary, we believe that it was Robert Paon who, in October, 1479, received the double charge of postmaster-general of foot runners and of controller of king's messengers, and was thus invested with supreme authority over the growing institution.

The runners or king's messengers were, properly speaking, cabinet messengers, of which denomination they were afterwards known. They followed the court and had to be always in readiness to carry the king's despatches. They already existed previous to the decree of 1464, and it is to be supposed that the towns or villages that they passed on their route were bound to provide them with relays of horses. This we understand from the statute of St. Louis, of December 13th, 1254, which we have already quoted, and from a statute of Philip V, surnamed the Tall, of February 11th, 1318, which gives the royal couriers the qualification of king's messengers (*chevaucheurs*). The edict of 1464 officially sanctioned the existence of the couriers or messengers and made them into a regular and definite body. Their number, fixed at first at 230, had at the death of Louis XI risen to 234. But it is very probable that this number comprised the officers who kept horses for the service of the king, or *maîtres coureurs*, that is to say king's messengers who went by the name of *chevaucheurs*.

The *maîtres coureurs* were established at distances of four leagues along the high-roads, keeping four or five horses of light build and suited to go at a gallop; they received, besides their wages, a fee for each horse which they supplied to people holding a passport from the king with the seal of the postmaster-general. They were also, as we have said, qualified as king's messengers, because they were not only charged with keeping horses, but also with carrying letters and parcels of the king, the governors, the lord-lieutenants of the provinces, and other superior officers. It is not probable, however, that the *maîtres coureurs* actually carried the king's despatches

[1461-1483 A.D.]

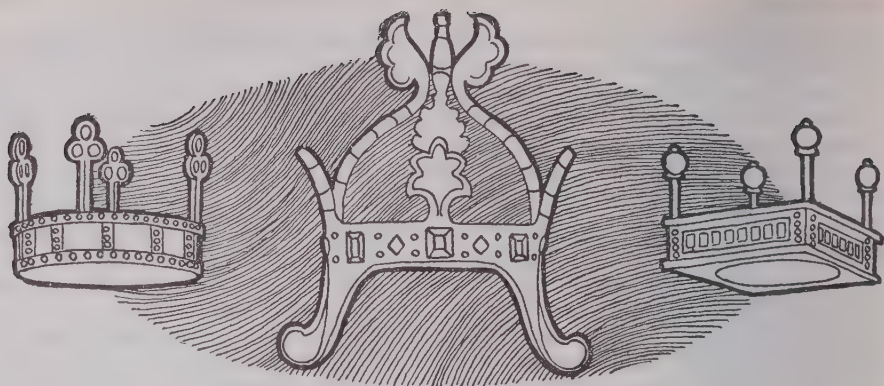
from post to post, as it is certain that the court despatches were conveyed by special messengers or *coureurs de cabinet*.

Later on the king's messengers lost the title of *chevaucheurs*, which placed them in a relatively inferior position to the *coureurs de cabinet*, but what they lost in dignity they gained in profits. At first the new institution profited only the king, his commissioners in the provinces, or personages accredited to foreign courts. Even the terms of the edict, which defined the attributes of the postmaster-general, have from the outset given a political character to this high post.

The postal organisation created by Louis XI comprised two distinct postal systems—a system of relays, embracing the most important towns and served by the king's messengers on horseback; a secondary postal system, branching off at certain points from the former and including secondary localities. The latter system was covered by messengers "sworn and received in the court of parliament."

This organisation is justly considered as having been the starting point of the modern post, but the state did not as yet look upon itself as being the servant of the public. Private letters continued to be transported almost exclusively by university messengers. But these, even in the time of Louis XI, were in competition with the royal messengers already in existence at that time, as is testified by the numerous inquiries and proceedings relating to disputes of this nature mentioned in the voluminous collection of manuscripts known as the *de Toisy*, which is in the Bibliothèque Nationale. These disputes were prolonged in the sequel with a vivacity which increased as the interests engaged became more considerable by reason of the incessant progress of circulation and correspondence.<sup>n</sup>





## CHAPTER XI

### CHARLES VIII AND LOUIS XII—THE INVASION OF ITALY

[1483–1515 A.D.]

There never was a period of history in which the efforts of individual minds were more important in their effects than the present. The inventions of one or two artisans on the banks of the Rhine presented mankind with the art of printing; an idea, a theory, springing up in the manly mind of Columbus, led to the discovery of another hemisphere; a whim conceived by Charles VIII, who, from hearing tales of Caesar and Charlemagne, suddenly became desirous of turning conqueror, had more effect on the destinies of Europe than all those occult causes of human progress which the philosopher of history loves to fathom. — CROWE.<sup>c</sup>

CHARLES VIII (1483–1497 A.D.)

WE now enter the epoch when, according to the usual computations of modern writers, the Middle Ages are passing away and modern times are being ushered in. Just at the time when Charles VIII is preparing to establish a new order of things in Europe by invading Italy, Columbus is sailing out into the western seas to discover the New World. This is the age when the new forces of the Renaissance are making themselves felt in Italy, and, to a less extent, all over Christendom. It is the age of Lorenzo de' Medici in Florence, and of Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo; of Alexander VI, the Borgia, and of Savonarola; of Ferdinand and Isabella in Spain; and of Edward V and Henry VII in England. It is an age of new ideas, an age of discovery. The seat of the new culture is Italy; the centres from which the explorers start out in quest of new worlds are Spain and Portugal. France has little share in either of these movements; but she shares with the other peoples a spirit of unrest; and this spirit is to manifest itself in the attempt of Charles VIII—Charles the Little as Brantôme<sup>b</sup> calls him—and his immediate successors to make the conquest of Italy. A fatal ambition that! It will cost France the lives of two millions of her best men; it will gain her little else than bitter experiences. But the vain ambition of a selfish prince never yet learned to count the cost; and in this case it must be admitted that the dominant spirit of the people is in full accord with the reckless ambition of the kings.



[1483 A.D.]

This idea of extending the domain of France was the one thought that dominated the life of Charles VIII, after he came to maturity. Yet the first years of his reign were devoted to a very different purpose. During these earlier years, as we shall see, the weakly youth was under the control of his sister Anne de Beaujeu, who had inherited many of the traits of Louis XI, and who carried forward the policy of that crafty monarch to its logical conclusion when she succeeded in bringing the last of the great feudal fiefs under full control of the crown, through the marriage of her brother Charles with Anne of Brittany. Thus the earlier years of Charles VIII must be regarded, thanks to the influence of his sister, as continuing and perfecting that policy of the unification of France which Louis XI had carried forward so efficiently. The events of the reign, therefore, divide themselves into two sharply defined periods. The first of these, during which Charles though nominally king is really subordinate to the influence of his sister, will now claim our attention.<sup>a</sup>

### *The Rule of Anne de Beaujeu*

Charles VIII, born June 30th, 1470, had entered his fourteenth year when his father died, and he was consequently of age by the terms of the famous ordinance of Charles V: it was therefore not necessary to establish a regency. But the government of the realm and the direction of council had been given to the first occupant, as the struggle which was to begin between the ambitions of the rivals could not be foreseen. The king, feeble of body, gave no hint of precocious talents; his minority in fact if not in law seemed as if it should be prolonged beyond the usual term.

The true danger to the state lay less in public unrest, so easily appeased by the reforms partially foreseen and indicated by Louis XI himself, than in the pretensions of the princes of the blood to take again their baleful power which had been crushed under Louis XI. The late king, in dying, had confided his son and his authority to his daughter Anne and his son-in-law Peter de Bourbon, sire de Beaujeu. His widow, Charlotte of Savoy, trembling still at the memory of her tyrannical spouse, made no objection to this exclusion. She survived Louis only a few months. Anne of France had laboured in advance to gain the confidence of the young king, whom she inspired with a timid deference, and had attached to herself the greater part of the councillors as well as the leaders and servitors of Louis XI. Anne, who was then twenty-two years old, was the only one of the children of Louis XI who resembled him. She had the tenacity, the dissimulation, and the iron will of the late king, who had once said of her with his usual caustic manner that she was "the least foolish of women, since there were no wise women." She proved that there was at least one, since she continued with admirable sagacity and energy all that was national in the plans of Louis XI. "She would have been worthy of the throne by her prudence and courage, if nature had not denied to her the sex upon which empire devolves." This opinion of a contemporary is also that of posterity. Anne's husband, a man of ripe age, of upright judgment, and a certain practical capacity, was but the first and most useful instrument of his wife. Through him she hoped to conciliate the other princes of the house of Bourbon, the duke de Bourbon and the archbishop of Lyons, brothers of the sire de Beaujeu; the old count de Montpensier, their uncle; the count de Vendôme and his son, their cousins; and the admiral de Bourbon, their bastard brother. The natural rival of Anne and her husband was the other son-in-law of Louis XI, the

first prince of the blood, the duke Louis of Orleans, whose birth gave him the place of honour in the council. The name of Orleans awakened sad memories. But Duke Louis was hardly twenty-one years of age; repressed during the whole of his first years under the iron hand of his terrible father-in-law, bound from his infancy to a woman worthy of esteem for her gentleness and kindness, but whose exterior repulsed every other sentiment, it was not ambition to which he devoted the first days of his liberty. He emancipated himself more like a schoolboy than a prince, and broke rein only to throw himself body and soul into a whirl of pleasure. Women, gambling, tournaments, horses, the pleasures of the table, left him little inclination for the cares of politics. He preferred courting women, breaking lances, jumping ditches "fifteen feet wide," to discussing royal edicts. Meanwhile he shared with the Bourbons the semblance of power, and his cousin, Dunois, son and heritor of the great count de Dunois, a most able man, and accustomed to diplomatic intrigues, spared nothing to draw him in the direction of duty. All who remained of the members and allies of the royal house had hastened to sit in council, and the first letters and edicts of Charles VIII are signed by several among them.

Some acts of indispensable reparation and amends signalised the beginning of the new régime. All who had suffered, all who had been offended, oppressed, justly or unjustly, under the late king—that is to say, nearly everyone in the kingdom—urgently demanded justice. The people clamoured loudly for the abolition of duties, and the punishment of the "wicked councillors" of Louis XI. A host of great noblemen, the count du Perche, the children of the duke de Nemours, the count de Bresse, the brother of the last count d'Armagnac, the prince of Orange, and very many others asked, some of them liberty, others restitution of property which had been confiscated. The duke, René de Lorraine, came in his turn to reclaim the duchy of Bar, and the county of Provence as the heritage of his mother. Claims threatened to go very far.

From the 22nd of September, all alienations of the royal domain, made for the benefit of either the church or private individuals, were revoked. The necessity for that measure could not be contested. The count du Perche was liberated from the cruel prison where he languished, and recovered the duchy of Alençon, confiscated but lately in spite of the just title of his father. The duke John de Bourbon, who had endured many affronts and vexations from Louis XI during the last years, was created lieutenant-general of the realm, and invested with the office of constable, vacant since the death of the count of Saint-Pol. This was the most powerful of the princes of the blood, by reason of the extent of his domains, but his infirmities and love of repose made him hardly equal to active participation in the government; his sister-in-law asked of him only the support of his name. The count de Dunois acquired a large pension with the governorship of Dauphiné, while the duke of Orleans became lieutenant-general of the Île-de-France, Picardy, and Champagne. The prince of Orange and the count de Bresse were again put in possession of their lands. This was only justice—at least to the prince of Orange, since the Treaty of Arras had stipulated reciprocal amnesty for all events relating to the war of the Burgundian Succession. The duke René of Lorraine, thanks to the support of the duke de Bourbon and Madame de Beaujeu, who expected to make use of the hero of Nancy against the princes of Orleans, obtained the restitution of Barrois, without re-embursement of the sums for which the king held Bar in pledge, a company of one hundred lancers, and 3,600 francs annually for four years, "during which time the

[1483-1484 A.D.]

claims of the count of Provence should be investigated." Madame Anne did not intend to go further than the concession of Barrois and wished only to gain time in regard to Provence. According to feudal law, the pretensions of René were justified: female succession was so thoroughly admitted in Provence that two women had successively brought this county into the two houses of Anjou; but another law, more conformable to reason and the nature of things, tending to be substituted in place of feudal law, was that of French nationality recognised and accepted by Provence.

These favours accorded to the princes were accompanied by harsh measures against the most odious of the ministers of the former reign. Oliver le Dain, count de Meulan, was sacrificed to popular vindictiveness, and Doyat to the resentment of the duke de Bourbon, whose follower he had been, and whom he had gravely offended. Oliver was condemned to death for various crimes, among others for having secretly killed a prisoner whose wife had sacrificed her honour to him as the price of her husband's life; the barber count de Meulan was hanged on the gibbet of Montfaucon, and his properties were given to the duke of Orleans. Doyat was beaten with rods at the pillory of the market-place, and lost both his ears, after having had his tongue pierced by a hot iron—punishment reserved for blasphemers and calumniators. One of his ears was cut off at Paris, the other at Montferrand, where he had filled the office of royal bailiff. The physician Coitier was relieved from the loss of his lands and castles by a ransom of 50,000 crowns.

Public sentiment demanded more than the punishment of a few wretches. The princes, divided among themselves, little known to the people, who had for them hardly any affection or fear, felt the impossibility of maintaining the despotic rule of Louis XI, and the necessity of having recourse to a national authority to obtain the obedience of the masses. The people would not have failed to resist universally the continuation of arbitrary taxation. This law reacted with irresistible force against the existing tyranny: a thousand voices repeated that "no king nor lord had the power to levy one denier on his subjects and on the revenues of his domain without the concession and consent of the people." Comines, the admirer of Louis XI, devotes a whole chapter to the discussion of this principle, which he declares not only equitable but essential to the prosperity of states, and regrets profoundly that the late king had not respected it. "In England," said he, "the kings can undertake no great enterprise, nor levy any subsidies without assembling parliament, which equals the three estates, and which is a just and holy thing." And he declares that "men who enjoy credit and authority without in the least meriting them" are the only ones who fear the great assemblies, since they will through them be known for the little they are worth. The king's council, on the proposition of the duke of Orleans, decided the convocation of the states-general at Tours, for the 5th of January, 1484, in spite of the outcries of some persons "of small importance, and little virtue, who said it was a crime of *lèse majesté* to talk of assembling the estates, and would tend to diminish the authority of the king." The friends of "Madame" as Anne of France was called, and those of the duke of Orleans, were agreed upon that important question. Each of the two parties which began to outline itself in the council hoped for the assistance of the estates against the other.

The record of state of 1484, drawn up by one of the most trustworthy members of the order of the clergy, Jean Masselin, official of the archbishopric of Rouen, has been preserved to us. It is the most explicit account we possess of the national assemblies of France, before the sixteenth century.



It is of great interest, and it preserves for us the memory of most important incidents. Nevertheless the states of 1484 became less remarkable for their actions than for their mode of action, that is, innovations practised in the system of election. Louis XI, in 1468, had already overturned the old form of the estates, but without substituting definitely a new form in the place of the old. The daughter of Louis XI, and the members of the council who nursed the project of the late king in the midst of a feudal reaction, effaced from the elections all trace of feudality, completing and regulating the work of Louis. Before Louis XI, the estates were composed only of the immediate feudatories of the king — prelates, barons, representatives of the *bonnes villes*, and the ecclesiastical or lay committees held by the crown.

In the estates of 1484 the elections were made after a uniform regulation, by bailiwicks and *sénéchaussées*, by purely administrative divisions; the electors were convoked not as feudatories of the king, but as subjects of the realm; and for the first time the peasants, at least the free peasants, were called upon to take part in operations of first degree; they sent delegates from the villages to the lesser bailiwicks or provostships, where the electors of the third degree were chosen, who in the headquarters of the bailiwick elected the deputies of the third estate. The social importance of such a change needs no commentary. There is now a real third estate, embracing the whole body of the people. The peasant is no longer the chattel of the lord of the manor, the appendix of the fief; he is the equal of the citizen, he is a member of the third estate.

This is not all; the same spirit of unity and equality, at least relative, is manifested in the regulation applied to the two privileged orders. There, all vote directly and not by triple degree; and not only do the lower clergy elect representatives, but the bishops are admitted to the estates only when they have the votes of the ecclesiastical order, and not by virtue of their episcopal title. In the nobility as well, no great baron is member of the estates unless elected by the noblemen. The three orders, under this régime, appear like three superimposed nations, in which equality reigns. It is here the great difference appears between the democratic spirit of France and the aristocratic spirit of England.

The only exceptions to the new rules were those provinces which were administered by annual provincial estates, and which continued to choose their deputies in their provincial estates, without resorting to popular assemblies of three degrees. This is true at least of Languedoc, and resulted, as a rule, in a veritable political inferiority of those countries formerly so much in advance of the others, their provincial estates retaining an oligarchical character in presence of a transformation wholly democratic.<sup>g</sup>

The king's minority and the factions at court seemed no unfavourable omens for liberty. But a scheme was artfully contrived which had the most direct tendency to break the force of a popular assembly. The deputies were classed in six nations, who debated in separate chambers, and consulted each other only upon the result of their respective deliberations. It was easy for the court to foment the jealousies natural to such a partition. Two nations, the Norman and the Burgundian, asserted that the right of providing for the regency devolved, in the king's minority, upon the states-general; a claim of great boldness, and certainly not much founded upon precedent. In virtue of this, they proposed to form a council, not only of the princes, but of certain deputies to be elected by the six nations who composed the states. But the other four, those of Paris, Aquitaine, Languedoc, and Languedoil (which last comprised the central provinces), rejected this plan,

[1484 A.D.]

from which the two former ultimately desisted, and the choice of councillors was left to the princes.

A firmer and more unanimous spirit was displayed upon the subject of public reformation. The tyranny of Louis XI had been so unbounded that all ranks agreed in calling for redress, and the new governors were desirous at least, by punishing his favourites, to show their inclination towards a change of system. They were very far, however, from approving the propositions of the states-general. These went to points which no court can bear to feel touched, though there is seldom any other mode of redressing public abuses—the profuse expense of the royal household, the number of pensions and improvident grants, the excessive establishment of troops. The states explicitly demanded that the *taille* and all other arbitrary imposts should be abolished; and that from thenceforward, “according to the natural liberty of France,” no tax should be levied in the kingdom without the consent of the states. It was with great difficulty, and through the skilful management of the court, that they consented to the collection of the taxes payable in the time of Charles VII, with the addition of one-fourth, as a gift to the king upon his accession. This subsidy they declare to be granted “by way of gift and concession, and not otherwise, and so as no one should from thenceforward call it a tax, but a gift and concession.” And this was only to be in force for two years, after which they stipulated that another meeting should be convoked. But it was little likely that the government would encounter such a risk; and the princes, whose factious views the states had by no means seconded, felt no temptation to urge again their convocation. No assembly in the annals of France seems, notwithstanding some party selfishness arising out of the division into nations, to have conducted itself with so much public spirit and moderation; nor had that country perhaps ever so fair a prospect of establishing a legitimate constitution.<sup>j</sup>

The most serious question which the estates had to determine was that of regulating the composition of the council and deciding to whom the care and education of the king should be confided. The deputies would have liked to conciliate the princes without clashing with them. However, in the course of examining the various projects submitted to them, they were led to inquire if the states-general were invested with the constituent power. The opinion that this was so was shared by the most eminent members of the assembly, especially by those belonging to the order of the clergy, and had for interpreter an eloquent deputy of the Burgundian nobility, the sire de la Roche. He demonstrated that no absolute, fundamental rule for the administration of the kingdom during the minority or childhood of the king existed in France; that neither was the right of the princes in such circumstances in any way definite or precise. In consequence he maintained that it was for the nation, that is for the estates, to constitute the government in moments of crisis. He presented a theoretical and philosophic analysis of the principle of the sovereignty such as might be laid down in the schools; then he passed in review the history of preceding assemblies and showed that several of them, called together under exceptional circumstances, had exercised a genuine constituent power.

In spite of the weight of this justly celebrated speech, the estates shrank from the danger of entering into a struggle with the council and the princes. They preferred to attempt an amiable conciliation of the different claims. It was not easy to come to an understanding even on this basis; for each day brought new difficulties. “It was,” says Maßelin, “the seven-headed

hydra. Cut one and two grow in its place." Finally it was agreed that the duke of Orleans should have the first place at the council and the presidency in the young king's absence; the duke de Bourbon and the sire de Beaujeu the second and third places; that the other princes of the blood should have the right to take their seats there after them; that all the existing councillors should be retained and that twelve new councillors, taken from the six bureaux of the estates, should be added to them.<sup>k</sup>

### *The Struggle with the Duke of Orleans*

The discontent of the duke of Orleans was not appeased by the decision of the states. He was a handsome, frank, amiable man, not naturally inclined to be turbulent; but as first prince of the blood, and heir presumptive to the throne, it was derogatory to his pride and spirit to remain tranquil, while deprived of all influence by a woman. Dunois, son of the famous bastard of Orleans, was his chief friend and councillor—a man as fond of intrigue, apparently, as his stout sire had been of battle. The dukes of Lorraine and Bourbon seemed at first inclined to join him, but both were won over by the lady Anne; Bourbon, the elder brother of the lord of Beaujeu, being made constable. Orleans tried every expedient to shake the authority of the king's sister. He sought to make himself popular in the capital, and to bring its citizens to declare in his favour. He tried the parliament also; but its president, La Vaquerie, replied that it was not their interest or duty to interfere in a private struggle for power. Orleans was soon after closely pressed by La Trémouille at the head of a superior army, and obliged to make submission; Dunois being banished to Asti, a town in Italy which the duke of Orleans inherited from his grandmother, Valentine of Milan.

Such a forced submission could not conduce to a lasting peace. Dunois soon afterwards returned from exile. There was a plot for carrying off the king, which failed, and the duke of Orleans was obliged to take refuge in Brittany. The gay and fascinating manners of the French prince entirely won the good will of Francis, the reigning duke. He was without male heirs; and his daughter, as inheritor of the duchy, was a rich prize for an ambitious prince. It is said that the duke of Orleans became a suitor for the hand of Anne, and that Duke Francis favoured his pretensions.<sup>1</sup> But the native nobles of the province were jealous of the duke of Orleans and of his influence with their prince. They leagued with the lady of Beaujeu against both; and a French army, supported by a great body of Bretons, soon after besieged the dukes of Brittany and Orleans in Nantes. There were two other pretenders to the hand of the heiress of Brittany: the sire d'Albret, a rich lord of Gascony, into whose family the crown of Navarre had passed from that of Fox. The duke of Orleans, in prosecuting his own suit, affected to support this competitor. The other was Maximilian, king of the Romans. A timely succour sent by this prince obliged the French to raise the siege of Nantes; and the lady of Beaujeu betraying a disposition to conquer the duchy, and to garrison and appropriate its towns, the Bretons became suspicious, abandoned her, and resumed their allegiance to the duke. The war nevertheless continued. The troops on both sides met at St. Aubin, and a battle ensued. The French were commanded by La Trémouille; the prince of Orange and duke of Orleans led on the Bretons. The French

[<sup>1</sup> The exact attitude of the duke of Orleans, at this early period, toward his future wife is not clearly established. Further reference to the subject is made later in the present chapter.]



[1488-1491 A.D.]

gendarmerie, having routed the cavalry opposed to them, took the Bretons in flank and rear, and routed them. The duke of Orleans and the prince of Orange were both taken prisoners. They were startled to perceive a confessor enter their tent in the evening. La Trémouille, who saw and enjoyed their consternation, reassured them by observing that it was only for the inferior rebels to clear their consciences and prepare for death.

An accommodation followed this defeat. The duke of Brittany made submissions, and survived but a short time. He was the last duke of the province, which now descended to his daughter Anne. There was another sister, who, as she died soon after, need not be more than mentioned. Affairs were now as unsettled as ever. The count d'Albret, seconded by a strong party of Bretons, who above all things aimed at the independence of their duchy, pushed his suit with the young heiress. The addresses of this aged noble could not be agreeable to a princess of fourteen. The duke of Orleans, the object of her predilection, was in prison. The armies of France were invading the duchy, and it behoved her to espouse a prince capable of defending her dominions. The resolution was taken that she should be married to Maximilian, king of the Romans, and the ceremony was accordingly performed by proxy; the archduke's ambassador, to conclude it, putting a naked leg into the couch of the young duchess. Hitherto the aim of king Charles and his regent sister had been to conquer the duchy by force of arms, laying claim to it as a male fief. Charles had been long betrothed to Margaret of Austria, Maximilian's daughter, who was then receiving her education in the French court, and awaiting the age of nubility. The stubbornness of the Bretons, however, made the lady of Beaujeu despair of her project. The ever-ready Dunois, in order to make his own peace and procure the liberty of the duke of Orleans, proposed that Charles should espouse the young duchess himself, and thus unite Brittany to the kingdom. Charles and his sister instantly entered into this scheme. The king, with a kingly generosity, began by setting the duke of Orleans, his secret rival, at liberty. This the monarch did without consulting his sister; nor was his generosity abused, for the duke remained ever after faithful to him, and even seconded his purpose of espousing Anne. Dunois, on his side, laboured to render the duchess less hostile to France. Anne still held with all the faithfulness of a wife to Maximilian, to whom she was nominally betrothed. An ostensible act of compulsion was deemed requisite to overcome her reluctance. A royal army besieged her in Rennes. One of the conditions of the capitulation was that she should espouse the king of France.<sup>c</sup>



CHARLES VIII

(From an old French engraving)

The marriage festivities which united Brittany to France took place at Langeais-Touraine. The pope declared the former marriage of Anne and Maximilian null and void, and the new queen was conducted to Paris to be

crowned. All these negotiations took place in the greatest secrecy, as it was desired to conceal them from the envoy of Maximilian. The king of the Romans was doubly insulted. Charles VIII took from him a princess whom he had already married by proxy, and sent back to him his daughter Margaret, educated in Paris, since the Treaty of Arras, and destined to the throne of France. When the time came to declare the marriage, it was shown that Maximilian had been the first to violate the Treaty of Arras, that he had never ceased to make war against France for fourteen years, and that he had not respected the conventions of Frankfort or Plessis-les-Tours.

The contract was made with much artfulness. Charles VIII and Anne gave up all their rights, their reciprocal pretensions which it was useless to pronounce upon. It was stipulated that these rights should be combined in the persons of the children born of this marriage; that if there were none, and the king should die, the duchess could not contract a second marriage except with his successor or the heir presumptive to the crown, on pain of losing the duchy.

The province demanded the maintenance of its privileges, which were confirmed (declaration of July 7th, 1492). It preserved its particular estates, its supreme court of justice, which sixty years later became the parliament of Rennes, and its independent administration. It was assimilated in every respect with Dauphiné, Languedoc, Provence, and Burgundy, but it ceased to be a sovereign state, to become like those countries one of the members of the body of the monarchy. It is annoying that we cannot to-day follow, step by step, the artful conduct of the duchess of Bourbon. However that may be, she had at that time achieved her ends, and scored a complete triumph. Brittany was joined permanently to France; the princes were reconciled, in a definite manner this time. Finally Charles VIII arrived at man's estate, and having nothing to fear of internal conspiracies, could defy those of foreign countries.

Meanwhile the coalition, which had shown too little activity to hinder the reunion with Brittany, was too strongly opposed to it to accept it without protest. A war might be expected, or at least great diplomatic difficulties. Henry VII, Maximilian, and Ferdinand the Catholic protested in common against an act which the latter called an unheard-of and execrable fraud. They agreed to attack France on her different frontiers. But the king of England was in a measure the only one to act. Ferdinand, for the last twelve years, was directing all his forces against Granada, and in spite of the triumph of his officers, who raised the Christian flag there in February, 1492, he could undertake nothing against France, unless it was to continue the hostilities on the frontier of Roussillon, which had never been interrupted. Maximilian, obliged to submit to Hungary, and to make war against the Turks, could the less wage war on the frontier of Artois, as he continued to be hampered by the ill will of the Flemish towns. Henry VII, on the contrary, had full liberty of action, and, what made him more dangerous, he never acted on calculation or on personal resentment. It was the national sentiment of England which protested against the aggrandisement of France. The English rightly regarded the union of Brittany with the rest of the monarchy as a fatal blow to their hopes of some day regaining Normandy and Guienne. Henry VII therefore declared war against Charles VIII; however, in yielding to the enthusiasm of his subjects, he took very little part in it; for, if the historian of his reign, the chancellor Bacon, is to be believed, he proposed alone to obtain the subsidies

[1492-1493 A.D.]

from parliament by flattering national vanity, and to sell to France as dearly as possible his recognition of the acquisition of Brittany.

Charles VIII had to oppose the English regular army, already increased, whose augmentation had brought taxes up to the figure of 2,300,000 livres. He collected all his supporters and obliged the principal towns of the realm to furnish him with men-at-arms. He called to his court also Perkin Warbeck, whom the Yorkists of England represented as a pretended son of Edward IV and a rival of Henry VII.

The latter passed the Channel, but not before October, after long delays, and besieged Boulogne, which would have strengthened the position on the continent which Calais already assured him. Arriving under the walls of the fortress, he found there much stronger resistance than he had expected; he received no aid from the Netherlands, and he heard that the Spaniards had begun separate negotiations with Charles VIII. These reasons decided him to sign a treaty at Étapes in the month of November. He contented himself with the payment of large sums by France as indemnity for the English troops which had served in Brittany, or as amends for the rupture of the Treaty of Picquigny and interruption of the payment of subsidies promised to Edward IV by Louis XI.

Charles VIII had undertaken separate negotiations with Ferdinand the Catholic. Roussillon and Cerdagne were objects of litigation between the crowns of Aragon and France, which had already lasted more than thirty years. Charles VIII finished by purely and simply restoring those two provinces, without even exacting reimbursement of the sums lent by Louis XI. The treaty was signed at Barcelona in January, 1493. France felt a certain astonishment at this abandonment of pretensions, on the subject of which all former offers of compromise had been refused. But notwithstanding that the question of law was not a simple one, and that the different acts of Louis XI had greatly complicated it, Charles VIII considered that, in buying the friendship of Spain at such a price, he would attain the dissolution of the coalition, assure to himself the possession of Brittany, and finally open an unobstructed road into Italy. He then made preparations to force the realm of Naples to respect the rights inherited by Louis XI through the princes of the house of Anjou. The king of Spain promised at Barcelona not to hinder his march to Italy in any way, and to furnish no aid to Ferdinand of Naples, who was of a bastard branch of Aragon, and even to aid the pretensions of France at the court of Rome, sovereign of the Two Sicilies.

There remained still Maximilian and his son, the archduke Philip, then fourteen years of age. Although these princes were for the time not redoubtable, a treaty with them presented more difficulties, as they had been more personally offended, and in sending back the princess Margaret it was not possible to preserve her dowry, stipulated in the Treaty of Arras, that is to say of Artois and Franche-Comté. Already disturbances had broken out in the two provinces. Arras, which remembered the cruelties of Louis XI, had driven out her French garrison the day after the Treaty of Étapes. Franche-Comté became insurgent in its turn. Charles VIII by a last treaty signed May 23rd, 1493, at Senlis, restored the counties of Burgundy, Artois, Charolais, and Noyon. He contented himself by sequestering the fortresses of Hesdin, Aire, and Béthune, until the day when Philip, having reached his majority, paid him homage; and to stipulate the restitution of Tournay, Mortagne, and St. Amand, towns of the ancient domain of the crown. Maximilian finished by accepting these conditions, which after all he was not



in a position to refuse; for although his ambition was cosmopolitan, the extensiveness of his dominions and the multiplicity of interests which called him every year to a new point of Europe never permitted him to pursue to the end any enterprise of long duration. His thoughts were now turning towards the imperial throne, which the death of his father Frederick III allowed him to mount a few months later. The French government wished that, following usage, the Peace of Senlis should be guaranteed by the principal towns of Flanders, Hainault, and Artois, such as Ypres, Namur, Arras, and Valenciennes.

Historians have often reproached Charles VIII with having signed oppressive treaties at Étapes, Barcelona, and Senlis, and above all to have partly restored by the last the power of the house of Burgundy, which had been previously weakened by the Treaty of Arras. Here was in effect a sad offset to the acquisition of Brittany; but the choice had to be made between Anne and Margaret, between Brittany and Franche-Comté. If Charles VIII made a blunder it was at least more excusable than that of Louis XI, who had never been placed in the same position.

Charles VIII has also been reproached with having sacrificed the frontier and French-speaking provinces in seeking aggrandisement and conquests in a country so far removed as Italy. The conquests in Italy were bound to be ephemeral. It had been necessary in the peninsula to battle for half a century without retaining in the end a single inch of ground.

Much more would have been attained by extending the northern frontier, which was too near Paris, and by attaching again to France the provinces which gravitated around her. But it was forgotten that Charles VIII, in sending back Margaret, had no claim worth considering on Franche-Comté or the Netherlands; that he had consequently on this side no motive for war, and that he could not undertake such a war without running foul of the empire and of allied Europe.

Italy offered no such dangers. If prudence had, until now, hindered him from interfering in her revolutions, Charles VIII, having no longer any interior questions to regulate, was in a much better position than his father or grandfather had ever been. It is thus the treaties of 1492 and 1493 should be understood. In France they were judged rather unfavourably, which was natural, since they stipulated concessions and restitutions; but they were not as has been said the result of the heedless enthusiasm of a young king, sacrificing the manifest interests of his realm to the passion for foreign conquest.<sup>k</sup>

### *Charles VIII in Italy*

As already suggested, the acquisition of Brittany marks the conclusion of the first period of the reign of Charles VIII. The king was now of an age to shake off the leading-strings of his sister. He was old enough to have a policy of his own, and he was soon to show that he had one. It was a policy dominated by a single thought—the conquest of Italy. In putting that sinister policy into effect, Charles VIII inaugurated a new era in French history; a new era, indeed, in the history of all Europe. France was now the most closely unified kingdom in all Europe; it aspired to become an empire.

The idea of the invasion of Italy was no doubt suggested by the fact that certain claims upon the kingdom of Naples had been bequeathed to Louis XI by Charles II of Anjou. Solicited by disaffected Neapolitans and by Lodovico

[1493 A.D.]

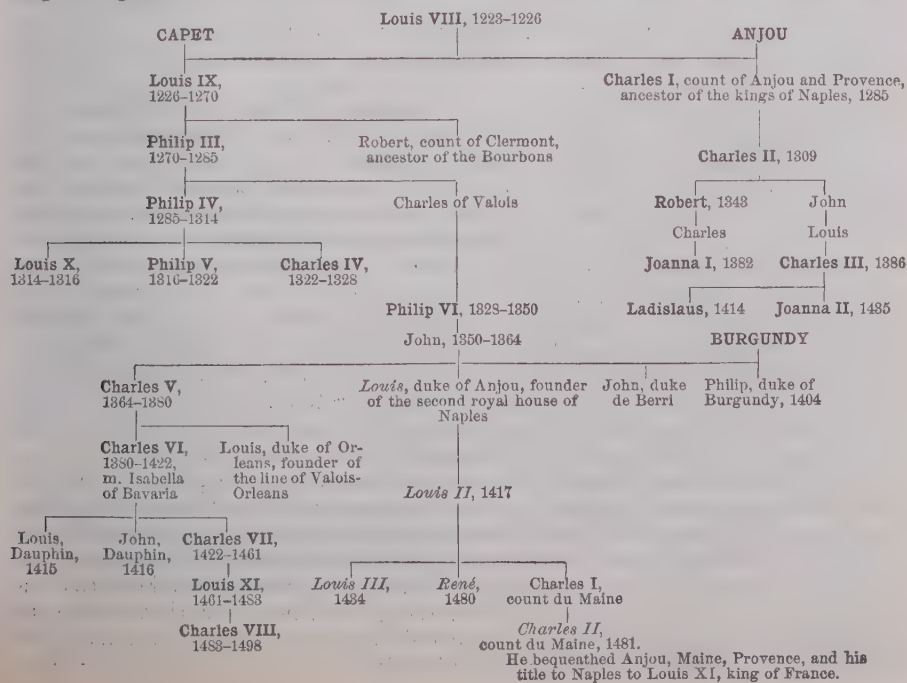
Sforza, duke of Milan, Charles VIII now determined to go to Italy and make good his hereditary claims.<sup>1 a</sup>

The thought of an expedition to Italy was most seductive to a prince as young as Charles VIII, nourished on traditions of chivalry, in which the study of antiquity was mingled with souvenirs of Caesar and Alexander. It was equally seductive to the nobility, the army, and the whole country, as flattering to the national vanity. Since the Crusades no great foreign enterprises had been undertaken by the kings in the name of the nation. The campaigns of Du Guesclin in Spain, of John the Fearless at Nicopolis, of the princes of Anjou at Naples, had been only private expeditions and had not involved France. The war in Italy reopened the era of great conquests.

In addition, this was an important epoch in French history as well as in that of all Europe. The old political system was upset. The empire was nothing more than a name at the head of what was still called Christianity. France seeking aggrandisement, the result was the prevalence of an idea of a necessary equilibrium among the great powers. This idea was not entirely new. The growth of France under Louis XI, the marriage of Maximilian of Austria to Mary of Burgundy, had already conduced to its formation. The powers observed how the rôle of diplomacy gradually grew, and conquests formed their necessary counterpoise in coalitions.

Without going back to reminiscences of the brother of St. Louis, and the protectorate assumed by France over the Guelfs of Italy two centuries before, it may be well to recall the expeditions, undertaken by the princes of the younger branch of Anjou, to seize the crown of Naples. Louis II, René,

<sup>1</sup> The following table will make clear the bearings of the French claim to the kingdom of Naples: Full face type denotes reigning kings of France and Naples. Italics denote titular kings of Naples.



John of Calabria, had, one after the other, claimed a succession regarded in France as a legitimate inheritance. René of Lorraine would again have followed that example in 1486, if the news that the great Angevin barons were treating with the house of Aragon had not stopped him, almost at the moment of departure. Men's minds were occupied with what Comines called "the smoke and glories of Italy." Louis XI had exercised some sort of a protectorate over the different states of the peninsula, governing Savoy and Montferrat by French princes; all-powerful at Milan; refusing the sovereignty of Genoa, which was offered to him; intervening as mediator in the dispute between Rome and Tuscany. Pius II has already stated that the greater part of the princes and people of Italy were more French than the French themselves, *Gallis Galliores*.

The Orient was also thought of. The prediction of a crusade renewed by Pius II and Sixtus IV, after the entrance of Muhammed II into Constantinople, the terror with which the Turks inspired Europe, the growth of their conquests which had not slackened, the recent heroic defence of the walls of Rhodes by Pierre d'Aubusson, grand-master of the knights of St. John, carried back public thoughts to memories whose vividness time could not alter. Although times had changed, the brilliancy and glory of the Crusades had not been forgotten. It was indeed all that tradition had kept up after two centuries. Moreover the military strength was much greater, and inspired another confidence than that of former times. If the route of Charles of Anjou were followed, the Ottoman empire could not be attacked before being sure of a base of operations at Naples, and it was hoped that the Greek Christians would rise at sight of the banners of the new crusaders.

In reality the oriental question had been asked; Europe was interested in solving it. Preparations were being made for the expedition into Italy. Each time that great events take place, public opinion is excited and the dominant ideas of the times reveal themselves in one way or another. It was now the first period of the Renaissance, in which the savants caused a perpetual confusion of antiquity and modern society.

Ancient memories had therefore a peculiar influence. Guillaume de Villeneuve, officer and historian of Charles VIII, Jean Bouchet, author of *The Life of De la Trémouille*, Comines himself, in the latter part of his memoirs—all abused ancient history, from which they borrowed a long list of comparisons; they even took occasion to compare the crossing of the Alps by the king to the similar feats of Hannibal and Cæsar.

Italy has always exercised a great and natural fascination, due to the beauty of the land and its cities, the splendour of its civilisation. The presence of so many monuments of antiquity, the study and appreciation of which had begun, had so much attraction for the French nobility, whom the Italians haughtily regarded as "barbarians," but who were far from meriting this title. The French had indeed an exaggerated idea of a country less known than we should be inclined to suppose, since nations were far from having the same intercourse that they have at the present day.

Charles VIII was, according to the Italians, who have portraits of him, small, of insignificant appearance, and expressed himself with difficulty. The desire for pleasure seemed to dominate him, and he is reproached with caring only for the chase, for dogs, falcons, and horses. The Tuscan and Venetian envoys at his court refused for a long time to believe that he could ever become a conqueror. They recognised, however, that he showed a certain natural ardour, when he assisted regularly at the reunions of his council, and reserved the decisions to himself.



[1493-1494 A.D.]

Nearly two years were consecrated to the necessary preparations. The enterprise, without being officially announced, was no secret to anyone. The Italian states were engrossed in it, and, with the exception of Milan, sent embassy after embassy to the court of France, to spy upon its actions, divine its intentions, and avert a project which menaced them all. The envoys, Florentines and others, whose correspondence has come down to us, showed infinite ability and genius in a series of delicate and difficult negotiations. But nothing proves more clearly the weakness of the government they were trying to serve than their tendency to intrigue, their perplexity, their suspicion, combined with self-deception and the duplicity of some of them.

Charles VIII, on his side also, sent envoys beyond the Alps. He wished to isolate the king of Naples, to entangle the different states in an offensive alliance against him, or at least obtain their neutrality, but a neutrality favourable to free passage over their lands. Above all he scrutinised closely the court of Rome. As he had had his rights to southern Italy examined by the parliament and the parliament had declared them valid, he demanded a similar declaration from the pope, sovereign of the crown of Naples. Alexander VI could not be relied upon very strongly — a Spaniard by birth whose election had been opposed by the French; but it was hoped to frighten him by threatening to uphold his personal enemies, who were many, and by demanding a general reform in the church, a reform equally desired by France and demanded by Maximilian and Ferdinand the Catholic.

Much as it was hoped also to find allies and resources in Italy, nothing was neglected for raising a large army, well equipped, and which should be sufficient in itself. Men-at-arms were not wanting. The difficulty was in organising them — the artillery, the wagons, and the ships necessary. Money was also needed, and to raise it every means in usage in such a case was employed. The pensions paid to the king were reduced for half a year; the treasurers were made to give advances; different loans were obtained, and an assessment was made on the banks of Milan and Genoa, and on Italian merchants; finally a particular tax was made on the clergy, under the form of a forced loan, as well as on the states of Languedoc, and several cities of the realm. All these negotiations required time, and were not concluded without difficulty. Paris and the other cities presented remonstrances, from which the Italian ambassadors concluded that the war was not popular and would not materialise.

The pecuniary difficulties, the inevitable length of the preparations, the boldness of the enterprise, the uncertainty of the political situation in Europe gave rise to a natural opposition. Several of the former councillors of Louis XI, such as M. d'Argenton (Comines), and the sire de Graville, grand admiral, expressed their doubts and fears. The duke de Bourbon saw with regret the abandonment of the prudent policy which he had followed until then, but neither he nor the duchess was any longer master of the government. Des Querdes maintained that, if it were desirable to make conquests, it would be better to look for them in the Netherlands rather than in Italy. Meanwhile the opponents generally held themselves in reserve, and sought rather to moderate the enthusiasm than to combat it.

The general rendezvous was to be at Lyons. Des Querdes, who was to have the command, died before the departure. The king resolved therefore to place himself in person at the head of his troops. He arrived at Lyons in the month of April, 1494; but preparations were not completed, and he had to wait several months before entering upon the campaign. Ships were

wanting, and it became necessary to construct a certain number for transporting one division of artillery. At last the departure took place in the month of September, although no tents, pavilions, nor other necessities were at hand.<sup>k</sup>

The details of the incidents of this memorable tour<sup>1</sup> have already been given in our history of Italy, and need not be repeated here. We have there seen how Charles VIII was permitted to enter Florence as the friend of the people, yet came with all the presumption of a conqueror; how he went to Rome and was there received with the outward semblance of friendship by Alexander VI; and how he entered Naples and took the nominal kingship of that realm without striking a blow. It will be recalled that while the king lingered in Naples, antagonistic princes gathered in the north of Italy, and attempted to intercept the French army on its return. The French army, fatigued from its long march, and only about nineteen thousand strong, with five or six thousand servitors or guards of the transport in its train, met the Italian army of at least thirty thousand fresh and well-supplied men in the duchy of Parma near the castle of Fornovo on the right bank of the Taro, on the 5th of July, 1495.<sup>a</sup>

It was a brief but sharply fought battle with alternations of success and defeat for both armies. The two chief officers of the royal forces, Louis de la Trémouille and Gian Giacomo Trivulzio, sustained without wavering the shock of troops far more numerous than their own. "At their throats — at their throats!" cried La Trémouille after the first counter, and his three hundred men fell upon the enemy with sufficient force to break their ranks. During the heat of the battle the French baggage wagons were attacked by the *stradiots*, a Greek corps recruited and paid by the Venetians. "Let them alone!" shouted Trivulzio to his troops; "their ardour for pillage will make them forget everything else and we can the more easily overcome them." At one time the king was in advance of the main body of his guard and had neglected to see if they were closely following. He approached to within a hundred feet of the marquis of Mantua, who, seeing him so slinly accompanied, charged at him with all his cavalry. "It is not possible," says Comines,<sup>d</sup> "to strike harder blows than were given on both sides." The king, closely pressed and surrounded, defended himself valiantly against those who sought to take him. The bastard Matthew de Bourbon, his brother-at-arms and one of the bravest knights of the army, rushed forward twenty steps in advance of the king to protect him, and had just been taken prisoner when a large body of the royal troops came to the rescue of both and delivered them from peril. It was in this engagement that Pierre du Terrail, Chevalier de Bayard, at that time scarcely twenty years of age but destined later to achieve such fame, performed his first feats of arms.<sup>2</sup> He had two horses killed under

[<sup>1</sup> See vol. IX, pp. 409 *et seq.*]

[<sup>2</sup> Champier gives the following portrait of Bayard: The noble Pierre du Terrail was born at Bayard, a stronghold situated in a province of Dauphiné, called Givodam, near the royal castle of Avalon — which castle is a fine mansion wherein were born and bred, in this fair and beautiful spot, a family noble and ancient, in Dauphiné, by name Montenar, from whom are descended many brave knights and valiant men skilled in the art of warfare. This same Pierre was well named Terrail, for no page was a better horseman, which came by his prowess did send many to their end before their time, and in many places and on many occasions did truly guard and defend the territories of his lord and sovereign prince, the noble king of France.

The noble Bayard in his youth was kindly, gracious, and courteous to all men; none ever beheld him wrathful; he was greater than all other pages; he did harm to no woman, relinquishing intrigues with them, as being unlawful; but little given to melancholy, he was cheerful towards all, loving good company, jestings, and pleasant sport. As for his gravity, it was always mingled with kindness and affability; he loved order in all things, and was benign, merciful, and charitable. J]

[1495-1498 A.D.]

him, and took one standard, which he presented to the king, being rewarded by the latter after the battle with a gift of 500 crowns.<sup>e</sup>

As a result of the battle Charles VIII and his troops were allowed to continue their march unmolested; but their return to France partook somewhat of the nature of a retreat. It was not to be expected that a territory so distant as Naples could be held subordinate to the French crown without difficulty; and while Charles himself and his followers no doubt regarded the expedition as a great success, it was really in the sober view of posterity a most lamentable enterprise. It was fraught with all manner of deplorable sequels, as we shall see. But of course the French people could not be expected to anticipate future events, and for the moment they were able to welcome their king back to Paris as a conqueror and a hero.<sup>a</sup>

### *Death of Charles VIII*

The two years which elapsed from Charles' return over the Alps to his death were marked by no event of importance. The chief expenditure and amusement that occupied him seemed to be the building and ornamenting of the castle of Amboise, for which he had brought with him eminent architects and artists from Italy. His sons perished in infancy one after the other; the name of the last, Charles Orlando, marking the favourite studies and thoughts of the monarch. In the spring of 1498 a game of ball, which interested the king, was played in the fosse of the castle of Amboise, where he resided. Charles, an affectionate husband, brought the queen to witness it. Passing in haste through the low archway of a gallery, he struck his head somewhat violently against it; for the moment the blow did not seem to affect him, but soon after, he was seized with a stroke of apoplexy, and died at the early age of twenty-seven. "Charles," says Comines,<sup>d</sup> "was of a small person, and little understanding; but a better creature was not to be seen."<sup>e</sup>

By the death of Charles VIII, the direct line of Valois was ended, and the crown was transferred to the collateral branch of Valois-Orleans, descended from Louis I, duke of Orleans, second son of Charles V.

### LOUIS XII, "THE FATHER OF HIS PEOPLE" (1498-1515 A.D.)

The transmission of the crown of France to another branch of the royal house had been effected without agitation and without an obstacle; there were whispers, but in hushed voices, round Madame de Bourbon, the ancient enemy of duke Louis, that that prince had forfeited his rights by bearing arms against the crown of France in the Breton war; but no one ventured to exhibit such ideas abroad, and the new king, by his prudent and generous conduct, prevented any chance of disturbance. It would not be becoming and to the honour of the king of France to avenge the wrongs of the duke of Orleans — such was the maxim which guided the first acts of Louis XII.

He sent for the sire Louis de la Trémouille, that renowned captain who had made him prisoner at the battle of St. Aubin, and confirmed him in all his offices, rank, pensions, and advantages. He declared that he would maintain every man in his full possessions and rights, and refused to bear in mind which of the late king's servants had persuaded Charles VIII in the latter part of his life to keep the first prince of the blood in a species of exile. Finally he invited Madame Anne of France and her husband Duke Peter de Bourbon to come to him at Blois and lavished on them marks of esteem and favour of every kind; his generosity towards them even appeared to many



people to go beyond the boundaries prescribed by the interests of the state. Louis XI, in giving his daughter Anne in marriage to the sire Peter de Beaujeu, had stipulated in the contract that if Peter should inherit property from the ducal branch of the house of Bourbon (which actually happened), those great domains, although originally feminine fiefs, should return to the crown in case Peter should die without male heirs. Now Duke Peter was old and had only a daughter named Suzanne; the last great lordship (*seigneurie*) of central France was thus about to be merged in that royal domain which had successively absorbed all the great fiefs. The king allowed him-



LOUIS XII

self to be drawn into sacrificing this final result of the labours of Louis XI, and by letters patent of the 12th of May, 1498, he annulled the ancient contracts and treaties which excluded Suzanne from the paternal fiefs. The marriage of Suzanne with her cousin Charles de Bourbon, who like herself was still a child, secured that the heritage should not pass from that house. The parliament of Paris, accustomed to defend the permanent interests of the crown against the kings themselves, only enregistered the royal letters after a resistance of several months.

Louis XII showed no less benevolence to the good towns than to the princes and old servants of Charles VIII; he promised the citizen deputies who had come to pay him their respects to give his attention to improving the condition of the poor people; he published a severe ordinance for the repression of robberies and violences committed by the soldiers; he diminished the taxes (*tailles*) by two

hundred thousand livres, and dispensed Paris and the whole kingdom from the *don de joyeux avènement*. Louis XII kept the promises of the opening of his reign: his well-directed energy, his desire to do good did not fail. The frivolous and libertine young prince had become a humane king, moderate, devoted to his duties, an economical administrator, who kept a careful watch over the public wealth, the protector of order and of justice, the equitable rewarder of merit and honesty: unfortunately he had little initiative and little breadth of mind, and the facility of his disposition placed him to an inordinate degree under the influence of those he loved. It is true that he often had the good sense and the good fortune to bestow his affections in safe keeping: his principal minister and his best friend, George d'Amboise, archbishop of Rouen, who had participated in his evil fortune and who shared, not to say absorbed his power, was certainly worthy to govern the king and the kingdom, if the internal administration alone is taken into consideration; but abroad the blind and often reprehensible policy in which George involved Louis afforded a melancholy compensation for the services rendered at home.

[1498 A.D.]

*Marriage with Anne of Brittany*

The first months of the reign of Louis XII were filled with an important matter which touched no less the most precious interests of the realm than the private life of the king. By the marriage contract of Charles VIII and Anne of Brittany the husband and wife had combined their respective rights over Brittany to the advantage of the survivor; this duchy therefore returned to the widow and was once more separated from France. Madame Anne of Brittany had already returned to her town of Nantes and had been reinstated in full possession of her sovereignty. It is true that another article of the contract, in order to obviate this separation, required the duchess not to marry again except with the successor of Charles VIII or the heir presumptive to the crown; but for twenty-two years the king had been married to the second daughter of Louis XI and had no son. Louis resolved to push aside the obstacle which separated him and the widowed queen and set to work to obtain a divorce from the deformed Joan of France in order to marry the fair sovereign of Brittany. It has been universally repeated, on the faith of certain writers, contemporaries of Louis XII, that the duke of Orleans and the duchess Anne had been previously attached to one another and that, during the Breton war, Louis had secretly contended with the other suitors for the hand of Anne. This tradition is confuted by a simple comparison of dates: when the duke of Orleans withdrew to Brittany in 1484, the princess was only eight years old: she was but twelve when he was taken prisoner at St. Aubin-du-Cormier. What does seem certain was that Landois, the intriguing favourite of Francis II, had even then suggested to Duke Louis the idea of a divorce for purely political objects, and that Duke Francis II had secretly promised his daughter to the duke of Orleans. Be that as it may, the duke of Orleans, after leaving his prison, figured without apparent repugnance in the negotiations which brought about the union of Charles and Anne and was even one of the king's witnesses at Rennes and Langeais.

Whilst Charles VIII was still alive nothing indicated that the duke and the queen had feelings of tenderness for one another; they were even at one time on very bad terms—on the occasion of the death of the little dauphin Charles Orlando, the death which had made Louis heir to the crown. Anne bore a grudge against Louis for the slight sympathy he had shown for her in her maternal grief. Finally Anne gave expression to a somewhat theatrical despair on the death of Charles VIII, a husband very far from faithful, but gentle and affectionate; she was the first queen of France who wore black for mourning; hitherto the widows of kings had dressed in white, which circumstance had procured for them the title of "white queens"



ANNE OF BRITTANY

(From an old French engraving)

(*reines blanches*). Anne assumed black as the symbol of constancy, because it cannot fade.

In spite of these demonstrations of a showy grief, the proud and ambitious Anne graciously received the first advances of the new king who proposed to her that she should not leave the throne of France, and Louis had little difficulty in persuading her to sign on the 9th of August a promise of marriage to be fulfilled as soon as might be. The king, without loss of time, had presented to Pope Alexander VI an application for the dissolution of his marriage. The circumstances were favourable: the Roman pontiff wished to withdraw his son, the cardinal De Valence (Cesare Borgia), from the ecclesiastical state that he might make him a secular prince; he had asked for him the hand of a daughter of Frederick, king of Naples. Frederick refused this shameful alliance. Alexander in his anger threw himself on the French side and undertook not only to authorise the king's divorce but to second his plans in Italy on condition that Cesare Borgia should have his share. A bull of the 29th of July charged three ecclesiastical commissioners to inquire into and take proceedings on the monarch's application. Two of these delegates, the cardinal De Luxemburg and the bishop of Albi, brother of George d'Amboise, were devoted to the king. Louis recognised this service by investing Cesare Borgia with the counties of Valentinois and Diois in Dauphiné; besides this he gave him a company of one hundred lances and a pension of 20,000 livres and promised to help the holy see to subdue the petty princes of Romagna. George d'Amboise received the cardinal's hat from Alexander VI: such was the earnest of the odious alliance which formed the ineffaceable stain on the reign of Louis XII. The excuse of the public advantage, the necessity of gaining over the pope in order to procure the divorce, closed the eyes of Louis and induced him to take the first steps; he was then unable to stop and almost his whole reign presented the aspect of two faces offering a strange contrast, the one of uprightness, good sense, and humanity at home; the other of injustice, violence, and folly abroad.

Joan of France, who had not been crowned with her husband and had not been accorded the honours of a queen, was summoned to appear on the 30th of August at the deanery of Tours before the pope's commissioners. There is something sad and ignominious about the details of this trial. Joan, resigned beforehand to a fate too clearly foreseen, defended herself solely from a sense of duty: the dissolution of the marriage was pronounced on the 17th of December and the repudiated wife withdrew to a convent at Bourges.

Louis XII now only awaited the necessary dispensation of consanguinity to marry Anne of Brittany: Cesare Borgia, whom the king had enticed into France in order to make him an instrument and who had arrived at the court in semi-royal state, was endeavouring to extort fresh favours from Louis before complying with his wishes; the bishop of Ceuta, one of the pope's commissioners, revealed to the king that the dispensation had been signed by Alexander VI and was now in Cesare's possession. Louis made ready to take further proceedings; Cesare then produced the bull which he had no further interest in keeping; but the bishop of Ceuta died a few days later — poisoned.

In the château of Nantes, three weeks after the granting of the divorce, Louis XII married the widow of Charles VIII: the marriage treaty, signed the 6th of January, 1499, by the chief nobles of France and Brittany, was much less advantageous to the crown than the contract of Langeais between



[1499 A.D.]

Charles VIII and Anne. Anne and her subjects, having in view the re-establishment of Breton independence,<sup>1</sup> required that the duchy of Brittany should be destined to the second child, male or female, to be born of the future marriage or, if the married couple had only one heir, to the second child of that heir; if the duchess died childless before the king, Louis was to retain Brittany during his life, but after him the duchy was to return to the next heirs of Madame Anne. As yet it was but a feeble bond which attached Brittany to France. The king swore to preserve to Brittany all its rights and liberties, its own administration judicial and political, its council, parliament, chamber of accounts (*chambre des comptes*), general treasury, and assembly of the three estates for the reform of the customs, tolls, and the levy of subsidies; he promised that benefices should only be given to natives according to the exclusive choice of the queen; that no new jurisdiction might be established and that free episcopal electors should be defended against the pretensions of the pope.

The whole conduct of Louis had shown that he desired this alliance equally as man and king: whether he had or had not loved the queen during the lifetime of Charles VIII he bore her during the whole period of their union a constant and unique affection which formed a singular contrast to the vulgar and licentious amours of his youth. It was doubtless by a kind of delicate flattery that contemporary writers traced back the origin of the king's passion to the childhood of the heiress of Brittany. The Breton duchess, who had the obstinacy rather than the sensibility of her race, made but a feeble response to this tenderness and took advantage of it to draw her docile husband into deplorable political errors.<sup>2</sup>

### *Foreign Affairs<sup>2</sup>*

The domestic and internal affairs of the kingdom thus regulated, Louis turned his views towards Italy. He was eager to renew the successes and avenge the defeats of his predecessor. He had not only to support the claims of the house of Anjou upon Naples, but to maintain his own private right to the duchy of Milan. The Sforza, soldiers of fortune, had usurped the duchy, and founded their right on the marriage of the first Sforza with Blanche, the natural daughter of the last Visconti. Louis XI had allied with them, and had refused to permit the duke of Orleans to insist upon his heritage. No sooner did the latter become Louis XII than he assumed the title of duke of Milan, and prepared, by arms and alliances, to prosecute his claim.

Lodovico Sforza had usurped the duchy, and secured it by poisoning his nephew: he was peculiarly hateful to the French, from having been the first to entice Charles VIII into Italy, and afterwards the first to betray him. His crimes made him equally odious to his countrymen. The pope was won over by the gift of the duchy of Valentinois, which the king gave to his notorious son, Cesare Borgia. The Florentines were in the French interest, and the Venetians leagued with Louis in order to share the spoils of Lodovico. In short, when a French army entered the Milanese in the summer of 1499, it met with no resistance. The duchy submitted almost without a blow, and Lodovico fled to Innsbruck, to his only ally, Maximilian.

[<sup>1</sup> Anne had Brittany in dangerously good order; and it has even been suggested that she intended by this move to make it almost a political necessity for Louis to marry her.]

[<sup>2</sup> The ensuing pages should be read with constant reference to our history of Italy, vol. IX, pp. 425 *et seq.*, where a complementary treatment of the subject is given. See also the history of the Holy Roman Empire, vol. XIII.]

Lodovico returned with an army in the ensuing year. The capital rose in his favour. Trivulzio, who had been left governor of the duchy, was besieged in the town-house, and was only rescued by the audacious gallantry of some sixty knights, his followers. The French were obliged to evacuate the province. At the first tidings of the insurrection, La Trémouille marched from France to succour Trivulzio. Lodovico sought to intercept this aid by posting himself at Novara. But when the outposts of both armies touched, the Swiss in Lodovico's service learned that their comrades in the French army were better paid and treated. On the eve of action these mercenaries declared their intention of deserting to the French. Lodovico Sforza used the strongest entreaties to dissuade them; but finding them determined, he merely begged not to be delivered to the enemy. How was he to escape from Novara, in which he was in a manner besieged? The Swiss consented to allow him to mingle in their ranks, clothed as one of their soldiers. Their treachery, however, or the vigilance of the French, discovered the unfortunate Lodovico in the Swiss ranks, as they marched out of Novara. He was taken, and conveyed to France, where he was confined in the castle of Chinon until he died. Thus Louis subdued for the second time the duchy of Milan.

The conquest of Naples still remained to be achieved; but the present enmity of Maximilian king of the Romans rendered it inexpedient to undertake at present so distant an expedition, which would leave Milan exposed to the hostility of the Germans. This inability to conquer, joined with the impatience to possess, caused Louis to commit an egregious blunder. He formed an alliance with Ferdinand king of Spain, to divide between them the kingdom of Naples, to the exclusion of its reigning monarch, who was of the illegitimate race of Aragon. Louis was to have the better or northern half of the kingdom, the city of Naples included. Ferdinand, who merely wanted a pretext to obtain a footing in the peninsula, and introduce forces, was to content himself with Apulia and Calabria. Accordingly, Ferdinand sent Gonsalvo de Cordova, and Louis despatched Stuart d'Aubigny, each to conquer their respective portions, which they effected; the reigning monarch at first confiding in Gonsalvo, who of course betrayed him. Frederick of Naples, being driven from his capital and kingdom, fled first to Ischia and thence to France, where Louis gave him the duchy of Anjou as a compensation for the loss of his crown.

Louis now turned his views towards the Venetians. They had obtained Cremona, Bergamo, Brescia, the eastern territories of the duchy of Milan, as the price of their co-operation against Sforza. The king envied them this portion of his duchy, as they hated and feared the newly grown power of a foreign monarch in Italy. He endeavoured to bring Maximilian of Austria to join in an alliance against them; and a treaty was concluded, by which Maximilian promised the investiture of the duchy of Milan to Louis. Maximilian's grandson Charles (afterwards emperor) was to marry the princess Claude, the daughter of Louis. The designs, however, which the monarchs entertained against Venice were interrupted by the bad faith of Ferdinand of Spain, which began to manifest itself in Naples. The agreement by which this kingdom was partitioned between two rival powers, without any fixed line of demarcation, was necessarily rather a source of war than a seal of peace. A great portion of the country's revenue proceeded from the tax on the herds of cattle, which were yearly collected in the plains. Quarrels arose about this, and about the limits of the provinces; and war soon broke out between Gonsalvo and the duke de Nemours, who was viceroy for the French.

[1502-1503 A.D.]

He was now leagued with the Borgias — the father, the execrable pope Alexander VI; his son, Cesare Borgia, one of the heroes of Macchiavelli. They betrayed Louis at every turn; crushed and murdered his friends. Still the French king temporised; and in a treaty concluded with them at this period, he agreed to sacrifice to them several of the independent nobility of Italy — among others, the Bentivoglios and the Orsini. One of the causes of this blindness in Louis was the care which the pope took to win the favour of the cardinal D'Amboise, the French minister, whom he cajoled in a manner which was afterwards practised on Wolsey, by flattering him with the hope of succeeding to the popedom. The French were at first the strongest party in Naples. Gonsalvo retired before D'Aubigny, and shut himself in Barletta. There were several combats: one, in which the brave La Palisse was taken; another, of thirteen French against thirteen Italians, in which the Italians had the best, although their enemies assert that the advantage was won by treacherously stabbing the horses of the French knights. The Spanish monarch had recourse to artifice, his usual weapon. Seizing the opportunity of his son-in-law the archduke Philip's travelling through France, he proposed a new treaty to Louis, by which Naples was to be brought as the princess Claude's dowry to young Charles, the grandson of Ferdinand and Maximilian. Louis XII gladly and confidently agreed to these proposals. He relaxed in his exertions for reinforcing his army in Naples, while Ferdinand made use of the interval to send potent succours to Gonsalvo. The continued hostilities and successes of this captain, notwithstanding the pacific declaration and arrangement of his master, awakened Louis from his supine confidence. But it was too late. D'Aubigny was beaten by the Spaniards and taken prisoner at Seminara in Calabria, the scene of one of his former victories. On the same day of the ensuing week, the hostile commanders, Gonsalvo and the duke de Nemours, met at Cerignola. It was towards evening, and the Spaniards threw up an entrenchment before their position. The duke de Nemours would not tarry. He ordered an instant attack, which was at first successful. He himself, leading on another to support it, was slain by a bullet from an arquebuse; and his followers failing in the assault, a rout ensued, in which the French army were for the most part dispersed. Naples surrendered to Gonsalvo. Its castle was taken by mining—a mode of offence invented in these wars. Shortly afterwards, the fortress of Gaeta was the only post in the kingdom that held for the French.

Louis raised armies to attack Ferdinand in the Pyrenees and in Italy; but equally without result. The reign of the Borgias was immediately after brought to a tragical close. The pope and his son had invited several rich cardinals, their intimates, to sup with them in a vineyard. The Borgias intended to poison them; and Cesare Borgia sent some bottles of medicated wine, under the especial care of a domestic, to the spot. The pope arrived first; he was thirsty, and called for drink. The poisoned wine was poured out for him; and his son, coming in at the moment, partook of it. Pope Alexander expired soon after, and his son's life was saved only by means of antidotes and a strong constitution. Great intrigues agitated the conclave. An aged and infirm pope was elected by way of compromise. In another conclave the cardinal D'Amboise was not more successful. An Italian prelate was preferred, who soon displayed his imperious, ambitious, and warlike spirit, under the name of Julius II. Cesare Borgia had contributed to his election, in return for a promise of protection; and Julius showed his gratitude by arresting Borgia immediately afterwards. He escaped, however, and fled to Gonsalvo, who, receiving him with friendship



equally insincere, put an end to the career of this prince of intrigue by sending him prisoner to Spain. In the meantime the French army remained inactive for want of a chief. Gonzaga had been driven from the command by the taunts of the French: the marquis of Saluzzo succeeded him, but with no more success. The campaign served but to display the valour of the brave Bayard, who alone defended the passage of a bridge against a body of Spaniards for a considerable time. Gonsalvo was everywhere successful; and Gaeta, the last fortress of the French, surrendered in a panic.

The tidings of this ill fortune, and especially of the loss of Gaeta, so affected Louis that he fell into a dangerous illness. He was tended with exemplary affection by his queen, Anne of Brittany. But that prudent princess, seeing his death imminent, despatched much of her valuables to be conveyed down the Loire to Brittany. The heir to the crown, young Francis, Count d'Angoulême, then inhabited, with his mother, the château of Amboise. The marshal De Gié was the chief counsellor and influential man of this embryo court. Over zealous for the interests of the future king, and deeming Louis past hope, De Gié stopped the valuables of the queen as they descended the Loire past Amboise. Anne never forgave the insult. Louis recovered, and the marshal De Gié was pursued by the vengeance of the queen for years. He was tried; and it is a great proof of the improvement of the judicature that he escaped with life from so powerful an enemy. This circumstance increased the hatred between the mother of Francis, Louise of Savoy, and Queen Anne. By the last treaty with Maximilian it had been agreed that his grandson Charles should marry Claude, the daughter of Louis, and with her inherit the Milanese. Some time previous to the last illness of the king, Maximilian had sent an embassy to conclude and enlarge this treaty. The monarch was at the time sorely vexed by his disasters in Naples, and greatly enraged against the fickleness and bad faith of the Italian powers. Above all he was incensed against Venice; and in order to be avenged on this proud republic, he granted to Maximilian all that he asked. The cessions then made or stipulated by Louis are so enormous as to be incredible. The heirs of his daughter Claude by Charles of Luxemburg were to possess not only Milan, but the duchies of Burgundy and Brittany, thus dismembering the monarchy of France, and reducing it almost by one-half.

De Seyssel,<sup>b</sup> the minister and biographer of Louis, excuses his conduct on this occasion, by saying that the king merely wanted to gain Maximilian's aid against the Venetians, and that he never intended to fulfil these conditions. It seems much more probable that these stipulations were owing to the influence of Anne of Brittany; to the love of that queen for her own daughter, whose exaltation she preferred to that of France; and at the same time to Anne's hatred of Louise of Savoy, and of her son Francis, the heir to the throne. Every Frenchman was shocked and terrified at the prospect of these provinces being conveyed to a foreign power. Louis himself, listening to the advice of his counsellors, was struck with remorse at the folly and want of patriotism which characterised such measures. The states-general were called together: they drew up a strong remonstrance against them, and supplicated that the princess Claude should be given in marriage to Francis. The king consented to this. But so long as Anne of Brittany lived, she never allowed the marriage to take place.

Maximilian was of course extremely wroth on learning that the king of France and the assembly of the nation refused to fulfil the treaty. He

[1506-1509 A.D.]

resolved to attack the French in Italy. Genoa about this time had rebelled against Louis. Louis, however, conquered and reduced it to submission. Maximilian was too late to support the insurrection. The Venetians, then allies of the king, barred the passage of the Austrians into Italy. They defeated Maximilian, and compelled him to purchase a treaty, resigning his conquests. They concluded it without awaiting the consent of Louis, or allowing him to derive from it any advantage.

This was a new grievance added to the many already entertained against these republicans by the French. Maximilian was of course ready to join against them. Pope Julius was at variance with them on account of Faenza, and other towns, the wreck of the Borgia usurpations, which they held. Between these powers and Ferdinand of Spain was formed the famous League of Cambray for the destruction of Venice. It was called famous from having nearly attained its aim—a distinction which could be applied to few treaties of the time. In raising his army for this enterprise the king made an important improvement in his levies. He began to mistrust the Swiss, whose mercenary and turbulent spirit was scarcely recompensed by their character for courage. Therefore, although he hired a corps of them to the number of 6,000, he at the same time endeavoured to resuscitate the French infantry. Louis XI had abandoned the good custom of training the French peasants to arms, which had so contributed to the victories of Charles VII. The despot dreaded a national army. The armies of Charles VIII, and hitherto those of Louis XII, were composed of mounted gentlemen, who formed the cavalry, and of hired Swiss, or perhaps a few Gascons, for infantry. This was the principal reason of the first success and subsequent defeats of the French in Naples. Cavalry force, so superior when in good condition, is liable to be unhorsed, and is more easily disorganised than infantry. Louis now levied a body of infantry in France of from 12,000 to 14,000 men. To give spirit and respectability to this force, he induced his bravest captains, Bayard, Molard, and Chabannes, to fight on foot and command these new brigades; and it required all his influence to make them submit to such degradation. The French cavalry amounted to 12,000 men. With this army he marched against the Venetians. Their army, nowise inferior, was commanded by the count of Pitigliano, whose policy accorded with the orders of the senate to avoid a battle. Alviano, the Venetian general second in command, risked an attack in despite of this at Agnadello. An action took place, in which the count feebly supported his lieutenant. Louis, who fought in the thickest of the engagement, was victorious. The



FRENCH PEASANT, REIGN OF LOUIS XII

Venetian army was utterly routed; and the French king, advancing to the brink of the lagunes, enjoyed the satisfaction of sending from his cannon some vain shots against the discomfited but still unsubdued queen of the Adriatic. This success dissolved the league. Julius II, having obtained possession of the towns which he coveted from the Venetians, leagued with them against Louis; and a war, or a succession of skirmishes, ensued.

Louis sent a powerful army against the pope, under the command of Gaston de Foix, duke de Nemours, his sister's son, then twenty-two years of age. The battle of Ravenna ensued, and the French were victorious. The sack of Ravenna was almost the only fruit reaped by this signal victory. Julius II, undaunted by defeat, refused to yield. He raised up the English and the Swiss against Louis, who was threatened with invasion from both these countries. Maximilian let loose upon Milan his namesake, Massimiliano Sforza, son of Lodovico; and the Swiss espoused the youth's pretensions. The cantons were enraged against Louis for attempting to substitute French soldiers for them. When he sent La Trémouille to negotiate with them, they demanded that 15,000 Swiss should be yearly hired, and paid by France in peace and war. They demanded also the Milanese for Sforza, and the abolition of the Pragmatic Sanction for the pope. It is said they also resented some injurious words spoken by Louis. Whatever was its cause, their resentment was but too well seconded by their force. The French under La Palisse and Trivulzio were driven out of the Milanese, and even Genoa again declared itself independent. The feats of Bayard during this unfortunate campaign might be made to fill pages, but they availed nothing. Haute-Navarre was at the same time wrested by Ferdinand from Jean d'Albret. The province has ever since remained to the Spaniards.<sup>c</sup>

### *Internal Affairs*

Neither the war of Genoa nor that of Venice had interrupted that universal movement of internal improvement in France, which, begun under Charles VIII, had gone on and increased under Louis XII. The foundation of this progress lay, above all, in the vitality of the nation itself; next in the good supervision given to the legislation, administration, and finances by the appointed members of council and parliament; but to the prime minister was due the merit of having given to all this activity a united impulse, and to the king the merit of zealous participation therein.

During the winter of 1509 Louis visited a large portion of his kingdom, and did much good in regard to the execution of justice. Never at any epoch of its history had France enjoyed so much prosperity; the twenty years' absence of all civil disorders, the maintenance of order by an absolute and vigilant administration, the security of people and property, the protection given to the weak against the stronger, to the labourers against the nobles and soldiers, bore marvellous fruits. The population increased rapidly, the cities in their ancient limits constantly expanded into large suburbs; hamlets and villages rose up as if by enchantment in the woods and waste places. The last vestiges of the fatal wars that had depopulated France were completely effaced, and Seyssel, a contemporary writer, states that a third of the kingdom had again been put under cultivation during the last thirty years. The produce of the land increased enormously; the excise taxes, tolls, fees, etc., had increased more than two-thirds in many places, and the revenue of the royal estate, augmenting like the private ones, allowed the king to carry out his enterprises without oppressing the nation.



[1509-1510 A.D.]

Industry and commerce received no less an impetus, communications were endlessly extended, and merchants made less of going to Rome, Naples, or London than formerly to Lyons or Geneva. The luxury and elegance of buildings, furniture, and apparel displayed the progress of the arts and public wealth. The condition of all classes was improved, and the poor, unaccustomed to see the sovereigns take such care of their interests, were deeply grateful to the king and his minister. "Let George do as he thinks right," had become a popular saying expressing the confidence placed in Cardinal Amboise. Louis XII received striking testimonies of the affection of the people on a journey he took from Paris to Lyons through Champagne and Burgundy in the spring of 1510. "Wherever he went, men and women assembled from all parts, following him for three or four leagues, and when they were able to touch his mule or his dress, or anything belonging to him, they kissed their hands with as much devotion as they would show to a reliquary." (Saint-Gelais.) The Burgundians displayed as much enthusiasm as the ancient French.

Cardinal George did not reap his share in the popular homage. The inseparable companion of Louis XII had not accompanied him on this journey; whilst the health of the king was improving somewhat, that of the minister was rapidly declining. George, weakened by gout and other infirmities, had not the strength to resist an epidemic, called "whooping cough" by contemporary historians. Louis XII found him dying at Lyons, whither the cardinal had gone to await the king, and had only the consolation of receiving the farewells of his "faithful friend." Cardinal Amboise expired May 25th, 1510. He had not yet reached the age of forty-five. He was the first of those cardinal-ministers, almost kings, who have played so large a part in the history of the monarchy. The experiment was not encouraging, for the duties of Cardinal Amboise were altogether foreign to his ecclesiastical dignity, and his faults, on the contrary, largely proceeded from it. His dream of the papacy and his dealings generally with the college of cardinals and the holy see were very detrimental to the interest and the honour of France.

His home administration saves his memory. He does not shine therein by disinterestedness, but that was never the distinguishing virtue of great ministers, and is scarcely compatible with monarchical government. He left a vast fortune, amassed rather at the expense of Italy than of France; his use of it at least pleads for his memory. Many touching anecdotes attest his goodness of heart; the fine remains of those buildings mutilated by the hand of the Revolution show us the use to which his wealth was put. Like all men of superior talents, whether princes or ministers, who have left their mark upon the destinies of nations, George was the centre of the art movement, and diffused a vivifying influence around him. One of the most beautiful periods of French art belongs to his ministry; it has been incorporated too long with the reign of Francis I, who during his best years merely continued, whilst enlarging it, and who took the first step towards decadence when he departed from it.

The artistic history of France in the sixteenth century may be divided into two periods: in the first, Italian art modifies French art by some happy innovations, and incites it to a healthy emulation; in the second, it stifles and absorbs it. In the first period, the Italian artists summoned to France concur with native artists in raising French monuments; in the second, the Italianised French build Italian monuments—vanquished Italy conquers her conquerors. *g*

*Last Years of Louis XII*

The internal prosperity of France contrasted strangely with the conditions of interminable warfare that characterised the external policy of Louis XII. The seat of these wars was not confined to Italy. In 1513 France became embroiled with her old enemy, England.

Henry VIII of England invaded France in concert with Maximilian. He laid siege to Théroutanne. The French succeeded in throwing supplies into the town; but being attacked suddenly some days after by the English and imperialists, they were seized with a panic and fled. This has been called the battle of Spurs. Bayard, who refused to join in the flight of his compatriots, was made prisoner after a gallant defence. Théroutanne was the sole conquest of Henry.<sup>c</sup> But almost simultaneously the French arms were checked in Burgundy and in Italy. In fact, the year 1513 has been pronounced (by Dareste<sup>k</sup>) one of the most disastrous in French military annals. Yet no very important political sequels were attached to these reverses.<sup>a</sup>

In January, 1514, Louis lost his queen, Anne of Brittany. She was a woman of distinguished beauty, though she limped in her gait. She possessed great influence over Louis: was proud, independent, and obstinate—qualities characteristic of the Bretons. Anne was at the same time a pious, chaste, and exemplary queen. It was through her influence and importance that the female sex, hitherto excluded, was introduced into society: she formed a court, and collected around her the principal young ladies of rank in the kingdom, whose manners and principles she loved to form. The establishment of a court, that is, of a court in which woman's presence was allowed and her influence felt, was, trifling as it may seem, a most important innovation.

Louis, attached as he had been to Anne, did not long delay to fill up the place by her left vacant. Policy joined with other reasons to prompt this step. As the seal of a reconciliation and alliance with Henry VIII, Louis espoused that monarch's sister Mary, a princess then in the flower of her age. The gay habits of a bridegroom did not suit the constitution of the king, then past fifty-



LOUIS XII

(From an old French print)

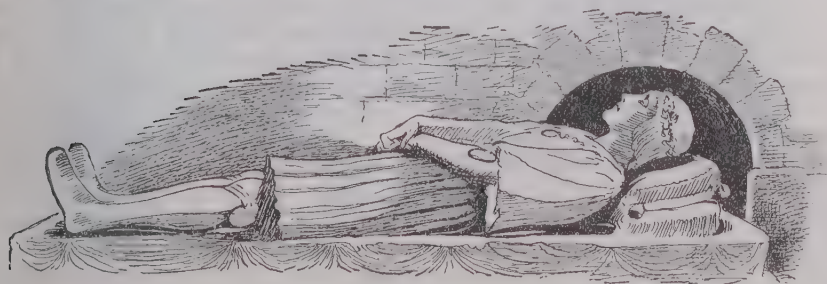
four. In a few weeks after his marriage he was seized with a fever and dysentery, which carried him off at the palace of the Tournelles, in Paris, on the first day of the year 1515.

Never was monarch more lamented by the great mass of his subjects than Louis XII. He was endeared to them principally by his economy and forbearance in levying contributions, and by his strict administration of justice, so different from the sanguinary executions which characterised the reign of Louis XI, when no man could be certain of life. He reduced the taxes more than one-third in the early part of his reign, and even in his distresses preferred selling the crown lands to any of the usual expedients for exaction.

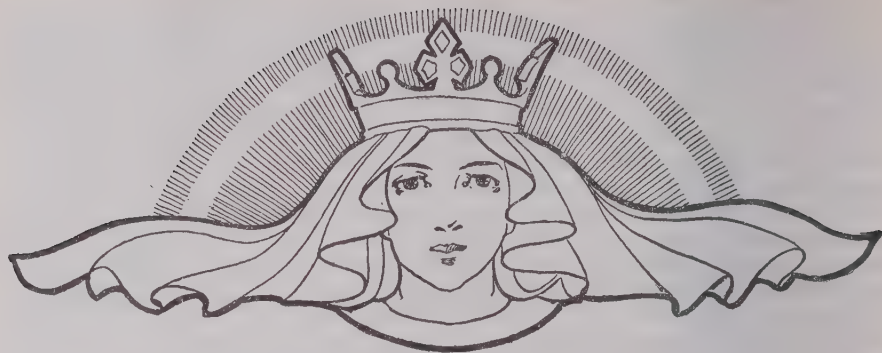
[1515 A.D.]

Hence Louis earned the appellation of "Father of his people." His popularity was much greater with the middle than with the higher classes. The latter called his economy parsimony, and his sympathy with the commons forgetfulness of his rank. Writers of the reigns of Louis XIV and XV seek to depreciate the character of Louis XII, and to elevate that of his successor. Louis XII they consider as the *roi roturier*, "the plebeian king": Francis as the aristocratic and chevaleresque. The nobility certainly do not appear prominent in this reign. New names arise and become illustrious as in the time of Charles VII. The lesser noblesse or gentry were in fact treading on the heels and taking the places of the higher aristocracy. The latter rallied or were re-created in the days of Francis, but these tendencies were as much the effect of opposite states and circumstances, as of the opposite characters of the two monarchs.

The writers of the Revolution reverse the system of favouritism: they choose Louis, the father of his people, to be their hero, and they depreciate the kingly Francis. An author of this school, Roederer,<sup>i</sup> has seen every perfection in Louis XII, and he considers that the commons of France were in possession of perfect constitutional freedom during his reign: history, however, does not present this view of the question. Although Louis did certainly seem to allow in the parliament a power of examining and objecting to his edicts, yet the assembly of states in his reign was far from assuming or being allowed aught like a constitutional control. The very virtues and moderation of Louis were inimical to political freedom, since, by rendering the commons contented, they took from them, with the wish, the right of remonstrance. Had a prodigal and an unpopular king been reduced to the same distress as Louis was in the latter years of his reign, the commons of France might opportunely have made a stand for their privileges, and at least kept alive their traditions of freedom.<sup>c</sup>







## CHAPTER XII

### IMPERIAL STRUGGLES OF FRANCIS I AND HENRY II

[1515-1559 A.D.]

Francis I, his government and his times, commence the era of modern France, and bring clearly to view the causes of her greatnesses and her weaknesses. — Guizot.<sup>b</sup>

#### CRITICAL SURVEY OF FRANCIS I AND HIS PERIOD

THE accession of Francis I to the crown of France, January 1st, 1515, on the death of Louis XII, may be considered as signalling the passage from the Middle Ages to modern times and from ancient barbarism to civilisation. The transformations of great masses of men amongst whom new ideas and new passions are seen to germinate, are never sudden; centuries have prepared them in silence, and an attentive eye may have discerned, in the preceding age, the authors of the age which is about to open; but their action on the people has an element of the unexpected, because the men whose minds have been formed in principles and sentiments scarcely avowed by themselves, and scarcely understood by their contemporaries, all at once perceive that they form the majority, that they are understood, that they will be followed; and they burst as it were upon the country which had not noticed them. Thus simultaneously with the reign of the young monarch there began a decided taste for arts and letters which signalled itself by the most glorious monuments; a new zest for the pleasures of society, for wit, and for gallantry which corrupted morals while it perhaps gave more elegance to manners; an esteem for learning, a zeal for study which reflected a special glory on the French magistracy in whom dignity of character soon joined itself to knowledge; and finally an independence of opinions which, while admitting men to judge what they had adored, led some to new systems of philosophy and others to the reform of religion. France, hitherto poor in writers, began to turn her attention to herself, to study herself; her follies and vices, like her virtues and learning, left their traces; and there came into being the double series of courtly and philosophic writers, of the friends of disorder and those of wisdom — a series which was not afterwards interrupted until the fall of the throne of Louis XVI.

[1515 A.D.]

The new sovereign, Francis d'Angoulême, duke of Valois, who gave the signal for this revolution, was not however of sufficient force to produce it. He was a son of Charles d'Angoulême, cousin german of Louis XII, and as he had been born at Cognac on the 12th of September, 1494, he was only twenty years and a few months old. His education had been begun by Marshal de Gié, whom Louis XII had replaced in 1506 by Arthur Gouffier,



FRANCIS I

sire de Boisy ; this last had been through all the Italian campaigns, and he had acquired in that country a taste for arts and polite literature which was scarcely ever to be met with amongst other men of noble rank. He perceived that a certain glory might be attached to the study of letters, he even accustomed his pupil to show some deference to men of learning and to seek their conversation ; but if Boisy himself took pleasure in reading, it was in vain that he endeavoured to inspire the prince he was training with

the desire to read any books other than the romances of chivalry. It was from them that Francis I derived his sole instruction ; he modelled himself on the heroes of the Round Table and of the palace of Charlemagne, not on those of history ; he desired to shine as an Amadis rather than as a sovereign ; and the height of his figure, the beauty of his face, his skill in arms and in all physical exercises, his bravery which he had already had occasion to exhibit, and finally his love of pleasure which his young comrades esteemed in him more than his moral qualities, marked him out for the admiration of those who, like himself, knew the world only through the medium of romances. "He was as fair a prince," said Bayard's *Loyal Serviteur*,<sup>c</sup> "as ever was in the world ; never had there been a king in France who so rejoiced the noblesse."<sup>d</sup>

#### A BRILLIANT CAMPAIGN IN ITALY

After the coronation, which was celebrated at Rheims with great pomp, and the festivities of the royal entrance in Paris, the preparations for the expedition into Italy begun by Louis XII were resumed without delay. France possessed nothing beyond the Alps since the fort at the Lantern or Fanal at Genoa had capitulated. Everyone expected to see the French retake the Milanese ; but Francis I anticipated the general expectation — he wished that conquest to mark the first year of his reign.

Two things were necessary : to hinder a coalition of the great powers, and to find allies. The coalition had been dissolved in the year previous ; in order that it should not be formed again two treaties were signed, with England and with the Netherlands. Henry VIII, always displeased with the way in which the other kings had abandoned him, consented to renew the alliance he had sworn with Louis XII in 1514. The young prince of Castile, Charles of Austria, freed from guardianship, took the direct government of the Netherlands, and prepared to cross into Spain ; he was the first to try to regain the friendship of France, in order to secure the Belgian frontier. It was agreed that he should be affianced to Madame Renée, the second daughter of Louis XII, who had a large dowry, and that he might defer for five years the homage he owed to the crown in his character of count of Flanders. On the part of Francis I, the concessions were important but remote and eventual : the advantage was immediate. France, safe-guarded in the north on its most vulnerable frontier, and having nothing to fear from England nor the Netherlands, might proceed boldly.

France had wished to gain the court of Rome. Leo X had never ceased seeking reconciliation with France. His brother, Giuliano de' Medici, had married a sister of Louise of Savoy in 1514. Several ambassadors were sent to him, among others the celebrated humanist, Guillaume Budé. But the pope desired peace in Italy and the grandeur of his family. A new French campaign would derange his plans, and for some months he had done everything possible to dissuade the French from such an enterprise. He refused to bind himself in any way, even that of simple neutrality.

There still remained Ferdinand the Catholic, Maximilian, and the Swiss. The king of Aragon was old and in failing health. His death was shortly expected, and he was known to be little in favour of taking the management of a new league. It was he who, by his withdrawal, had caused the failure of that of 1513. Meanwhile, fearing to lose the alliance of the Swiss, and wishing to hinder the return of the French into the peninsula, he refused to prorogue the truce of the preceding year, and signed a defensive alliance



[1515-1516 A.D.]

with Maximilian and the thirteen cantons. The emperor always had need of Spanish troops to continue his war against Venice; he objected all the more to the troubling of the empire by France by her levies of lansquenets. But his hostility was as harmless as his friendship was useless. As for the Swiss, finding them rejecting all offers and manifesting unqualified unreasonableness, the plan to conciliate them was abandoned. The alliance with the Venetians was always assured. Francis I renewed the treaty signed at Blois by Louis XII with the republic.

After these diplomatic precautions it was necessary to renew and strengthen the army. The gendarmerie was increased from 2,500 lances to 4,000. A national infantry was added to it, also more numerous than that of preceding years, 6,000 Basques and Dauphinois, 10,000 French adventurers, Picardians, Gascons or Bretons, and 3,000 pioneers or engineers. Part of these troops were formed by Pedro Navarro, prisoner of the French since the battle of Ravenna. The celebrated Spanish captain, not having obtained from Ferdinand the Catholic the payment of his ransom, consented to enter into the service of Francis I. The foreign infantry was composed of 26,000 lansquenets under the command of the duke of Gelderland. The artillery, more important than ever, comprised 72 large cannon, and 500 mounted pieces.<sup>f</sup>

Thus equipped, Francis crossed the Alps and entered upon that campaign which culminated in the brilliant victory over the Swiss army at Marignano, a full description of which has been given in our history of Italy.<sup>1 a</sup>

It is related that, after the battle, Francis wished to be knighted and that he chose Bayard to give him the blow with the sword; a thing never before seen, as it was supposed that kings had no need of being knighted, as they were knights by birth.<sup>f</sup>

The victory of Francis resulted in his regaining possession of the whole of the Milanese, with the addition of Parma and Piacenza. He also signed two treaties, on November 7th, 1515, at Geneva, and November 29th, 1516, at Friburg, which established a perpetual alliance between himself and the Swiss.

### *The Concordat*

In the course of an interview between himself and Leo X at Bologna, Francis took the important step of abolishing the Pragmatic Sanction and signed the Concordat, which gave the king the right of nomination to bishoprics and other ecclesiastical privileges. "Then it was that Francis I and his chancellor loudly proclaimed the maxims of absolute power; in the church, the Pragmatic Sanction was abolished; and in the state, Francis I during thirty-two years did not once convoke the states-general and laboured only to set up the sovereign right of his own will."<sup>h</sup>

The first article of the Concordat, destined to replace the Pragmatic Sanction, transferred to the king the right to appoint the bishops, abbots, and priors, the pope reserving for himself the veto, in cases where the elect did not fulfil canonical conditions; by the second article, the pope renounced the rights of reversion and expectative, the reversion of livings during the life of the incumbents; but he did not renounce in any way the annats, the most exorbitant of papal exactions, and the silence of the Concordat on this subject implied their re-establishment. The rights of collators of livings were subsequently recognised and limited, and it was decreed that collators

[<sup>1</sup> See vol. IX, Chapter XV, for the complementary account of this and the subsequent Italian campaigns of Francis I.]

could accord only to graduates "*ès universités*" the livings which became vacant during the months of January, April, July, October. Every collator, having from ten to fifty livings at his disposal, was obliged to resign one to the discretion of the pope—or two if he had more than fifty. It was ordained that ecclesiastical trials should be judged in the realm, either by ordinary judges or by commissioners of the pope in reserved cases. The Concordat kept a significant silence on the rights and periodicity of the councils. A tithe on the clergy was accorded to the king, in recognition of the re-establishment of annats, but on condition that the pope and the Medici should receive their part. The abolition of the Pragmatic was then proclaimed in the Lateran Council, a servile assembly which did nothing but register the wishes of the pope, which abjured the principles of the councils of Constance and Bâle, and dissolved itself obscurely shortly afterwards, without the perception by Europe, so to speak, of its closing.

The Concordat was an act of boldness on the part of royalty; which ceded only on a question of money (and reduced that concession when it came to practice). It was an immense stride in the direction of despotism: after the political order it seized upon the religious order; after having usurped the right of the Estates in the fixation of taxes, it usurped the right of the church in the election of its chiefs. In fact during the whole extent of the Middle Ages, the temporal power frequently troubled the liberty of elections, sometimes by force, more often by recommendations equivalent to commands. The ecclesiastical bodies were rarely in full enjoyment of their liberty, and the ancient participation of the people, and even of the lower clergy, at the election of the bishops had been reduced to a purposeless acclamation. But in the end the law remained, the best kings having recognised it, the Pragmatic had revived it, and after the great reaction directed by the councils of the fifteenth century against the papacy, the chapters and convents proceeded more freely at elections than at any period of the preceding centuries. It was this state of things which Francis I and Leo X violently overturned in their division of what did not belong to them by a bizarre exchange where, as Mézeray says, the pope, the spiritual head, took the temporal power unto himself, giving the spiritual power to a temporal prince.<sup>k</sup>

This displacement of the Pragmatic Sanction by the Concordat is justly regarded as one of the most momentous events in French history. The effect of the new order of things upon the immorality of the upper clergy can hardly be overestimated. The Concordat remained in force until the Revolution, and much of French scepticism and philosophical criticism may be ascribed to its influence.

#### STRIFE BETWEEN FRANCIS I AND CHARLES V

The reign of Francis I thus opened brilliantly. That first victory was to have no complete parallel during a long reign; but it served to establish the reputation of Francis as a warrior, and to cast a glamour about his name that no subsequent defeats could quite obscure. We are now to see the victor of Marignano enter upon a struggle with that crafty monarch Charles I of Spain,<sup>1</sup> who, when the emperor Maximilian died, was elected to succeed him, and who came to the imperial throne as Charles V. The life-long

[<sup>1</sup> Charles had succeeded Ferdinand the Catholic, who died in 1516. Francis made no murmur when Charles entered into his vast heritage; indeed, he signed a treaty of offensive and defensive alliance with him at Nyon in 1516. France gained nothing by it except the restitution to Jeanne d'Albret of Basse-Navarre, which Ferdinand had seized. But Maximilian's death in 1519 changed the whole face of affairs.]

[1520 A.D.]

rivalry with this most powerful monarch of the century furnishes the key-note to the reign of Francis I. Francis had himself been an eager candidate for the imperial crown.<sup>a</sup> His mortification was great when his rival was chosen by the electors. He dreamed of nothing but revenge, and fancied that an alliance with Henry VIII of England would help him to gain his object. A meeting was consequently arranged between the two kings, and took place on June 7th, 1520. So gorgeous were the garments of the kings and the trappings of their horses, that their courtiers in trying to rival them "bore thither," the contemporary writer Du Bellay<sup>g</sup> graphically tells us, "their mills, their forests, and their meadows, on their backs."

*Meeting of Henry VIII and Francis I on the Field of the Cloth of Gold*

Nothing equalled in splendour this meeting between the two kings and the two courts in the camp so well named "The Cloth of Gold." It was a struggle upon both sides for pre-eminence in magnificence. It would seem as if they sought more to dazzle than to please, and etiquette, being prejudicial to cordiality, was set aside.

Both arrived on the same day, June 1st, 1520, the one at Calais, the other at Ardres. Henry VIII and Francis I exchanged visits through the most important personages of their courts and councils. Six days passed in the necessary negotiations for their meeting. All was at last arranged with a care so distrustful and minute as to suggest a mutual fear of treason. It was arranged that, leaving the castle of Guines, whither he expected to go on June 5th, Henry VIII should advance towards Francis I, who, on his side, would leave the castle of Ardres, and advance towards Henry VIII.

On Wednesday, June 7th, the kings of France and of England, mounted upon great chargers, clothed the one in cloth of gold, the other in cloth of silver, covered with pearls, diamonds, rubies, and emeralds, their heads covered by velvet caps resplendent with precious stones, from which floated magnificent white plumes, set out at the same time and at the same pace. Their constables preceded them, bare sword in hand, and the lords of their court, most gorgeously apparelled, followed in their train. Each of them was followed by a bodyguard of four hundred archers or men-at-arms. Thus escorted they descended the two hills which led into the pleasant plain of the Valdoré, where a pavilion had been erected to receive them. Their appearance was more that of two knights marching to battle than two princes going to a diplomatic interview.

The escort halted at a certain point, from whence they kept watch, so that the English archers should not approach too closely to the king of France, nor the men-at-arms of the French army to the king of England. At a short distance from each other, Henry and Francis spurred their horses, reining them in with all the grace of the experienced cavalier, when they found themselves side by side. Saluting one another in kingly fashion they then dismounted and entered the pavilion arm in arm. Cardinal Wolsey and Admiral Bonnivet, who, since the death of his brother the grand-master, Arthur de Bois, had been the favourite of Francis I and managed his affairs, preceded them.

Francis I showed great cordiality to Henry VIII, and, giving utterance to the thought always present with him, proffered him his assistance in the hope of gaining his. "Dear brother and cousin," said he, "I have taken much trouble to see you. You understand, I hope, that I am ready to help you with the kingdoms and lordships which are under my authority."



Henry VIII, evading any pledge, relieved himself from the obligation of helping Francis I, by not accepting the assistance offered. He contented himself with assurances of his friendship, which he still made conditional. "I have not in view your kingdoms or your lordships," answered Henry VIII, "but loyalty and the instant execution of promises contained in the treaty drawn up between us. If you keep these, my eyes have never beheld a prince who could win more the affection of my heart."

They then examined the treaty which had been drawn up that evening, and by which, conforming to the agreement of the 4th of October, 1518,

the dauphin of France was to marry the only daughter of the king of England, and Francis I was to pay an annual sum of 100,000 francs, which is equivalent to more than 2,000,000 francs of modern money, until the celebration of the wedding, which was yet far distant. Whilst reading the introduction to the treaty, in which, according to diplomatic etiquette, the title of king of France was added to that of king of England and of Ireland, Henry VIII said with tact: "I will omit it. In your presence it is not correct." But if he omitted it in reading, he left it in the treaty, and a little later was ambitious to make it real by invading France and wishing to reign there. After some discussion, following the custom of that time the sovereigns took wine together, and admired the nobles of their courts, whom they presented to one another and who were embraced, those of France by the king of England, those of England by the king of France. As the meetings, so the fêtes were regulated and carried through in a very ceremonious manner, with precautions that excluded intimacy, and require-

When Francis I went to dine with Queen

ments which betrayed jealousy.

Catherine at Guines, Henry VIII came to dine with Queen Claude at Ardres. The two kings held hostages for one another, and behaved in many ways as if they were in the presence of enemies. This suspicious attitude, these timid steps, were as little suited to the political views as to the trusting character of Francis I.

Wishing one day to break down this ceremonious and distrustful barrier, he arose earlier in the morning than was customary, and taking with him two gentlemen and a page, and wrapped merely in a Spanish cape, he left Ardres to go and surprise the king of England in Guines. Two hundred archers and the governors were upon the drawbridge when he arrived. At the sight of the king of France, come at such a time, so meagrely attended, putting himself thus in their hands, they were aghast. Francis I crossed their ranks with a frank and laughing countenance, and, as if he wished to take the fortress by storm, summoned them gaily to surrender to him. The king of England still slept. Francis I went straight to his room, knocked at the door, awoke Henry VIII, who, on seeing him, was even more astounded than his archers had been, and said frankly, with as much cordial-



THE DAUPHIN FRANCIS, SON OF  
FRANCIS I

[1520 A.D.]

ity as tact: "My brother, you have done me the best turn that one man ever did to another, and showed me what confidence I ought to have in you. From this moment I am your prisoner, and pledge you my faith." He took at the same time a beautiful collar from his neck and begged the king of France to wear it that day for love of his prisoner. Francis I went still further in his demonstrations. He had a bracelet double the value of the collar. Putting this upon Henry's arm he asked him to wear it for love of him, and he added that he wished for that day to be valet to his prisoner. The king of France as a matter of fact handed the king of England's shirt to him. The next day Henry VIII, imitating the confidence of Francis I, went to Ardres slightly attended, and there took place a fresh exchange of presents and courtesies between them.

This attempt to rival each other in friendship was followed by a rivalry of skill in the tournaments and games that the two kings held at their courts. Spacious lists, which ended in strong enclosures for the guards of each prince and which adjoined elegant stands erected for the queens and the ladies-in-waiting, had been prepared in a high and uncovered place. There for eight days were held jousts in which the most skillful men-at-arms of France and England took part on foot and on horseback, with lance and sword. The two kings who directed them displayed therein without contention, the one his brilliant dexterity, the other his athletic strength. Francis I, who excelled in horsemanship, broke his lances with an accomplished skill. Henry VIII, whose impetuosity could not be resisted, struck his antagonist's helmet so violently that he unseated him, and prevented him from fulfilling his other engagements.

King Henry, who was one of the best bowmen in the kingdom, made himself remarkable by the strength with which he drew the string and the swiftness with which he struck his mark; he would also have liked to show his superiority in wrestling with Francis I. The English wrestlers had defeated the French wrestlers because through negligence the latter had not brought with them the Bretons, who are unsurpassed in this sort of game. In the evening Henry VIII, hoping to complete the victory of his men by an easy triumph, came close to Francis I and said to him roughly, "Brother, I want to wrestle with you." At the same time he grasped him with his powerful hands and tried to throw him; but Francis I, who was a well-trained wrestler and more lithe, twisted his leg around his assailant, so that the latter lost his balance and rolled on the ground. Henry arose, crimson with confusion and anger, and wished to begin again. Only the fact that dinner was ready and that the queens intervened prevented this dangerous test, which was more likely to make bad friends of the two kings by wounding their vanity, than the recent intimacies of their long interview were likely to cement their friendship. After twenty-five days passed together in the midst of festivals and pleasures, Francis I and Henry VIII separated, apparently in cordial friendship.

### *Francis I and Charles V at War*

Francis I was not certain of the armed co-operation of Henry VIII, but he believed he had secured his interested and, from thenceforward, faithful friendship. He had bought it by a large annual payment which was simply a subsidy in disguise. He flattered himself that if the king of England failed to declare himself on his side in the war about to begin, at all events he would not espouse the cause of the emperor, his enemy.<sup>h</sup>

But this interview was nothing more than play-acting, as Francis soon realised when he learned that Henry on his way back to England had paid a visit to Charles V, who was close friends with Wolsey. Furious at this duplicity and at learning that Henry VIII had agreed to arbitrate on Charles' behalf in all quarrels between him and France, Francis cast about for a pretext for war, and soon found occasions in the Low Countries, Navarre, and Italy. In April, 1521, he despatched Marshal de Lautrec to defend the Milanese against the Spaniards.<sup>a</sup>

The government of the conquered province had been such as to render the French yoke odious to the Milanese. The cause lay in the intrigues and corruption of the court. As soon as the government has grown despotic, we are instantly compelled to look for the causes of events in the scandalous chronicle of harlotry. It has been related that Anne, queen of Louis XII, had assembled around her the daughters of the French nobility; and a court was thus gradually formed, no longer composed solely of warriors and statesmen, but of the gay and idle also of both sexes. This sudden freedom had

an ill effect upon public morals. The principles and habits of courtiers were not prepared for the increased temptation. The grossness of the age did not yet admit of that true and pure enjoyment of female society which modern cultivation allows. Francis, when he was suddenly released from Amboise, and found himself possessed of all power, and endowed with all attraction, in the midst of an assemblage of beauty, gave a loose rein to his passions. His wife, Claude, daughter of the late king, never had the command of his affections; and the court of Francis soon arrived at that state of dissoluteness which we find recorded in the pages of Brantôme, and from which we shrink in incredulity and disgust.



A FRENCH BARON, EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY

Françoise de Foix was one of those high-born maidens whom Anne of Brittany had reared near her person. That queen had given her in marriage to the count de Châteaubriant, who retained her at his remote château, far from the fascinations of a court. Francis, however, insisted on the presence of the beauty. The countess de Châteaubriant was

summoned to the capital, and soon became the avowed and chosen mistress of her sovereign. Her brother Lautrec was made governor of Milan.<sup>i</sup> In spite of Lautrec's efforts Milan fell into the enemy's hands, and on April 27th, 1522, he lost a battle which robbed Francis of all his power in Lombardy. This was the battle of Bicocca, in which Prospero Colonna, occupying an entrenched position, repulsed the French and inflicted upon them a decisive defeat.<sup>a</sup>

#### *Defection of the Duke de Bourbon*

The rage of Francis against his unsuccessful general was extreme. He refused to see him. The duchess d'Angoulême exasperated the king's animosity by her censures; while Madame de Châteaubriant dared not inter-



[1521-1522 A.D.]

cede for her brother. At length the constable procured Lautrec admission to the king, who covered him with reproaches. "It is not I who am to blame," said Lautrec; "the gendarmerie have served eighteen months without pay; and the wilfulness of the Swiss, both in fighting against my wish and then abandoning me, was owing to my inability to pay them."

"And the 400,000 crowns?" said the king. "Were never received," was the answer. Francis summoned his treasurer, Semblançay, and asked him sternly how it came that the promised sum had not yet reached Lautrec. The treasurer replied that the duchess d'Angoulême had made him pay it to her. The king then rushed to the apartments of his mother. "It is to your avarice then, madam, that I owe the loss of the Milanese?" The duchess could not deny the receipt of the sum, but she alleged having received it on her private account. The excuse did not satisfy the monarch, and Semblançay kept his station. The vengeance of the queen-mother henceforth unremittingly followed the unfortunate treasurer. Heads of accusation can never be wanting against a man intrusted with the finances of a kingdom; and five years after, Semblançay, an honest and irreproachable minister, fell a victim to the intrigues and iniquity of the monarch's mother, and died as a malefactor on the common gibbet.

Whilst Francis met with these reverses, which were the natural consequences of the blunders and recklessness of his administration, the emperor Charles was carefully securing every friend, and improving every advantage. The new pope, Adrian, was his creature: Wolsey's resentment, on being disappointed of the tiara, was soothed for a time; and Henry VIII was induced not only to break with France, but to send thither an army under the duke of Suffolk, which, however, achieved nothing remarkable. The Venetian Republic, also, the last of the Italian powers that inclined to France, was estranged from his friendship, and joined the alliance against him. Not content with making every foreign potentate his foe, the French monarch had at the same time the imprudence to alienate the most powerful of his subjects. Trivulzio, we have seen, expired beneath his neglect. Charles, duke de Bourbon, and constable of the kingdom, was now driven by injustice to league with the enemies of his country. The last duke de Bourbon had left a daughter, Suzanne. The title, and a certain portion of the heritage, went by law to the male heir; but as a considerable part would be inherited by Suzanne, the paternal care of Louis XII arranged a marriage between Charles, the existing duke, and Suzanne de Bourbon, thus preserving unbroken the heritage and title of that illustrious family. The duke was of a handsome person, and on the death of his duchess, Suzanne, without issue, the duchess d'Angoulême made advances to fill her place. This she was the more forward in doing, as, being descended in the female line from a previous duke de Bourbon, she considered herself to have claims on that part of the property which might descend to a female. The constable, however, was blind to her advances, backed by this tacit menace. And the slighted duchess instantly put forward her claim to the Bourbonnais as appertaining by right to her.

Bourbon had previously received affronts from the king, who disliked his cold temper and reserved demeanour. The duke was grave and dignified, fond of war and business, and averse to join in the follies of a court. It appears, too, that Francis amused himself at the duke's expense; and the latter bore raillery with so little good humour as to be called the "prince of small endurance." Whatever was the cause, they certainly disliked each other; and Francis manifested this feeling first by recalling Bourbon from

the government of Milan, and afterwards by giving the command of the vanguard in one of the northern campaigns to the duke of Alençon, although that post of honour was the constable's right.

Bearing all this in mind, when his hitherto unquestioned right to the Bourbonnais was called in question, the duke instantly apprehended that a league to destroy him had been planned by the king and his mother. Duprat, the chancellor, was but a creature of the latter; and to hope for justice in the event of trial was absurd. Bourbon was, therefore, driven to look abroad for a refuge or for vengeance. The emperor's emissary was at hand, proffering him that prince's sister in marriage, and many advantages, if he would join the emperor's party, and raise a civil war in France against its monarch. Bourbon hesitated long, but finally acceded to the proposals of Charles. Francis in the meantime had been roused from the lap of pleasure by the league of all Europe against him. He was at Lyons, on the way to Italy at the head of an army, when Bourbon was about to take the fatal step. Francis tried to soothe him: he showed his confidence by appointing him lieutenant-general of the kingdom; and assured him that whatever might be the result of this unfortunate process, he would not see him despoiled. The object of Francis seems to have been the gratification of his mother, and the driving of Bourbon to a marriage with her. This failed, however, like every act of the monarch's policy. The constable determined to join the emperor. But Francis was now near, accompanied with forces; and as circumstances had awakened his



CONSTABLE DE BOURBON

suspicious, he called on the constable to accompany him to Italy. Bourbon feigned sickness, and took to his couch, as a pretext for delay; till at length, seeing that it would be dangerous to trifle any longer with the impatient Francis, the constable dispersed his suite and fled, followed by a single attendant, into the dominions of the emperor. Francis gained by this desertion, as he confiscated the wide domains of Bourbon. Charles acquired what he least wanted — a general, and an unfortunate claimant.

### *A Disastrous Campaign in Italy: The Battle of Pavia*

Bonnivet, the personal enemy of Bourbon, was now intrusted with the command of the French army. He marched without opposition into the Milanese, and might have taken the capital had he pushed on to its gates. Having by irresolution lost it, he retreated to winter quarters behind the Ticino. The operations of the English in Picardy, of the imperials in Champagne, and of the Spaniards near the Pyrenees, were equally insignificant. The spring of 1524 brought on an action, if the attack of one point

[1524-1525 A.D.]

can be called such, which proved decisive for the time. Bonnivet advanced rashly beyond the Ticino. The imperials, commanded by four able generals, Lannoy, Pescara, Bourbon, and Sforza, succeeded in almost cutting off his retreat. They at the same time refused Bonnivet's offer to engage. They hoped to weaken him by famine. The Swiss first murmured against the distress occasioned by want of precaution. They deserted across the river; and Bonnivet, thus abandoned, was obliged to make a precipitate and perilous retreat. A bridge was hastily flung across the Sesia, near Romagnano; and Bonnivet, with his best knights and gendarmerie, undertook to defend the passage of the rest of the army. The imperials, led on by Bourbon, made a furious attack. Bonnivet was wounded, and he gave his place to Bayard, who, never intrusted with a high command, was always chosen for that of a forlorn hope. The brave Vandenesse was soon killed; and Bayard himself received a gunshot wound. The gallant chevalier, feeling his wound mortal, caused himself to be placed in a sitting posture beneath a tree, his face to the enemy, and his sword fixed in guise of a cross before him. The constable De Bourbon, who led the imperials, soon came up to the dying Bayard, and expressed his compassion. "Weep not for me," said the chevalier "but for thyself. I die in performing my duty; thou art betraying thine."

Francis, in the meantime, alarmed by the invasion, had assembled an army. He burned to employ it, and avenge the late affront. He marched upon Milan, whose population was spiritless and broken by the plague, and took it without resistance. It was then mooted whether Lodi or Pavia should be besieged. The latter, imprudently, as it is said, was preferred. The siege of Pavia was formed about the middle of October. Antonio de Leyva, an experienced officer, supported by veteran troops, commanded in the town. By the month of January, 1525, the French had made no progress; and the impatient Francis despatched a considerable portion of his army for the invasion of Naples, hearing that the country was drained of troops. This was a gross blunder, which Pescara observing, he forbore to send any force to oppose the expedition. He knew that the fate of Italy would be decided before Pavia.<sup>i</sup>

During the night of the 23rd of February the emperor's generals harassed the royal camp by a lively cannonade and a series of feigned attacks, while the main body of their troops was approaching in silence the walls of the park. Masons undermined and tore down a considerable portion of the wall, and through the breach thus effected the imperial advance-guard, under the young marquis del Guasto, cousin to Pescara, closely followed by the remaining troops, rushed into the park. In the light of the breaking day the French saw the imperial columns defile rapidly by the king's quarters and set out in the direction of Pavia. The hostile troops were obliged to cross a wide clearing that was raked by the shot of the artillery posted along the king's entrenchments, and so terrible was the fire opened out upon them by the veteran Gallot de Genouillac that, says Martin du Bellay,<sup>j</sup> "one after the other great breaches were made in the enemy's battalions, and there was nothing to be seen but flying arms and heads." Their ranks thinned by this frightful cannonade, the imperials began running in single file towards a valley, where they hoped to be out of range of the royal batteries.

When Francis I saw this movement he believed the enemy to be in full flight and his own victory assured; it had, moreover, been reported to him that the division under Alençon and Chabot had routed a Spanish battalion in the park and captured several cannon. Rallying his gendarmerie, he



rushed forth from the camp in pursuit of the flying enemy, thus masking his own batteries and reducing them to silence at the very moment when they might have been the most destructive; the remainder of the army followed the king.

Bourbon and Pescara, transported with joy, hastily formed their line of battle, while Del Guasto rushed up with his advance-guard, reinforced by Antonio de Leyva, and the flower of the garrison of Pavia, which the guard left in charge of the camp had been unable to hold back. The division of the duke of Alençon formed the left wing of the French army and was separated by a large body of Swiss troops from the king, who commanded the centre; between the king and the right wing commanded by La Palisse were placed four or five thousand lansquenets, the remnant of the old bands of Gelderland and Westphalia who were used to fighting under French banners against the house of Austria, and to being placed under the ban of the empire by Charles V. The shock of the meeting between these two armies, inconsiderable as to numbers but composed of the bravest fighting-men in Europe, was terrific. Fallen upon by the lansquenets of Charles de Bourbon and left without assistance by the Swiss, the king's lansquenets were overwhelmed by force of numbers and crushed between two battalions of the enemy. Nearly all these brave men perished, as did also their two chiefs, the duke of Suffolk (the White Rose) and Francis de Lorraine, brother of the duke de Lorraine and of Count Claude de Guise. Bourbon and his victorious infantry next turned against the French right wing which was engaged in a hot contest with a Spanish-Italian cavalry corps. The right wing, after many great but useless exploits, shared the fate that befell the French lansquenets, and it was on this field that the veteran Chabannes de la Palisse ended his glorious career. His horse having been killed under him, he was about to surrender his sword to the Neapolitan captain Castaldo, when a Spaniard, envious of Castaldo's good fortune, killed the illustrious prisoner by a shot from his arquebuse.

No less furiously did the combat rage in the centre where the king, at the head of his gendarmerie, overpowered an Italian squadron under the command of the marquis de Saint Angelo, a descendant of the great Scanderbeg; it is said that the king slew this nobleman, as well as several other knights, with his own hand. The squadron of the Franc-Comtois suffered overthrow in its turn; the Spanish cavalry would have had a similar fate had not Pescara devised a manœuvre which was as successful as it was terrible in its effects. This was to mingle with his horsemen fifteen hundred or two thousand Basque musketeers whose agility enabled them to slip into the ranks of the French to choose their victims, and who by their deadly fire checked the advance of the gendarmerie and threw all the squadrons into confusion. The richest coats of mail, the most gallantly plumed helmets were the marks selected in preference by these sharpshooters, and one after the other the famous leaders who had raised French arms to glory during the last thirty years were seen to fall—Louis de la Trémouille, Louis d'Ars, teacher and friend of Bayard, the grand equerry San Severino, the bastard of Savoy, and the marshal De Foix-Lescun, all were killed or mortally wounded. The king and those immediately about him continued to fight desperately, a furious charge having brought Pescara to the earth and put to flight Lannoy. Victory might still have been on the side of the French had Alençon and the Swiss done their full duty; but the duke, on learning of the confusion into which the right wing had been thrown, fled precipitately, carrying with him almost all the gendarmerie and the left wing, while

[1525 A.D.]

the Swiss, left uncovered by the desertion of Alençon and menaced on their left flank by the imperial cavalry, turned their backs in their turn, instead of repulsing the enemy's attack and flying to the succour of the king, and set out in confusion on the road to Milan. This battle should have served as a terrible lesson to the kings of France, who were in the habit of buying the services of mercenaries at a high price rather than place arms in the hands of their own subjects.

All the stress and burden of the battle now fell upon the king and the valiant body of nobles who pressed about him; Bourbon, Castaldo, Del Guasto, De Leyva, and the viceroy Lannoy had successively joined Pescara, and there remained to the French gendarmerie but to sell their lives as dearly as possible. Diesbach, the Swiss general, and Admiral Bonnivet decided not to survive—the one, the ignominious retreat which was to tarnish the fame of the league, and the other the sad “misadventure” for which he himself had been mainly responsible. They both flung themselves upon the pikes of Bourbon's lansquenets and at once found death. Bonnivet, the favourite of Madame d'Angoulême as well as of the king, had taken the most active part in the persecution of the constable, and Bourbon was now seeking him all over the field of battle. When he finally perceived his enemy's mutilated corpse, “Unhappy man!” he exclaimed with sadness, “you are the cause of France's ruin and my own!”

The French gendarmerie at last succumbed to the superior numbers of the enemy; they were broken, dispersed, and cut to pieces. Francis I, wounded in the leg and in the face, defended himself bravely for some time longer, but his horse, on being dealt a fatal blow, fell and bore him to the earth, where he would have been despatched by the soldiers who struggled to reach him had not Pompérant, the companion of the constable's flight, recognised the king and rushed to his rescue. Pompérant proposed to the king to pledge his faith to Bourbon, but Francis indignantly refused; then Pompérant sent for Lannoy, viceroy of Naples, who bent his knee to receive the bloody sword of the king, and proffered his in exchange.

Eight thousand French and auxiliaries had met death; and all the leaders—the king of Navarre (Henry d'Albret), the count of Saint-Pol, Fleuranges, Montmorency, Brion—who were not stretched upon the battlefield, shared the captivity of Francis I. The king begged his captors not to take him back to Pavia where he would be a “spectacle and a laughing-stock to those upon whom he had formerly inflicted fear, evil, and fatigue.” He was conducted to the tent of the marquis del Guasto, where his wounds were properly attended to. In the evening Charles de Bourbon presented himself with every mark of respect before the monarch upon whom he had taken so cruel a vengeance. Both, according to the accounts most worthy of credence, displayed great self-control and admirably concealed feelings, of triumph on the one hand, of grief and humiliation on the other; the king's only departure from this reserve was in the reception he gave Pescara, which was warm compared to his attitude towards Bourbon. Francis I had at least one consolation in his misfortune, the one that would most appeal to a nature such as his: the imperial soldiers had been so struck by his prowess in the field that they divided his effects as relics among themselves, and evinced so strongly their desire to see him that the viceroy of Naples experienced some alarm. The German mercenaries, without taking into account the immense booty they had gained, demanded more imperatively than before the battle their arrears of pay, and Lannoy feared that they would seek to seize the king as surety, perhaps even go over to the royal side. He averted this danger by

sending Francis I to Pizzighettone under the guard of a Spanish captain of whose fidelity he was sure, and by extorting heavy contributions from the pope and the smaller Italian states, in order that the soldiery might be induced to wait in patience.

It was in the imperial camp near Pavia, on the eve of departure for Pizzighettone that Francis I wrote to his mother the celebrated letter that tradition has greatly altered by giving it this laconic form: "Madame, all is lost save honour." The true text is as follows: "Madame, To let you know the full extent of my misfortune I have but to say, of all things there remain to me only honour and my life; and that this news may be of a little comfort to you in your adversity I have prayed them to let me write you this letter, which prayer they have readily accorded; I also beg of you to allow yourself to come to no harm but to make use of your accustomed prudence, for I have hope that in the end God will not abandon me. I recommend to you my children and your grandchildren, and pray you to let pass the bearer of this to Spain and back, for it is his mission to see the emperor to inform him of the treatment I receive."k

### *Francis Captive in Spain: The Treaty of Madrid*

Although Francis had hoped to overcome his conqueror, he did not fear to humiliate himself before him. This role of captive and suppliant was so new to him that he rather overdid it and rather bore in mind his present fortunes, which might change, than his kingly dignity which he should never lose. Thus, in three letters written by him to Charles, three times he affected to call himself his slave.

"Having no other comfort in my misfortune than the hope of your goodness, by which, if it please you, use me, the fruits of your own victory, with all fairness. I have firm hope that your virtue will not constrain me to do anything dishonouring, and I beg you to let your heart decide what you will do with me. Wherefore may it please you to have the kindly pity to assure the safety which is due the king of France as prisoner, then will you render me friendly and not despairing, you will make an acquisition instead of a useless prisoner, and have a king forever your slave. So I end my humble petitions which have no other end to expect but that you will style me, instead of a prisoner, your good brother and friend Francis."

But when Francis heard the rigorous conditions, when he saw he had in vain humiliated himself before his enemy, death appeared less horrible than captivity for him, and ruin and shame for France. "Tell your master," he cried, "that I would rather die than submit to his terms. My kingdom is still intact, and for my deliverance I neither can nor will harm it. If the emperor desires treaties, let him speak another language." The opportunity was propitious for Lannoy, and he well knew how to use it. "Your majesty," said he, "had made a better bargain with the emperor by treating directly with him. Go yourself to Spain and put yourself in the hands of my master. He will be touched by this proof of confidence and will certainly not abuse the rights victory has given him." Francis allowed himself to be taken in the trap, and judging his enemy by himself the chivalrous monarch resolved to put himself at the discretion of Charles V. He had sent from Marseilles six of his galleys to aid in the transport of troops which were to serve him as escort, and forbade his admirals to alarm the imperial crews during the crossing. He embarked at Genoa May 7th, 1526, and Lannoy was clever enough to persuade Bourbon and Pescara that he was conducting his prisoner to Naples.



[1525-1526 A.D.]

Charles V was unaware of Lannoy's project; it was a pleasant surprise, then, to learn that the king of France, whom he had thought in Italy, was on Spanish soil. He immediately had him transferred to his castle at Madrid, leaving it himself for fear of meeting him. Francis, always liable to be deceived, had counted on prompt deliverance. While waiting, he had imagined himself treated by his conquerors as a guest and not as a prisoner. But seeing he had been tricked by Lannoy, guessing the astuteness of Charles behind that of his minister, he immediately fell ill of grief. Soon his life was in danger. The people of Madrid, moved with sympathy for this knightly king, more fitted than Charles V to reign over Spain, hastened in crowds to the churches to ask God to cure him. Charles, who calculated everything, even his pity, realised that if he allowed his prisoner to die he would lose a possible ransom. He then decided to pay him a visit, and, lavish of fine words, succeeded in raising Francis' courage. But his object gained and the sick man saved, Charles forgot all his promises, refused to see his prisoner again, and reinsisted on the hard terms of release.<sup>1</sup>

France in the meantime, though stunned and disordered by the first news of the disaster of Pavia, was recovering its composure and force. The duchess of Angoulême was regent; the count de Vendôme, cousin of the constable De Bourbon, did not take advantage of his being first prince of the blood to embroil the kingdom. The parliament, indeed, displeased with the imperious character of the king, and angered on account of the Concordat and other causes, gave the regent some trouble. But new allies flocked to France in her distress. The Italian states were all ready to combine against the emperor, whose power they now dreaded. Henry VIII of England instantly flung his support into the scale of the discomfited Francis, and concluded a treaty with the regent, stipulating that the kingdom should on no account be dismembered. Large numbers of the people of Alsace had taken advantage of the opportunity to rise and invade France, excited by that religious zeal which scorns restraint. The count of Guise mustered some forces, fell upon them in time, and cut them to pieces. It was for this service that Francis afterwards created the county of Guise into a duchy-peerage—an honour heretofore granted solely to princes of the blood. The parliament made great opposition to this novelty; but the king was resolute in his friendship, and Guise became one of the high noblesse of France, a duke and peer.

Negotiations for the liberation of the king proceeded, with little prospect of success, at Madrid. Bourbon had betaken himself thither; his presence and his claims were no small source of difficulties. The emperor had promised him his sister Leonora, queen-dowager of Portugal, in marriage; but as Francis, to disappoint Bourbon, offered to marry this princess himself, the constable was obliged to forego the honour. The marquis Pescara dying at this time, the emperor offered the command of his Italian armies to Bourbon, who was urged to accept of it, and was thus got rid of. Still the terms offered to Francis were so harsh that he could not accede to them. His sister, the duchess of Alençon, had come to tend him in his illness and captivity. She was now about to return; and Francis put into her hand his absolute resignation of the kingdom, that he might be considered as dead, and no further efforts be made for his liberation. This alarmed the emperor, who became willing to relax in some degree. Still his demands were so exorbitant and unreasonable that Francis at length consented to extricate himself by a breach of faith, and to swear to a treaty the stipulations of which he was determined not to perform.

With these opposite views — grasping severity, that over-reached itself, on the one side, and premeditated bad faith, the almost compulsory resource of Francis, on the other — the Treaty of Madrid was concluded. By it the king agreed to give up Burgundy, to renounce all right to Milan and Naples, as well as to Flanders and Artois. He was to be set at liberty, and to espouse Leonora of Portugal, the emperor's sister. He was, moreover, to abandon his allies, the king of Navarre, the dukes of Gelderland, of Würtemberg, and the count de la Mark; and he was to re-establish Bourbon in all his property and privileges. Moreover, the two sons of Francis were to remain as hostages for the performance of these conditions, the king himself promising to return into captivity if they were not fulfilled. On the 14th of January, 1526, the treaty was signed; Francis taking the precaution to protest secretly, in presence of his chancellor, against the validity of such exactions. Charles himself could not but mistrust the sincerity of Francis, and he even retained him prisoner a month after the signature. The king's health again declined in consequence; and at length Charles, in a hurried and irresolute way, gave orders for his final liberation. He was led to the river Bidassoa, which separates the countries: his sons, who appeared on the opposite bank, were exchanged for him, and Francis, mounting a horse of extreme swiftness, galloped without drawing rein to St. Jean de Luz, and thence to Bayonne.

#### *Further Dissensions and the "Ladies' Peace"*

Thus freed from captivity, on terms which, if fulfilled, must ruin his kingdom, and if unfulfilled must stain his honour, Francis, it might have been expected, would be instantly occupied in the duty of defending himself and retrieving his affairs. His first act on arriving at Bordeaux, however, was to become enamoured of Mademoiselle d'Heilly, better known as the duchess d'Étampes, who superseded the countess of Châteaubriant in his affections, and held thenceforward the greatest influence over the monarch.

The liberation of Francis was the signal for a general league against the emperor. The Italian powers were ever disposed to unite against the strongest. Sforza had already rebelled against Charles, and had been driven from Milan by Pescara. All of them — the pope, the Venetians, the Florentines — now formed an alliance with the king, on condition that Sforza should remain in possession of Milan. A treaty to this effect was signed at Cognac, but was kept secret for some time. The states of Burgundy had assembled, to protest against the transfer of their province to the emperor. The king, they said, had no right nor power to make such a stipulation without their consent. When Lannoy, on the part of Charles, demanded the cession of Burgundy, Francis referred him to the answer of the states. The emperor, on learning this evasion of the treaty, called on Francis, as a man of honour, to redeem his word and return into captivity.

This was a trying moment for Francis, who piqued himself on possessing all the chivalric virtues. He could not openly deride the credulity of Charles, as Louis the XI or Ferdinand the Catholic would have done. He was perplexed, distressed, and could only allege the necessity of the case; a plea which by no means satisfied his nice notions of honour. He therefore resolved on taking the advice of his subjects. Despotism as he was, he felt in this case at least the necessity of having the nation to participate his responsibility. To call together the states-general of the kingdom was obviously the natural step in such a case. But no; Francis dreaded the very

[1526-1527 A.D.]

name of that assembly, in which the vulgar *tiers état*, or people, had a voice. The legists and judges of the parliament had for some time taken upon them to represent the nation, in demurring to taxes and to edicts. Francis, and his minister Duprat, though not wholly contented with the parliament, yet deemed that preferable to an assembly of bourgeois. It was resolved therefore between them that the voice of the nation should now be taken, not in the good old states-general, but in what has since been called an assembly of notables—one of the most unfortunate inventions or innovations that despotic craft could have imagined.

This assembly of notables, or, as some historians will call it, this bed of justice, was held in December, 1526. It consisted of prelates, nobles, courtiers, gentlemen, the parliament of Paris, and the presidents of the provincial parliaments; the only admixture of democracy being the provost of merchants and the four sheriffs of the city of Paris. Before those Francis made a long discourse; entering at large into the affairs of the kingdom, its finances and resources. He recounted the misfortunes of his captivity, and declared his readiness to return to it, if his people thought that either their interest or his honour so demanded. The reply of each class, for all answered separately, was that he was absolved from an unjust and compulsory oath, against which he had previously protested, and the fulfilment of which the privileges and welfare of his people alike forbade. They at the same time accorded to him the liberty of raising two millions for the ransom of his sons, assuming in this particular all the rights of the states-general. Thus satisfied, Francis published the general league against the emperor, denominated "holy," because the pope was at its head. Not only the Italian states, but the Swiss and the king of England acceded to it; so that the reverses of Francis, if they had stripped him of territories, rendered him much stronger in alliances than his rival.

The emperor, on his side, promised to Bourbon the investiture of the Milanese, if he succeeded in expelling Sforza. This the constable accomplished, subsisting his mercenary troops on the unfortunate inhabitants of Milan—for of money Charles had as notorious a lack as his grandsire Maximilian. Milan taken, pillaged, and wasted, how was Bourbon to support his army—that army by which he lived? For since his exile the prince had inhabited camps, and was averse to any more orderly way of life. He loved his soldiers, rapacious and licentious as they were; and was beloved by them, as a valiant and successful leader inclined to tolerate the license of the freebooter. Since his treason, Bourbon had met everywhere with insults and ingratitude from the French, the Spaniards, the emperor, and his brother generals. This situation made him misanthropic, and his character degenerated into that of the reckless and ferocious corsair. To obtain plunder for his army of lansquenets, in lieu of pay, became indispensable; and he accordingly led them south, menacing all the great cities of the peninsula, and uncertain which he should attack. Florence and Rome had both declared against the emperor; Bourbon fixed upon the imperial city as the more glorious prey, and accordingly marched thither his mercenary army. Pope Clement was terrified at his approach, and used all his country's artifices to avert the danger. It approached nevertheless, and Clement shut himself up in the castle of St. Angelo.

The army of Bourbon attacked Rome in the morning of the 5th of May, 1527. Bourbon himself applied the first scaling-ladder, and was in the act of mounting it, when the first shot from the walls struck him and put an end to his disastrous career. His army passed over his body to the assault, and



Rome was carried by storm. The pillage was general, so merciless were the soldiery. Not all the ravages of Hun and Goth surpassed those of the army of the first prince in Christendom. The cruelty of the German soldiers was unequalled: they indulged in the most horrid extravagance of debauch and impiety. For two months they remained masters of the city; and the pontiff himself was finally obliged to surrender himself a prisoner.

This new triumph of the emperor, over the head of the church too, roused the zeal of Henry VIII. He already meditated a divorce from Catherine, Charles' aunt; and it therefore became his policy to befriend and protect the pope, whose assistance he would chiefly require, against the emperor. Wolsey was therefore despatched to France; the treaty between the crowns was renewed; and a joint army was raised, to march into Italy under the command of Lautrec. That general now compensated for his former ill success. He made himself master of Genoa by the aid of Andrea Doria; and took Pavia by assault, abandoning it to pillage, in revenge for the defeat which the French had suffered under its walls. The conquest of Milan would have been easy; but as that city was now to belong to Sforza, the French general turned from it towards Rome, in order to procure the liberation of the pope. His approach effected this: the emperor became less harsh in his terms, and Clement soon found himself free at Orvieto.

It was about this time, towards the commencement of 1528, that challenges and defiances passed between Charles and Francis. The former, in his reply to the French envoy, reproached the restored king with an infamous breach of faith; and hinted that he was ready to support his charge as a true knight, sword in hand. Francis, indignant, sent a reply that the emperor "lied in his throat"; and demanded a rendezvous, or *champ clos*, for the duel; but notwithstanding the choler of both parties, it never took place. It is singular that in this affair of the single combat the cold and politic Charles seems to have been most in earnest, whilst the obstacles and delays were raised by the headlong and chivalric Francis.

Lautrec in the meantime advanced to the conquest of Naples. He marched to the eastern coast, and soon reduced the provinces bordering on the Adriatic. The command of Bourbon's army had devolved on Philibert, the last prince of Orange of the house of Châlons, another French chief of talents and influence, whom the petulance of Francis had alienated from him and driven into exile. With some difficulty this prince withdrew his army from the spoils of Rome to the defence of Naples. He was not strong enough to face Lautrec in the field: the prince of Orange, therefore, and Moncada, the new viceroy, shut themselves up in Naples, where they were soon besieged by Lautrec. Andrea Doria, a faithful partisan of France, held the sea with his Genoese galleys, and blockaded the port. It was proposed to reduce the town by famine. After some time Moncada, fitting out all the galleys in port, made an attack on the Genoese, then commanded by Filippino Doria, Andrea's nephew. The attempt failed: the Spaniards were beaten, Moncada slain, and most of the captains taken; amongst others, the marquis del Guasto, and two brothers Colonna. Naples thus became in prospect an easy prey to Lautrec. Its fall might have brought the final submission of the kingdom; but the same blunder which Francis persevered in committing throughout his whole reign lost him this advantage, among so many others.

Such was the fatal habit of the French king to disgust and alienate his best and most attached friends. Doria, for example, like Trivulzio, was an Italian who united with a love of his own country a firm attachment to the French. His exertions had but just torn Genoa from the emperor to give it

[1528-1529 A.D.]

to Francis: he was now doing the very same by Naples, when it pleased the French court to insult and disoblige him. The prisoners he had won in action were taken from him, and no allowance was made for their ransom. These insults to himself Doria might have passed over; of wrongs offered to his country he was more sensible. The French undertook to fortify Savona, and to raise it into a rival of Genoa. They removed thither the trade in salt, one of the most lucrative sources of the Genoese commerce. Doria expostulated; and another admiral, Barbesceñas, was sent to supersede him and bring him prisoner to France. When the admiral arrived, Doria received him, saying, "I know what brings you hither: the French vessels I deliver to you; the Genoese remain under my command. Do the rest of your errand if you dare!" The consequence of this blindness and ingratitude on the part of Francis was soon seen; Genoa declared herself free, and allied herself with the emperor. The blockade of Naples by sea was raised; and the influx of fresh troops and provisions enabled the city to defy its besiegers. These, encamped under a midsummer sun, ill supplied, and harassed, were soon attacked by pestilence. Lautrec their general died of it. The marquis of Saluzzo, who succeeded him, raised the siege and retired to Aversa, where he soon after surrendered to the prince of Orange; and thus another unsuccessful Italian expedition was added to the long list of French disasters.

Another army led by the count of Saint-Pol into the north of Italy met with as little success. Francis felt that he could not re-establish his fortunes: he sickened of the love of glory that had hitherto animated him, and showed himself willing to treat for peace on any terms, provided the cession of Burgundy was not insisted on. Charles by this time saw that the nation would never consent to such a sacrifice: he therefore waived this part of the Treaty of Madrid. The negotiations on both sides were carried on by the duchess d'Angoulême and Margaret of Austria. The king gave up all his claims to possessions in Italy, Milan, Naples, and even Asti, and abandoned all his allies in that country; he renounced all right of sovereignty over Flanders or Artois; he ceded Tournay and Arras; two millions were to be paid as ransom for the young princes; the lands of the house of Bourbon were to be restored to the heirs of that family (a stipulation, by the by, never performed); and, finally, the treaty was to be sealed by the marriage of Francis with Leonora, the emperor's sister. This Peace of Cambray, called also the "Ladies' Peace," was concluded in August, 1529: it was as glorious for Charles as it was disgraceful to France and her monarch. The emperor remained supreme master of Italy; the pope submitted, and obtained the re-establishment of the Medici in Florence, with hereditary power; the Venetians, who said that Cambray was destined to be their purgatory, were shorn of their conquests. Charles forgave Sforza, and left him the duchy of Milan. Henry VIII reaped nothing save the emperor's enmity by his interference: the English monarch showed himself generous to Francis, by remitting to him, at this moment, a large debt. Thus was Europe pacified for the time.<sup>i</sup>

## INTERNAL AFFAIRS

The melancholy Peace of Cambray will not be of long duration; the wars of Italy are not wholly finished; Francis I has not sincerely renounced "his heritage" beyond the mountains, the theatre of his former glory; he will continue to meditate and more than once to attempt, with some partial success, to shake his rival's dominion over Italy. But neither great expeditions nor great events in the heart of the peninsula will again be seen under his

reign. The essential interest of the history of France is no longer there: it returns to the interior; it is in the moral, intellectual, and social condition of that nation—thrown back upon itself after having failed in conquest, and confronted at home and abroad by the problem, growing daily more formidable, of a religious revolution or reaction which will compromise its destiny for centuries. The question is no longer whether France will snatch Italy from the political domination of Spain united with the empire, but whether France will find, in the elements which the Renaissance has brought her, the strength and light necessary to maintain or redeem her political and religious independence between those two genii of the north and south, Teutonic Protestantism and Hispano-Roman Papism<sup>1</sup> which, coming into collision, are about to make an attempt to drag everyone into their whirl.

We will not here enter on the religious history, whose crisis does not appear in all its intensity till some years after the Treaty of Cambray. We will first take a glance at the economical situation of France, at the industrial arts and particularly at the fine arts, at letters and science, at that Renaissance movement which continued to develop under the patronage of Francis I. The taste for a civilisation elegant and learned, picturesque and varied, was the sole affection to which Francis always remained faithful. He had a more genuine right to the title of “father of letters” (*père des lettres*) than to that of “knightly king” (*roi chevalier*). Even his own mistakes and the misfortunes of the allies he had abandoned were made to contribute to the progress of the arts among the French, a progress whose advance in a good direction remains, indeed, questionable. The fall of Florence, the persecutions of the partisans of France at Naples and in Lombardy, sent a multitude of emigrants, the flower of the Italian population, streaming across the Alps; and France, as she was so often obliged to do, at least opened an asylum to the friends she had not managed to protect. The king endeavoured to palliate the wrong he had done Italy by favours to Italians, and the exiles experienced some consolation in finding on the banks of the Seine and the Loire the tastes, fashions, habits of thought, and almost the language of their own country.

Many refugees were pensioned or invested with distinguished posts in the army and in diplomacy. The Florentine Strozzi and the Neapolitan Caraccioli, prince of Melfi, became marshals of France. Italy not only sent France artists and politicians, but merchants and skilful manufacturers, who brought into her cities their industry and the remains of their fortunes which had escaped the hands of the tyrants. The pre-eminence of the manufactures of Lyons dates from the fall of Florence: Louis XI had made Lyons a great commercial city and an international entrepôt by instituting three annual fairs which caused the decline of those of Geneva, and had endeavoured by the aid of Italian workmen to develop the manufacture of silk goods, simultaneously at Lyons and Tours: still Lyons, where various manufactures had rapidly developed, did not begin to rival Tours in silks until about 1525; the Florentine refugees soon gave her the superiority; two Genoese are also mentioned amongst the chief founders of the manufactures of Lyons.

A bank was instituted at Lyons. An import duty of two gold crowns per piece on velvet or silk goods protected the French silk manufactures against foreign competition; as to the cloths and woollen goods of Spain and Perpignan, they were absolutely prohibited in favour of the cloths of Languedoc. In

[<sup>1</sup> “I purposely make use of this Protestant term,” says Martin, himself a Catholic, “as expressing a particular form of Catholicism.”]



[1525-1547 A.D.]

the north the manufacture of the cloths of Darnétal near Rouen was very considerable; the edict of May, 1542, which regulated the manufacture at Darnétal, qualifies it as almost inestimable. An edict of the 18th of July, 1540, had decreed that foreign stuffs in gold, silver, and silk should enter France by Susa if they came from Italy, by Narbonne or Bayonne if they came from Spain: they were to be taken straight to Lyons and, there only, unpacked and exposed for sale. This privilege must have enormously increased the prosperity of Lyons. Yet in 1543 one of those sumptuary edicts which the rigid spirit of the parliament from time to time wrung from the kings forbade the wearing of gold and silver stuffs. French merchandises were subjected to a uniform export duty of one sou per livre. In 1540 a royal ordinance attempted to establish a uniform measure as already planned by Louis XI: an ell of three feet, seven inches, eight lines was prescribed for use throughout the kingdom. But commercial relations were not yet sufficiently active for the advantage of such an improvement to be generally felt; local practice protested and prevailed: the edict was revoked in 1543.

The French navy was making remarkable progress: Dieppe had raised its head since the expulsion of the English and had resumed its ancient preponderance amongst the French ports on the ocean; Norman and Breton navigators gleaned, so to speak, on the tracks of the Spaniards and Portuguese and tried to take up the threads of their old commercial relations with Africa, and to open new ones with both Indies. Such expeditions were full of peril, for the haughty rulers of the western and eastern seas treated as pirates those competitors who ventured into their domains. Captain Denis of Honfleur had touched at Brazil as early as 1504, before the Portuguese, who discovered it in 1500, had founded any settlement there; the French navigators continued to traffic with the savage tribes who sold them those precious woods from which Brazil has derived its name, and who "gave a better welcome to the French than to the Portuguese and other European peoples." In 1529 two ships from Dieppe, under the command of Jean Parmentier, made a voyage to Madagascar and Sumatra. During this time attempts which had more lasting results were directed to the north of America, towards the countries whither the Spaniards had not turned their steps. In 1506 Denis of Honfleur had visited the island of Newfoundland which was then taken for a portion of the continent; in 1508 Aubert, a native of Dieppe, followed him there with a vessel fitted out by Jean Ango, the father of the illustrious shipowner of the same name; the Bretons for their part discovered and named the island of Cape Breton, and the annual codfishery was founded on those coasts. The French government at last decided to second private enterprise, and to claim its share of the New World. In 1524, by order of Francis I, the Florentine Verazzano undertook a voyage of discovery, reconnoitred all the coasts from Cape Breton and Acadia to Florida, and took possession of them in the name of Francis I. Ten years afterwards, in 1534, the Breton Jacques Cartier of St. Malo, commissioned by the king at the suggestion of Admiral Chabot de Brion, satisfied himself that Newfoundland was an island, penetrated into the vast gulf which that great island bars, and reconnoitred the mouth of the St. Lawrence: the year following he ascended this immense river as far as the spot where Quebec was afterwards built, and discovered Canada. The name of New France (*Nouvelle-France*) was imposed on the whole northern part of America.

In 1540 Roberval, a Picard *gentilhomme*, was appointed viceroy of Canada by Francis I, and set out with a squadron of five ships which Cartier commanded under his orders; the colony was installed at Cape Breton. The

severity of the climate, so different from the magnificent regions conquered by the Spaniards, the insufficiency of supplies; the improvidence and negligence of the royal government were the cause of the failure at the close of a few years of this first attempt at colonisation, which was not renewed till the reign of Henry IV; but the sailors of Normandy, Brittany, and La Rochelle continued the codfishery and the fur trade with the peoples of Canada. A wealthy shipowner of Dieppe, Jean Ango, whom the documents of the time describe as "merchant of Rouen and viscount de Dieppe," made himself one of the glories of the French nation by his great enterprises, by his taste for the arts, and the energy with which he sustained the honour of the French flag against the rulers of the seas, particularly the Portuguese. His beautiful manor of Warengenville, farm-house rather than château, still charms the traveller amongst the green woodlands of the Dieppe coast. This family of Ango was probably the same whence came the architect Roger Ango who built the Palais de Justice at Rouen.

### *The French Renaissance*

Whilst industry and navigation were thus progressing, the arts surrounded Francis I with a splendour which Charles V and Henry VIII in vain attempted to rival: for example, the king and all the nobles contended with one another in erecting buildings, and there sprang from the earth all those Renaissance châteaux which arose on French soil to take the place of the feudal fortresses, and which like them have unfortunately in great part disappeared. There was Madrid, the elegant retreat of the Bois de Boulogne, so called because Francis loved to recall the weariness of the prison in the midst of pleasures and liberty; there was La Meute (by corruption La Murette), and St. Germain, and Villers-Cotterets and Chantilly and Follembrai and Nantouillet, the splendid residence of Duprat. The national architecture, threatened by the growing invasion of the Italian taste, seemed to concentrate all its forces to protest against it by a last creation of brilliant originality (1526). He who has not seen Chambord does not suspect all the fantastic poetry that was to be found in the French art of the sixteenth century. There is something indescribable in this palace of the fairies, rising suddenly before the eyes of the traveller from the depths of the gloomy woods of La Sologne with its forests of turrets, spires, aerial campaniles, the beautiful tints of their pearl gray stones, chequered with black mosaics standing out on the sombre slates of the great roofs. This impression could only be surpassed by the spectacle which delights us on the terraces of the keep at the foot of the charming cupola which terminates the grand staircase, the centre and pivot of this vast and varied whole and which stands up radiant above the terraces like a flower one hundred feet high. Everywhere between the *lacs d'amours* and crowned F's, mysterious salamanders, vomiting flames, climb on the pediments, curl round the medallions, or hang from the cornices and panels of the vaults, like the dragons which watch over the enchanted castles of old legend, waiting the return of the master who will come no more.<sup>k</sup>

Francis I had at first been the pupil of the Italian, Baldassare Castiglione, author of a book called *Il Cortegiano*, or "the perfect courtier." Struck by the qualities of the Italian people, the French monarch cherished for them a peculiar love, and drew about him the most celebrated men of the peninsula. Leonardo da Vinci died at Fontainebleau almost in the arms of the king. Primaticcio, Il Rosso, Andrea del Sarto, and Benvenuto Cellini came with alacrity at his call, and some of their greatest works were des-

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ained to be the property of France. The early and most illustrious French artists, among them Jean Goujon, were trained in the school formed by these masters, and it was to the construction and embellishment of Chambord and Fontainebleau that the king devoted their inspired brushes and chisels.

The type of the old fortress-castle of feudal times gradually gave place to another and less repellent one, that of the great pleasure-mansions which included among their attractions everything that the most luxurious and refined taste could devise. The court journeyed without ceasing from castle to castle and from feast to feast, eliciting loud complaints from the foreign ambassadors, who, though unable to afford the expense of such continual moving about, were yet obliged to follow.

Not satisfied with the presence of foreign artists about him, Francis I offered great inducements to men of science to visit his court. Erasmus, the literary oracle of Europe, was warmly solicited to leave Holland and establish himself in France, but he consented merely to make the voyage thither. Many Italians, however, among whom was the poet Alamanni, and a number of Greeks with the aged Lascaris at their head, established for themselves a second fatherland in France. The famous Guillaume Budé, guardian of the king's library and one of the most learned men of the century, was, with the Estiennes, deputed by the king to show these colonists all the honours of the land. Francis I gave his envoys to Turkey the mission of procuring for him manuscripts in Greek, and the translation into French of ancient documents was undertaken; while the art of printing, introduced in France during the reign of Louis XI, underwent rapid development; the presses of Lyons, where a numerous Italian colony had become established, gaining a celebrity for the town almost rivalling that of Venice or Bâle.

The College of France, called in the beginning College of the Three Tongues, was founded in 1529 after a plan indicated by Budé, less with the object of giving general instruction than for the purpose of promoting the study of the three languages of learning, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. The institution bore a great resemblance to the Italian academies. Philology, its chief object, was the science most in vogue at that time, as it was held to be the initiatory stage in the study of antiquity. Thus conceived, the College of France left all instruction, properly speaking, in the hands of the old Sorbonne, the ancient university. True to its old scholastic spirit, opposed to innovations, and attached to its ancient privileges which it now believed to be menaced, the Sorbonne entered upon a bitter war against the new institution; but the latter, strong in the royal favour and patronage, issued victorious from the conflict. The number of chairs was increased, to the study of languages was added that of science, particularly mathematics, and beginning with the very first years of its existence the College of France gained the reputation of being the most brilliant and complete of all the European institutes of learning.

The reason for the creation of this college and for its rapid success and growth may be found in the tendencies of an age that was rich in discoveries of all kinds. There are, in the history of the human mind, certain happy periods when the horizons of thought seem to become enlarged on all sides at once. A new field was opened to philological research, as the Middle Ages had had but little knowledge of Greek and less of Hebrew. A corresponding progress was also made in geography and the natural sciences by the study of climates and races hitherto unknown.

Always powerful over the entire country, the influence of the court increased under Francis I, and was no less beneficial to letters and society in



general than it was to the cause of learning. The king, beloved of his men-at-arms because he was the best knight in the kingdom; of artists and scientists because he so generously patronised and encouraged them, commended himself equally to courtiers, men of letters, and ladies because no one in his realm carried to such a point as he the love of the beautiful. Aided by his mother and sister and later by his daughter-in-law Catherine de' Medici, he made his court the most remarkable in Europe, not only for the luxury it displayed but for its wit and grace and a certain elegant not to say corrupt refinement of manners that was best exemplified in the foreign princess brought up under the eyes of Catherine, Mary Stuart.

Never had the French court counted so many members. Under Louis XII it had been composed of a few favourites, a definite number of officers, and a guard of a hundred nobles. Francis I increased in enormous proportion the number of court officers, which he intended to bestow on upstarts who could in this manner rise to nobility. The posts were mostly filled, however, by landless gentlemen of birth upon whom were also bestowed detached titles. Thus arose a company of marquises and dukes possessing neither marquisesates nor duchies. These two innovations alone would have sufficed to make the court the point upon which converged all ambitions and hopes of fortune. Francis I desired that women should share the offices and dignities of the court, and should have a hierarchy of their own; he loved to shower upon them, as upon his nobles, the marks of his liberality. Two of his mistresses, Madame de Châteaubriant, sister of Lautrec and of Lescun; and afterwards Mademoiselle de Heilly, whom he made Duchess d'Étampes, reigned for a long time side by side with the king, and patronised artists as well as distributed remunerative posts.

Unfortunately one cannot have much to say about this court without speaking of its corruption, to which Francis I himself contributed by the changes he brought about and by his personal example. Destroying as they did the simplicity of former modes of living, the innovations introduced by him resulted in confusion to the rules and usages of the nobility, and fostered fawning and intrigues. His own many scandalous deeds as well as those that were with impunity committed around him, have heavily burdened his memory with the charge of violating the public morality.

It would, however, be most unjust to view the court of the Valois only through the biased medium of Brantôme's *chronicle of scandals*, or the writings of contemporaneous Calvinists. As for these latter, they have neglected no means by which they could blacken the fame of the prince and personages who were the first to persecute their co-religionists; hence, on many points, their testimony is not to be believed. The letters of Venetian envoys, on the other hand, who were observers of great depth and keenness, reveal the warmest admiration for a court of which they, among all foreigners, were the quickest to feel the great seduction and charm. All the literature of this century, in fact, imaginative as well as historical, attests with striking force the elevated character of the influence exercised by the court of Francis I over public opinion.

Particularly prominent among the writers of that time are Marguerite de Valois and Marot, the king's valet, from whose works the fairest judgments may be formed concerning the tastes of the court—its gallantry, its love of wit and social pleasures, the esteem in which it held pure learning and the tolerance it accorded free thought. Severely as we may condemn certain of their works, they are nevertheless worthy to serve as models for sentiment, beauty of form, and light, poetic grace. To these two writers

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compare Rabelais, the author of the people, the creator of that strange and inexplicable encyclopædia wherein, as the product of a great intellectual debauch, the whole sixteenth century passes by us in review, and you will be able to judge on which side lay delicacy and taste, in what degree the literature of the court was qualified to elevate and refine the literature of the people.<sup>f</sup> But, on the other hand, Rabelais<sup>1</sup> remains a classic in our own day, while these other writers are forgotten. Rabelais, indeed, is not merely the greatest writer of this time, but by common consent he is named as one of the three or four greatest humourists of any age or country.<sup>a</sup> His work is in itself sufficient proof that Francis I destroyed neither the liberty of his subjects nor their originality. Although more absolute than his predecessors, Francis always took account of public opinion and had the insight to distinguish, as Ranke<sup>s</sup> ingeniously puts it, enforced obedience from that which is rendered voluntarily.

Thus even in those personal memoirs wherein the individuality of the writer is most wholly revealed, it is to be observed that the tendency of the century was all toward expansion, in height as well as breadth. We note the origin, the preliminary flights of that freedom of thought and research that was later to soar so high. Apparent as are the excesses of the age, we must not judge it by its faults alone; its very shortcomings raised controversies that served to form public opinion in a graver, sterner mould. More ado was made about the use or abuse of supreme power, which was for the first time subjected to control. The writer who passes the severest judgment on Francis I and his court is Gaspard de Saulx-Tavannes, the representative of the most radical of the independent nobility.<sup>f</sup>

A word must be said about another phase of intellectual development — that which found expression in the words and deeds of Luther and Calvin and their followers.<sup>a</sup> The new opinions early crept into France; their first converts were men of letters. All the great French juriconsults of that century, in secret or openly accepted the Reformation. A party at the court itself inclined towards it. Louise of Savoy appears not to have been opposed to it. Her daughter Marguerite, queen of Navarre, an independent genius and the author of mysteries and novels, openly professed the principles of the German reformers; the duchess of Étampes, the king's mistress, made a point of protecting them. Lefèvre d'Étaples (Faber Stapulensis), and Louis Berquin, both men of learning known and esteemed by Francis, sustained these in their favour: the first had begun six years before Luther. Finally the favourite court poet, Clement Marot, abandoned his elegies and epigrams to translate the psalms of David, which the reformists of Paris sang about the Pré-aux-Cleres. At first Francis, far from being alarmed at these symptoms, would fain have attached to himself Erasmus of Rotterdam, the king of the learned and of the men of letters of the century, who was accused of having prepared the way for Luther by his attacks on the monks. But when the German peasants, following out the new doctrines to their socialistic consequences, would have overturned all authority, Francis I thought that the Reformation, which was a revolt against the pope, was in danger of leading politically to a revolt against the king; and if he remained the interested friend of the German Protestants he had no wish to allow their doctrines to gain ground in his own states.

During the king's captivity two Lutherans had been burned in the capital. He had put a stop to these executions, but in 1528 a statue of the Virgin

[<sup>1</sup> The work of Rabelais is discussed in Chapter XIV of the present volume.]

was mutilated at Paris. Francis declared that, "if he knew one of his own members to be infected with this doctrine he would tear it away for fear lest the rest should be corrupted," and from that day he persecuted the innovators. Berquin, who refused to retract, was burned on the place de Grève (1529); at Vienne, at Séz, at Toulouse there were other executions. The necessity of propitiating the Protestants of Germany mitigated the persecution. Again in 1536 six unfortunates were sacrificed on different squares in Paris in presence of the court.<sup>m</sup>

#### WAR AGAIN BETWEEN FRANCIS I AND CHARLES V

But we must not pause for further details of this character;<sup>1</sup> we must return to the sweep of political events in France, and the renewed quarrels of Francis and his old enemy Charles V. A lasting peace between such rivals as Charles and Francis was not to be expected. Even if the latter could have confined himself to the pursuit of pleasure, to the internal regulation of his kingdom, and to the patronage of the arts, the spirit of Charles, ever restless in the cabinet, could not fail to have provoked him. At one time the emperor sent him a summons, requiring his aid against the Turks, and ending with the accusation that he had called Suleiman to invade Europe. Francis was now on the closest terms of alliance with Henry VIII, who was bent on divorcing the emperor's aunt. The French king used all his influence with the pope to procure the necessary license for Henry, but was still baffled by the influence of Charles. Clement VII was the potentate whose alliance was most warmly disputed by the rival sovereigns. And both assailed the pontiff on a pontiff's weak side, by the offer of aggrandisement to his family. Charles proposed that Clement's niece, Catherine de' Medici, should espouse Francesco Sforza, duke of Milan; by which means the Medici would necessarily be ever adverse to the claims of the French kings on Milan. Francis, in opposition, offered his second son, Henry, duke of Orleans, as a husband for Catherine; and Clement, elated by the honour of an alliance with the royal house of France, exulted at the proposal. The emperor, who knew the proud character of Francis, could not believe that he would sincerely permit his son to ally with such upstarts as the Medici; and this incredulity neutralised the exertions that he might otherwise have made to obstruct the match. It took place, however, in 1533, at Marseilles, where Clement and Francis met to honour the ceremonial, and to arrange the conditions of their future friendship. One of these, there is no doubt, was the vigorous prosecution and extirpation of heresy. Francis, however, reaped as usual little advantage from the negotiation. He failed to obtain for Henry VIII the dispensation required, and that impatient monarch broke with the church in consequence. Clement himself died in the year following, and was succeeded by Paul III of the house of Farnese.<sup>2</sup>

Francis I and Charles V vied with each other in seeking alliance with the church. Francis burned heretics in the great cities, and made adhesion to the new opinions a crime against the crown. Charles, on the other hand, led an expedition into Africa, and slaughtered the infidels in a new crusade (1535). Victorious over Barbarossa, the usurper of Tunis, and followed by the blessings of the thousands of Christian captives whom he had delivered from slavery, he made his way to Rome. There, in presence of the pope,

[<sup>1</sup> For a study of the Reformation, see vol. XIII.]



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he stood forth and made his complaint against Francis. He declared his readiness to invest one of his sons with Milan, on such conditions of suzerainty and subjection as he should afterwards choose to name; failing that, to meet his enemy foot to foot, on horseback, or in a boat, armed *cap-à-pie* or naked to their shirts; or, finally, to declare internecine war upon him, binding himself by an oath never to sheathe the sword till he had made him the poorest gentleman that ever lived. After this decent and courageous bravado, at which the pontiff must have been greatly amazed, the assembly broke up in most admired disorder, and the dogs of war were let loose. An invasion of France was resolved on, and Charles already counted his victory so secure that he distributed the estates of the French nobility among his favourites (1536). An army of Spaniards and Italians was to overrun Provence, and another of Flemings to break in on Picardy. Between the two, Francis was to be crushed.

Misfortunes crowded, not in single file but in battalions, upon the thoughtless but affectionate king. His eldest son Francis, the dauphin, died at this time [suddenly; there were suspicions, probably unfounded, of poisoning]. Defection deprived him of some of the strongest fortresses in Savoy; and the forces of his enemy were reported to be on the soil of France. Instantly the courageous Francis was roused from his grief and dejection. The territory in front of the Spaniards was made a desert; the cattle were driven away, the villages burned, and parties of resolute horsemen sent forth to harass them on the march. Charles expected that all would be risked on the arbitrament of one great engagement, and was foiled by the unexpected tactics. He marched without glory, for he saw no enemy; and without food, for every field was bare. Sickiness came to aid; and, in frightful disorganisation, the starving hordes hurried across the Alps, slain and pillaged on their way by the angry peasantry, and perishing in the clefts of the rocks of hunger and fatigue. Thus fell the pride of the invader almost without a blow.

Francis took now the lofty part which hitherto had been played by his rival; and at a bed of justice in the palace of the Louvre, summoned his rebellious vassal before his feudal court (1537), stripped him by solemn sentence of his tenures of Artois, Flanders, and Charolais, which always had been held of the French crown, and of which his renunciation at the Treaty of Madrid was null and of no effect, as having been obtained by violence and fraud. Beside him, on this great occasion, sat the king of Navarre and James V of Scotland, who had just married the short-lived Madeleine of France—a more dignified, though not a more useful demonstration than the quarrel-scene of his rival at Rome. The forms of feudalism were occasionally revived to gratify a hatred, as the forms of chivalry were retained



A FRENCH NOBLEMAN, TIME OF FRANCIS I

to justify a duel ; but the hatred of the two greatest sovereigns in Europe carried them beyond the bounds both of feudalism and chivalry. Their language, by their respective heralds, would have done honour to two English prize-fighters. They interchanged the names of perjurer and liar, and reminded each other of the discomfitures they had sustained ; Charles being particularly caustic on the subject of Pavia and the prison of Madrid, and Francis retorting with reminiscences of the emperor's overthrow in Provence, and starvation among the hills. Yet, in a year after this time, the enemies met, and spent four of the happiest days of their lives in unrestrained intimacy at Aigues Mortes, a small seaport on the Mediterranean. Charles arrived in a galley. Francis went on board, and grasping his hand said, "My brother, you see I am your prisoner again." Charles returned the visit on shore ; listened well-pleased to the open unsuspecting talk of his companion, and put down all his sayings, and plans, and recollections in his memory, to be used against him at the proper time. He promised him great things in return for all his confidence ; the investiture of Milan for his son, and aid in all his schemes.

A French king at that time would have sacrificed anything for the vain-glory of establishing himself in Italy. Charles saw his triumph, confirmed it by a friendly visit to Paris, and made use of it by obtaining permission to pass through France to punish the men of Ghent who had rebelled (1539). And, when thus the whole advantages of his superior policy were secured, he denounced his friend to the indignation of every Christian, as an ally of Suleiman the chief of the unbelievers, and bestowed the duchy of Milan on his own son, Philip, the prince of Spain. Five armies sprang up at the king's lifting his hand, to revenge this wrong and insult. But though indignation may raise troops, it cannot raise money. Fresh burdens were imposed ; church ornaments were coined into crowns, but still the chest was empty. La Rochelle set the dangerous example of rebellion on account of its over-taxation, and was only quelled by alleviation of its payments and pardon of its behaviour. Assistance was greedily looked to by both parties. Suleiman, the champion of Mohammedanism, on the side of Francis, was balanced by Henry, the defender of the Protestant faith, on the side of Charles. The Turks, under the same Barbarossa whom Charles had displaced from Tunis, besieged Nice, and ravaged the shores of Catalonia. Henry did little but keep Scotland from aiding France by the intrigues and menaces with which he sued for the hand of the unfortunate Mary Stuart, now queen, for his son Edward. A great victory at Ceresoles, in 1544, added another useless wreath to the chaplet of French achievements, and for a moment Milan opened its gates. But Charles and Henry were by this time on the soil of France. The Spaniards were at St. Dizier, the English at Boulogne. Troops were summoned from Italy, and collected from all quarters. Charles steadily advanced, seized Épernay, and rested in Château-Thierry. Paris almost heard the thunder of his guns ; and, flushed with the possession of Boulogne, Henry was reported to be upon the march to join the army.

But other sounds reached the ears of the belligerents. The Protestants in Germany were sharpening their swords, and Charles feared the men of the confession of Augsburg more than the Catholic French. A peace was patched up at Crespy in the Valois (1544) which left things as they were, and enabled the two monarchs to turn their religious minds to the extirpation of heresy. The royal heretic [Henry VIII] who had been the faithful ally of one of them, and the considerate foe of the other, contented himself with demanding a bribe of 2,000,000 crowns for the restitution of his

[1544-1547 A.D.]

conquests. From this time Francis and Charles had more interests in common. Both glowed with a hatred of the Reformation such as only tyrants can feel. They persuaded the pope to summon a general council to extirpate Lutheranism and Calvinism at once, and while the famous council of Trent was gathering from all the orthodox nationalities, they occupied themselves in cruel persecutions of their suspected subjects (1545).<sup>v</sup>

#### LAST YEARS AND DEATH OF FRANCIS I

Francis, however, was growing feeble. He was no longer the brilliant knight of Marignano or Pavia, the friend of Leonardo da Vinci and of Erasmus. Worn out before his time by excesses, at fifty-one he was a morose old man. The greatest blot on his reign belongs to these last unhappy years. So long as the war with Charles V continued, Francis I was careful not to offend the dissenters; the Edict of Coucy had even ordered, in 1535, the suspension of all persecution on account of religion. The peace concluded, men of harsh and sinister counsel, such as Montmorency and Cardinal de Tournon, resumed the upper hand. They attributed the king's reverses to the relaxation of severity and he allowed himself to be persuaded to order new executions. At Meaux fourteen pyres were erected in one day (1546); at the place Maubert Etienne Dolet was hanged and then burned.

The most odious execution was that of a whole inoffensive population, the Vaudois, whose beliefs were more than three centuries old. In 1540 they had been condemned as heretics. The execution of the sentence had been suspended in favour of a peaceable peasantry who paid their taxes regularly and merely offered the spectacle of pure and simple manners in the two little towns of Mérindol and Cabrières and in some thirty villages of the Alps of Provence.

But in the month of April, 1545, precise and rigorous orders from the court reached the parliament of Aix. Without warning, the baron de la Garde, assisted by the president D'Oppède and the *avocat-général* Guérin and accompanied by soldiers, entered the territory of these unfortunate people: 3,000 were massacred or burned in their dwellings; 660 sent to the galleys; the rest dispersed in the woods and mountains, where the greater part died of hunger and privation. For fifteen leagues round not a house, not a tree was left.

Francis I, who perhaps did not know all the details of this execrable drama, approved what had taken place and ordered the persecution to be continued. Foreign affairs went no better. It was the time when Charles V, no longer trammelled by the war with France and assured of peace with the Turks, turned his forces against the Protestants of Germany and, under pretext of stifling heresy, sought to stifle German liberty; the battle of Mühlberg seemed to lay the empire at his feet. Francis I did not see this great success of his rival; he had died three weeks before at the château of Rambouillet, at the age of fifty-two years (31st of March, 1547).<sup>m</sup> He was buried with a magnificence far surpassing anything which had yet been witnessed in France; eleven cardinals assisted at his obsequies, and the ceremony extended over two and twenty days. The bodies of his two sons, the dauphin Francis and Charles duke of Orleans, were conveyed to St. Denis together with his own, and Henry II succeeded to the vacant throne.<sup>n</sup> Before we take up the events of that monarch's reign, let us listen to an estimate of the character and influence of the showy ruler whose life story we have just followed to its close.<sup>a</sup>



## GAILLARD'S ESTIMATE OF FRANCIS I

Charles V and Francis I (says Gaillard) perhaps owe it to each other that they were great men; each had some advantages that were denied the other. The leading characteristic of Charles was diplomacy, of Francis straightforwardness. If we compare the two princes as warriors, the sum total of their military exploits appears about equal; nevertheless the deeds of Francis are more famous. His early career was so brilliant that it has shed a lustre over his whole life, even over his misfortunes. To gain a victory at twenty makes a man famous forever. Charles V began his career, or at any rate distinguished himself in it, too late. His first important expedition was the

one against the Turks in 1532; for the time when he appeared at Valenciennes only to fly on the approach of the king, and the occasion of his failure before Bayonne, when he was enabled to regain Fuenterrabia by the treachery of a coward, must count for nothing. The expedition to Tunis in 1536 was the first exploit of Charles V which can be compared with the battle of Marignano; nevertheless it was certainly better to gain the battle of Mülberg than to lose that of Pavia. On the whole Charles V was perhaps the greater general and Francis I the better soldier, and this division of military talent is very much what might be



THE BOUNDARIES OF FRANCE IN THE TIME OF FRANCIS I

expected from their individual characters, the one deliberate and thoughtful, the other ardent and impetuous.

In the matter of policy it cannot be denied that Charles V was much greater than Francis I. He kept or gained everything that was contested between him and his rival; he obtained the empire and took possession of the duchy of Milan, and he kept the kingdom of Naples. Nor did he owe his success entirely to the favour of blind fortune; it was rather the result of wise conduct, well-thought-out methods, and the adoption of measures likely to bring about the end he had in view. He was fortunate, and would have been thoroughly worthy of his good fortune had he not so often used fraudulent means to bring about success. He possessed in a high degree the royal faculty of understanding men. The greatest generals in Europe were to be found at the head of his armies; his ministers had no sway over him, and he always employed them in the matters for which they were most suitable. He understood both his own subjects and foreigners; he knew that Bourbon was a hero and that Saluzzo was only a traitor. He therefore made use of Bourbon for conquest and Saluzzo for treachery. Bourbon was a hero, but he was a French refugee, so Charles placed Pescara to act as a

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spy over him. Pescara was almost on an equality with Bourbon and was jealous of him. Both men however were ambitious and not very faithful, so Charles employed the trustworthy and useful Lannoy to watch them both. He won over from France La Marek, Sickingen, the sublime Bourbon, the prince of Orange, and Andrea Doria, the greatest men of his time, while Francis only took from him the obscure prince of Melit. Charles V greatly excelled his rival also in steadiness and energy.

Francis I was capable of actions which dazzle us, but he was only energetic by fits and starts, with long intervals of lethargy and languor; while with Charles V there were no such intervals. Always full of energy, he made his preparations, he carried them out, he plotted, he sowed dissension where it suited his purpose to do so, he went to Germany, to Italy, to Spain; he controlled the great powers and subdued the lesser ones, he fettered them all by his negotiations. Bayle remarks that since there were many more leagues formed against Francis I than against Charles V, the former must have been more feared than the latter; but it was the emperor's cleverness which made people believe that Francis I was so formidable. Moreover such leagues do not always prove that the power of the person against whom they are formed is greatly feared. After the defeat of the De Foix and the expulsion of the French in 1522, the whole of Italy formed a league against them; was it because she had more fear of Francis I, who was routed and expelled, than of the emperor, who was master of the Milanese and of the kingdom of Naples? No, but she thought she would be more likely to be left in peace if she submitted quietly to the emperor, than if she made an effort to help the fallen king to rise, by lending him a helping hand.

Henry VIII, it is true, more often allied himself with Charles V than with Francis I. He thought he had some claim to France; he knew he had none to Italy, to Germany, or to Spain. Charles V knew how to turn to his own advantage the power of his rival, which he exaggerated in order to injure him. But Francis I was far superior to his rival when he was defending Provence against his attacks, and Bayle is right in saying that he deserved more glory for preserving his own kingdom, in spite of circumstances, than Charles V, who failed to do this notwithstanding his great power and numerous intrigues, deserved for all his other conquests. Again, Francis was superior to Charles when he warned the latter that the people of Ghent were in rebellion, and allowed him to pass through France on his way to subdue them; when he pardoned the rebels of La Rochelle; when he behaved with such moderation after the scandalous scene in Rome; and when, Charles having calumniated him throughout Germany, he took no further vengeance than heaping benefits on the German merchants.

Finally, in military ability Francis I was at least the equal of Charles V; in political genius he was his inferior, but he surpassed him in honour: indeed his political inferiority was partly the result of a greater moral delicacy, which made him more fastidious than Charles as to the means by which he tried to gain his ends. In drawing this parallel we have been looking at Francis I as a politician and a soldier, but the point of view is not advantageous to him. He will perhaps shine more brightly in the history of literature and of art.<sup>o</sup>

#### CHARACTER AND POLICY OF HENRY II

Henry II, at the age of twenty-eight, displayed all the military qualities that had distinguished his father in his youth. He was trained in every kind of physical exercise, and enjoyed the reputation of being a most accom-

plished knight. "He possessed," says Brantôme,<sup>p</sup> "majesty and grace, and manners that were suavely royal. He loved war, and never found life so much to his liking as when he was in the midst of battle." His enterprising character had revealed itself in the last two struggles against Charles V, in which he had taken part under Montmorency and D'Annebaut. Cavalli, the Venetian envoy, who erred on the side of leniency, said of Henry that his excellent qualities gave promise to France of the worthiest monarch that had reigned there in two centuries. Like his father he made it a point to become acquainted with every gentleman in his realm. He detested Charles V, and took no pains to hide his feeling. The emperor well knew the bellicose humour of the king towards him and exerted every effort to furnish it satisfaction. "Henry's father," wrote Charles V to his ambassador at Rome, "drew the Turk towards him by the hair of his head; Henry will seize him by hair, hands, and feet."

One thing, however, was wanting in the new king: though a poet, and possessing like all his race a cultivated taste in literature, he lacked that personal charm which made of Francis I the natural head of the most cultured court in Europe. The men of letters in general have little to say in his praise, and the Calvinists, whose numbers were constantly increasing and whom he persecuted with relentless rigour, have least of all been inclined to spare him.

#### COURT FAVOURITES

Scarcely had Henry II ascended the throne when he recalled Montmorency, the master who had instructed him in the art of war and who had beguiled the tedium of a recent period of disgrace by building the superb mansions of Écouen and Chantilly. Montmorency immediately became all-powerful, and showered upon his family the highest dignities and honours. Claude of Guise, his brother the cardinal De Lorraine, and his six sons, all destined to attain the highest eminence, were also given great prominence in the councils of the new reign; they literally blocked the approaches to the throne. "It seemed," says Tavannes, "as though the king had sworn to partition France among them." Diane de Poitiers, grand sénéshale of Normandy and mistress of Henry II, though many years his senior, wielded, under the title of duchess of Valentinois, an influence far wider and more powerful than that exerted by the duchess d'Étampes during the preceding reign. By the marriage of her daughter she became allied to the family of Guise, with whom all her future movements were made in concert. Lastly Saint-André, a former governor of the king, was elevated to the position of marshal, and the pope bestowed the cardinal's hat upon two favourite prelates, Charles de Bourbon, brother of the duke de Vendôme, and Charles de Lorraine, archbishop of Rheims.

D'Annebaut, to whom Henry attributed the defeat of Perpignan; the cardinal De Tournon, and several gentlemen who had served as secretaries of state under Francis I were banished from the court. Out of eleven cardinals who sat in the council seven were sent to Rome, partly with the intention of propitiating the new ministry, and partly to strengthen French influence with the government of Rome, and to establish a French party in the sacred college. The duchess d'Étampes was also requested to withdraw, the king even taking from her the diamonds she had received from Francis I to present them to the duchess of Valentinois.

These many changes resulted, as was inevitable, in widespread discontent. The new councillors were accused of rapacity, and the spirit of



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jealous distrust in which they arrogated all the power to themselves highly incensed the people, while the king was reproached with the weakness which made him so readily yield himself over to be governed. The highest personages made open traffic of court dignities and positions; Montmorency in particular being accused of having furthered his own and his kinsmen's interests by bribes given to the highest nobles, and by peopling the courts of justice with magistrates and councillors of his own creation. Venality and corruption everywhere prevailed, and the spirit manifested by new ministers in entering upon their office was almost that of dogs rushing upon a quarry.

Not one of the writings, in which speaks prejudice or passion, that has come down to us from that day is unquestioningly to be believed; it is an unfortunate fact that many of our most entertaining historical memoirs are little better than chronicles of scandals, since, however incontestable may be the facts they contain, the manner in which these are dressed is invariably calculated to mislead.

On the other hand these memoirs enable us to form an excellent idea of the brilliancy of the court, of the intellectual standard of its members, of the political ability of the councillors surrounding Henry II, of the sentiments of honour and obedience by which were actuated the nobility. It is seen that to untrammelled liberty of opinion, whether in praise or blame, was allied a deep-seated reverence for law, for the government, and for the king. Indeed many diplomatic documents, which for a long time remained unknown, are to the honour of Montmorency, Diane de Poitiers, and the Guises, attesting a truth that contemporaneous writers of military memoirs seem scarcely to suspect—namely, that diplomacy can accomplish more than arms. From the additional circumstance that the records of the relations with Venice are mainly favourable to the court, it will be seen that, strange though it may appear, it was the Frenchmen of that day who contributed the most towards blackening the national character.

Catherine de' Medici, wife of Henry II, and Jeanne d'Albret, queen of Navarre, also played parts during this reign, small at first but increasing to great prominence as time went on. Catherine, whom Francis I had loved and protected against her enemies, gave as yet no evidence of personal ambition or greed for authority. She passively submitted to the rule of the duchess of Valentinois, but worked stealthily all the time to strengthen her own private influence—an influence which Diane herself finally came to second, and which paved the way to the reign upon which Catherine was soon to enter.*f*

#### RELIGIOUS PERSECUTIONS AND ROYAL MARRIAGES

The first days of his accession were employed by Henry in royal progresses through his domains, and in shows and spectacles. In the last of these he was himself a chief performer, and no one held the lists with a firmer lance, or overthrew his opponent with a more scientific thrust. Henry next proceeded to the slaughter of such of his people as began to think for themselves on religious subjects. Gibbets were erected on the side of the road by which he made his entrance into the good city of Paris, and unhappy Protestants were suspended from them by cords round their bodies, and dropped into a slow fire, which was kindled under them, till they expired. The Protestant princes of the league of Smalkald had been completely beaten at the great battle of Mühlberg within a month of Francis' death. The elector of Saxony

and the landgraf of Hesse were taken prisoners, their military followers dispersed, and to all human appearance the cause of the Reformation on the continent was at an end.

Before the fruits of the battle of Mühlberg could be gathered by the victors, news reached the confederated Protestants that a quarrel had broken out between the French king and the emperor, and between the emperor and the pope. They actually became the arbiters of these great dissensions, and

were courted by all parties.

Charles, in order to intimidate his holiness, insisted on the return of the general council to Trent, where it had been originally summoned in 1544, and its removal from Bologna, to which it had been transferred by Paul. This was to place it where the influence of Protestant belief was greatest, and already there were hopes of a compromise, by which Germany might become an undivided power. England was under an eclipse at this time, and was nearly forgotten outside of her guardian seas. Edward VI was on the throne, Somerset was protector, and both were too weak to do anything more than defend their authority against the cabals of the political and religious parties into which the nation was split.



HENRY II

The career was therefore open to the rival crowns. Charles, in entering on the new contest, showed his usual sagacity, and made concessions after having obtained all the advantages of force. He granted liberty of worship to the Protestants by an imperial rescript, marriage of their priests, and communion in both kinds, till the council of Trent should come to a final decision. But this was assuming too much of the pontifical authority to be pleasing to the pope. He protested against the Interim, as this act was called, and prosecuted his schemes in favour of France more zealously than ever. Persecution and toleration therefore became the conflicting arms of the champions in this great struggle; and it shows us how completely the political view at this time excluded the religious, that the heretics were slain and tortured by a man who was utterly regardless of the great question in dispute, while their liberties were defended by a gloomy and unrelenting bigot, who looked on them as the enemies of God and man.

Henry, too thoughtless to take warning by the sudden change in his adversary's treatment of the innovators, sought to strengthen his cause, and increase the papal influence, by double severity against the new faith. The massacres and atrocities perpetrated under Francis at Mérindol and Cabrières

[1547-1548 A.D.]

rested for a long time in the memory of the people, till they were expelled by still wilder excesses of fanaticism and hatred. Rebellions, prompted by despair and over-taxation, broke out in several places, and an expedition into Italy was thwarted by the necessity of hurrying back to punish refractory Bordeaux. Disregarding the protest of the local parliament, the edict of the king had imposed a duty on salt, which maddened the consumers; for the article lay at their doors, and the commissaries were inquisitorial as well as unjust. Montmorency, the favourite, was in his element now. He was sent down to execute justice on the revolvers, and spared neither sex nor age. A hundred of the chief artisans of Bordeaux were ignominiously hanged; crowns of red-hot iron were placed on other sufferers' heads while they were broken alive on the wheel. The bells were taken down, in sign of the withdrawal of the city's municipal powers; and a breach was made in the walls, in sign of its subjection to military law. Wherever the constable went, he was preceded by the executioners of his vengeance; and having spread desolation and misery through the whole south of the kingdom, he returned to Paris in time to take part in the rejoicings which had been going on while these terrible events occurred, for the marriage of Anthony de Bourbon with Jeanne d'Albret. The mother of this Jeanne was the Protestant and poetess, Marguerite of Navarre, the sister of Francis I; and the eldest son of this marriage was Henry IV. These blood-stained espousals were the connecting link between the follower of Bayard and the friend of Sully. It is a great step when we come, with only one life between, from the armed bravo of Marignano to the author of the Edict of Nantes.

At this time also another marriage was resolved on, and another royal bride made her appearance at the court of France. A beautiful and graceful child she was, whose life has been studied with more zeal, and fate lamented with more tears, than those of any other queen; for it was the fair and unfortunate Mary of Scotland, transplanted now, in her sixth year, from the bleak land which scarcely owned its allegiance, and always refused its affections—to appear for a brief moment on the brightest and gayest throne in Europe, and go back to the toils and struggles, the errors and sorrows of her native realm. She was betrothed in 1548 to Francis the dauphin, who later ascended the throne as Francis II. The rejoicings on these two auspicious events were soon interrupted; for all the nations were in a roused and unsettled state, and every day brought forth some new complication of parties, or totally unexpected turn in the progress of affairs.

A distinction seems always to have been drawn between the doctrines of the Lutherans and the Calvinists. The Lutherans were considered merely dissidents from the papal church, but the Calvinists were thought rebels against royal authority. Excesses on both sides justified to superficial observers the opinion, which inflamed the Catholics and reformers with unappeasable rage, that their joint existence was impossible. Catholicism, when it was triumphant, trampled on the faintest spirit of dissent; and dissent, when it had the opportunity, retorted with almost insane retribution. The release from the darkness in which all men's minds had been avowedly kept was too sudden to be wisely borne. The light blinded their eyes, and the persecutors could point to their victims' acts in justification of their own. This will account for the tragedies and nameless horrors of the next half century in France, in which the national character entirely changed. Jacques Bonhomme became a ravening savage instead of a complaining drudge, and knight and cavalier became brutalised below the standard of a Chinese mandarin or maddened Hindu.



## WAR WITH CHARLES V AND HIS SUCCESSOR

National efforts, however they might ostensibly be only on temporal or political subjects, borrowed their spirit from these theological dissensions. Wars, sieges, marriages, all had reference to the great argument of the time; for it was felt on both sides that the preponderance of either of the parties in the religious struggle would decide the predominance of the political opinions which were supposed to be involved. Protestantism and free government, if not the cry, was already the sentiment of all the peoples, and Catholicism and loyalty to the crown were the counterblasts on the other side. If Charles V, therefore, at any time, perceived that the pope himself relaxed in his opposition to the Calvinist reformers, he opposed the person of his holiness without the least compunction, but with an unabated reverence for his office; and if Henry II saw, in the midst of his executions of the Protestants of his own kingdom, that encouragement of the Lutherans of Germany would weaken his rival's forces, he sent assistance to the confederated princes. But both were equally bent on maintaining their individual authority. It will therefore not surprise us when we perceive that, in the year 1552, the part played by these unprincipled potentates became reversed. Charles, the publisher of the Interim which secured the Protestant demands, is at open war with them in Germany; and Henry, the torturer of the reformers of his own kingdom, is armed in their defence. Maurice of Saxony, however, saved the French king the trouble of crossing the Rhine, for he secretly placed himself at the head of a band of determined Protestants, forced the passes of the Tyrol, and scattered the council of Trent, which was still carrying on its labours. Without check or pause they marched without beat of drum, and got so close to the house in Innsbruck where Charles was in bed with a slight illness, that his imperial majesty had to fly with no more dignified apparel than his shirt and stockings.

While the confederated princes were lamenting the escape of their expected prisoner, they were cheered with a message from the emperor himself offering terms of accommodation. The rapidity of his flight had been increased by the knowledge, which reached him in his retreat, that Henry, with a great French army, was on the borders of Germany, and ready to cross over to the assistance of his enemies. Better, he thought, to yield at once than allow his French rival to gain the glory of a reconciliation. The princes accepted the offer, and wrote to beg Henry to discontinue his advance. Henry yielded to their request by discontinuing his advance; but indemnified himself by turning to one side, and seized by main force the cities of Metz, Toul, and Verdun, spread his legions over Lorraine, and made an attempt on Strasburg and the county of Alsace. In this he was only repulsed by the Protestantism of the people. They feared the most Christian king and had more confidence in the Catholic emperor, who, to the great satisfaction and at the powerful request of sixty thousand armed Lutherans, had just signed his name to the Treaty of Passau. This Treaty of Passau was the termination for a long time of the German strife. Equal rights were secured by it to Protestant and papist; equal eligibility to seats in the great council of Speier, and mutual freedom of worship in the states of both communions.

The war henceforth became a petty personal quarrel between the sovereigns. Charles, having pacified the reformers, swore he would die before the walls of Metz, which the king had taken, before he would raise the siege; and Henry swore he would lose his last man before a Spaniard crossed the ditch.

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It was a duel with the world gathered round the lists. Metz was a wretchedly placed town, with no regular fortifications, no bastions or towers, and was commanded by hills in the immediate neighbourhood. But Francis, duke of Guise, threw himself into the place, and made preparations for defence.<sup>v</sup>

*The Siege of Metz (1552 A.D.)*

On approaching the place, the 120,000 men who accompanied Charles V found neither food nor trees nor shelter in a province which the stupidity of the men of Brandenburg had ravaged without aim or profit, as completely as the defenders of Metz might have done systematically in their own interest. Albert, their markgraf, with the improvidence of a savage, had reduced himself to famine. Charles V remained for a long time encamped at Saarbrücken and at Forbach, waiting for his heavy artillery.

Guise had no intention of letting himself be surprised by this army, masked as it was behind the forests, and most frequently employed himself in visiting the guards and sentinels. He established a "watch" of mounted men at St. Julien, to give warning of the approach of the enemy. In the beginning of October, the imperial army came and encamped at St. Avold, and on the 19th Metz was invested. Under fire of the enemy's cannon, Guise continued the defensive works. Frequent sorties kept up the ardour and health of his garrison and exhausted the enemy by continual alarms and losses. Every day brought some damage to the enemy, taking soldiers and horses and spoiling the provisions that were being brought to them.

At the very beginning the emperor sent a trumpeter to Guise to announce that Hesdin had been taken from the king of France and that his brother, the duke d'Aumale, had fallen into the hands of the markgraf of Brandenburg. But Guise did not heed these communications; himself informed of what was passing outside, he was in constant communication with the king, and imparted to him every episode of the siege, his hopes, his checks, and the movements of the besieging army. His quarters were near the Champagne gate, the principal object of attack, that he might be at all hours on the spot where action and the greatest danger were making ready. He had about five thousand men under his orders in the town a few days before the investment, but he was entirely without artillery. He sent a letter to the king, through the enemy's lines, on the 29th of October: "Having already split and cracked four of the seven pieces of artillery I have had fired, am decided on careful consideration to load them only with half charges, and to use them to terrify more by their noise than their effect, and to employ falconets and other small pieces, it not having depended on me to give warning of what I needed in good time, when means to assist me were available." He had a double cannon on the Ste. Marie platform, but "one of the pins of the said piece is sticking out; the other large culverin is burst at the front end, about a foot and a half, and I have had it sawn off and shall still be able to use it. I assure you, sire, that the fault was not that they were overloaded, but they are so badly cast and of such brittle material that they cannot bear even the smallest charge."

Thus reduced to make use of his artillery only for noise, he still did not hesitate to announce that he could defend himself for ten months. Every two or three days he sent despatches to Fontainebleau or to the relieving army; he indicated means of supplying him with news and of seizing convoys. He wrote to his brother, the cardinal De Lorraine, to the constable, to the marshal De Saint-André; he excited everyone to an interest in the

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honour of saving his town. The cardinal shared this passion with all the ardour of his vehement temperament. To relieve his brother, to save Metz, to hurry to the king at any moment to suggest an idea, propose a surprise of the besiegers, and—noteworthy solicitude which shows the party leader still hidden behind the courtier—commend to him those gentlemen whom his brother singled out for their gallant conduct in the sorties, name those who were wounded, demand for his partisans the offices of those who had just been killed, were the occupations of his every moment.

On the 20th of November, Charles V approached the ramparts of Metz, believing that in a few days they were to fall into his hands; but at this



THE DUKE OF GUISE  
(From an old French print)

moment his engineers judged it necessary to change the point of attack. Whilst they opened new trenches in front of the Tour d'Enfer, not a day passed but some troops of French horse went to alarm the enemy and ransack the high-ways, where spoil was made of provisions and booty of prisoners. On the 28th of November the Tour d'Enfer fell with a crash. Guise wrote to the king that the breach was three hundred paces in width, but that he did not fear the assailants, for "St. Remy swears by all the gods he will make them a tasty dish. I think, sire, they will not be cold when they go out." The whole garrison awaited the assault with the same gaiety.

The ensigns and standards were planted on the breach to defy the enemy and every morning on mounting guard new colours were seen to float. While filling the sacks of earth, the men-at-arms removed their cuirasses and worked clothed in their "woollen liveries." Bales of wool were rolled by women beside the sacks of earth in the space left empty where the rampart had fallen in. One evening Guise, between two of these bales, was watching the preparations for an attack, when the engineer, Camillo Marini, putting his head in the place whence Guise had just withdrawn his own, suddenly received a discharge from an arquebuse which scattered his brains.



[1552-1553 A.D.]

Only on the 7th of December did the assault seem imminent. Guise hurried to the breach with all his volunteers whom he encouraged "by many of those good words which incite to honour, to virtue, and to victory." The assault was not attempted, but the besieged had no time to rejoice at this, for the next day they learned that Henry II was on the march to besiege Hesdin, instead of advancing to the relief of Metz. It is true that they showed no appearance of desiring to be relieved, but they began to be sparing of provisions; Guise had the pack-horses of the foot-soldiers killed and salted, in order to husband the forage for his cavalry. The Tour de Was-sieux fell in near the Champagne gate and left a new breach a hundred paces wide: this opening was closed up like the first, with sacks of earth; the sorties went on; sometimes two or three were made the same day, by different gates. The wounded in the place were numerous. For their benefit Guise sent for the surgeon Ambrose Paré, who had drawn the lance-head from his cheek when he was wounded before Boulogne, and an Italian officer of the imperial army consented for a hundred crowns to introduce him into Metz by night with "his apothecary and his drugs." The privations and sufferings which the emperor's army had to endure rendered treasons of this kind possible, especially amongst the Italians, bewildered as they were at finding themselves transported to the north in the middle of winter for the sake of a German quarrel. Whole bands of these Italians deserted from the camp of the besiegers and went to take service with Henry's army, detachments of which were overrunning Lorraine and intercepting all the convoys of provisions sent from Franche-Comté to the emperor.

The garrisons of Verdun and Toul intercepted food and reinforcements, which were arriving from other points for the besieging army, carried off the famished soldiers who wandered from the camp, and held enclosed in mud and snow this confused multitude of men of all nations. The imperial leaders were not in agreement. The duke of Alva would not allow his veteran Spanish soldiers to be sacrificed under the eyes of the Germans, who refused to advance for an assault. Charles V, exasperated at seeing such weak walls and crumbling ramparts resist so formidable an army, exclaimed: "How, by the wounds of God, is it that they do not enter? By the virtues of God, what is the meaning of it?" He grew irascible, ill, discouraged. He was heard to exclaim: "Ha, I renounce God; I see well that I have no men left; I must bid farewell to the empire, and shut myself up in some monastery, and, by God's death, in three years I will become a Franciscan!" Finally, beaten in several sorties, and embarrassed by the capture of his provisions, he opened a furious cannonade without attaining the foot of the wall, took to mining, in which he was not more fortunate, and withdrew shamed and desperate on the 26th of December, 1552, leaving his army orders to raise the siege after his departure and execute a retreat on Thionville and Treves, under cover of some cannon mounted at the château de Ladonchamp. He had lost thirty thousand men during the siege.

When, on the 2nd of January, 1553, Guise perceived the men in full retreat, he precipitated himself with his garrison into the camp, to seize the artillery and cut to pieces those who had lagged behind. But a heart-rending spectacle presented itself to the eyes of the French. Whichever way they looked, lay so many dead, and an infinity of sick were heard groaning in the huts. In every quarter were great cemeteries, newly dug, tents, arms, and other abandoned furniture. Some of the sick were lying in the mud, others were seated on great stones, with their legs frozen up to the knees in mire, so that they could not withdraw them. More than three

hundred were rescued from this horrible condition, but the greater number were obliged to have their legs cut off.

As if by magic, the French forgot their own sufferings, the dangers they had just escaped, the martial ardour which had animated them, and thought of nothing but how to succour these unfortunate Germans, thus abandoned with their feet in the snow, administering all necessities and such comforts as poor sick foreigners want. Guise had them taken in boats to the duke of Alva at Thionville.<sup>u</sup>

### *Minor Engagements; the Abdication of Charles V*

The following year the emperor besieged Théroutanne in Artois. The little garrison which held it did not capitulate till after a valiant defence; he had the town levelled with the ground and it was never rebuilt. Hesdin was treated in the same fashion. Charles was avenging his humiliated pride by a savage war. In 1554 Henry II paid him ravages for ravages in Hainault and Brabant; he sacked Mariembourg, Dinant, and, at the other extremity of the Low Countries, he attacked Renty, not far from St. Omer. The emperor tried to relieve the place, Guise and Tavannes defied his cavalry; but the French army was compelled by lack of provisions to raise the siege.

At the same time, Brissac, by a series of campaigns which have remained the model of their kind, maintained himself with a small army in Piedmont, in spite of the duke of Alva, and seized Casale, capital of Montferrat; Strozzi and Montluc defended Siena in Tuscany against the Florentines and imperialists; the Turks menaced Naples; finally the baron de la Garde, the French admiral in the Levant, sacked the island of Elba and set foot in Corsica. Thus the check given at Metz was not counterbalanced; France seemed to have recovered her youth with her new king: Charles V grew weary of a struggle which he had now sustained for five-and-thirty years. Frustrated alike by France and by the princes of Germany, he ceded the Low Countries, Italy, and Spain to his son Philip II, and sought at the monastery of San Yuste that repose which is never to be found by the ambitious great (1556).

Charles V had not been able to deliver all his crowns to his son; Austria and the title of emperor remained to his brother Ferdinand. The house of Austria was divided. But at the moment in which Philip II lost Germany he seemed to gain England by a second marriage with the queen of that country, Mary Tudor. He had already one son, Don Carlos; he reserved for him all the Spanish possessions, and it was agreed that the child who might be born of this new union should reign over both the Low Countries and England, that is to say, that London and Antwerp should be under the same master, the Thames and the Schelde under the same laws, and that the North Sea should become an English lake. Thus both for the present and the future France was seriously threatened by that domination which was pressing on her from three sides, which might bring upon her an English invasion against which she could no longer hope for aid from Germany. At the beginning of 1556 Henry II had signed the Truce of Vaucelles with Charles V: he broke it the same year (November), that he might not leave Philip II time to establish himself firmly. The holy see was then occupied by a fiery old man, Paul IV, who was alarmed to see the Spaniards beside and above him, at Naples and Milan. The king and the pontiff made alliance. An army under command of Montmorency was sent to the Low

[1557-1558 A.D.]

Countries; another under the duke of Guise into Italy. The object was to confine Philip II to Spain; Henry II was to enlarge his dominions on the north by neighbouring provinces which it would be easy to retain, and one of his sons received the promise of the crown of Naples, which Duke Francis of Guise, descended in the female line from the house of Anjou, counted on taking for himself. The plan was well thought out. The energetic Paul IV placed his spiritual power at the service of France and the Italian cause; he lanced an excommunication against the most Catholic king.

*Battle and Defence of St. Quentin (August 10th, 1557)*

Against Montmorency, Philip II opposed the duke of Savoy, Emmanuel Philibert, who, despoiled of his states by Francis, rested all his hopes on Spain; and against Francis of Guise, the duke of Alva, a true Spaniard, devoted to the church more even than to his king. Guise, received in triumph at Rome by Paul IV, penetrated into the Abruzzi, but failed near Civitella before the scientific tactics of his adversary. Emmanuel Philibert, after a feigned attack on Champagne, suddenly turned on St. Quentin where he was joined by seven thousand English. This was a place without walls, without munitions, without provisions. Admiral Coligny threw himself into it with seven hundred men; Montmorency approached with supplies; but came so near to the enemy with an army very inferior in numbers and took so few precautions to preserve for himself freedom of movement, that he was obliged to fight without securing his rear. Emmanuel Philibert turned his flank, attacked him in front and rear, and completely defeated him. A Bourbon, the duke d'Enghien, and a viscount of Turenne were slain; another Bourbon, the duke de Montpensier, and the constable De Montmorency, the marshal De Saint-André, the duke de Longueville were taken with four thousand men, the artillery, and the baggage. There were more than ten thousand killed or wounded.

"Is my son at Paris?" cried Charles V on learning in the depths of his retreat of San Yuste of this great disaster to France. Philip II was not at Paris and did not get there. Cold and methodical of temperament, and obstinate but without dash, he had not thought it prudent to follow up his victory. Before taking another step he wished to have St. Quentin, and St. Quentin did not allow itself to be taken for seventeen days. Coligny, knowing that the salvation of France was in question, had made heroic efforts to prolong the defence. There had been time to collect forces and Philip II, after having taken Ham and Le Catelet, re-entered the Low Countries with the slender results of a victory which had promised to be as disastrous to France as Poitiers or Agincourt.

*The Retaking of Calais (1558 A.D.)*

Henry II had recalled the duke of Guise in all haste from Italy. The conqueror of Metz left the duke of Alva to impose, one knee on the ground, the Spanish will on the pope, and came to receive the title of lieutenant of the kingdom with unlimited power. All the nobility flocked round him; Guise responded to the universal expectation. Whilst a movement of the troops was attracting the attention of the enemy on the side of Luxemburg, the duke hastened to Calais which he immediately invested on the 1st of January, 1558. The English, reckoning on the fortifications of the place and on the marshes which envelop it, had left in it but nine hundred men.



Two forts cover the town : that of Nieullay on the land side and that of Rysbank on the side of the sea. Guise attacked the first with fury and carried it on the 3rd of January. The fort of Rysbank fell into his power the same day. On the 6th the castle was attacked ; on the 8th the garrison capitulated. The last and shameful memorial of the Hundred Years' War was thus effaced ; the English no longer possessed an inch of territory in France. In an attempt to compensate themselves by an attack on Brest they were unsuccessful, for the troops landed at Le Conquet were driven back into the sea by the peasants of lower Brittany. This was the death-blow of Queen Mary. "If they open my heart," she said when she was dying, "they will read upon it the name of Calais." The same blow ended the Anglo-Spanish alliance. Elizabeth, who succeeded her sister Mary on the English throne, made Protestantism triumphant in the island and became the irreconcilable enemy of the king of Spain.

### *The Treaty of Câteau-Cambrésis (1559 A.D.)*

Indeed Philip II, that sombre and fanatical spirit, desired to attain the dominion of Europe by another road than his father's. Half of Germany and the Scandinavian states had separated themselves from Rome, and the Reformation, stifled in Italy and Spain, was fermenting in France, spreading in the Netherlands, triumphing in Scotland and England. Philip II conceived the design of crushing Protestantism. He wished to make himself the armed leader of Catholicism throughout Europe, the secular arm of the holy see, the executor of the sentences of the church. His faith and his ambition were in agreement ; for he doubtless calculated that if he stifled heresy it would not be to the profit of orthodox Christianity alone, but to that of his own power, and that the unity of religion would bring about the unity of the empire. In this idea a war with France for a few towns on the frontiers seemed at the moment impolitic and he desired to treat with its king in order to win him to his own plan. Before the peace was concluded some further encounters took place ; Guise seized Thionville and Therme, captured Dunkirk, Bergues, and Nieuwport, but suffered a defeat by allowing himself to be caught at Gravelines between the count of Egmont who attacked him in front, and an English fleet whose cannon belaboured his flanks. On the 3rd of April, 1559, peace was at last signed.

By this treaty France kept the Three Bishoprics (Metz, Toul, and Verdun with their territory). She had already re-entered into possession of Boulogne ; she also retained Calais, engaging to pay a sum of 500,000 crowns to the English if she had not restored that city at the end of eight years— which she took good care not to do. The two kings of France and Spain mutually restored each other their conquests on the frontiers of the Low Countries and in Italy, with the exception of Piedmont where Henry retained several towns<sup>1</sup> until the claims of Louise of Savoy, grandmother of the king of France, should be settled. The acquisitions of France were valuable and protected her against England and Germany. Nevertheless, one of the negotiators, Montmorency, has been accused of having sacrificed his country's interests to the desire of recovering his own liberty more quickly ; France ceded the county of Charolais, and 189 towns or castles, which she

<sup>1</sup> The treaty of 1562 with Savoy finally left France only Pinerolo, Perosa, and Savigliano, which were restored by Henry III in 1574. The marquisate of Saluzzo which Francis I had snatched from the family of that name was usurped by Savoy in 1588 and in 1601 exchanged for Bresse.

[1559 A.D.]

was occupying in the Low Countries or in Italy, in return for St. Quentin, Ham, Le Catelet and a few unimportant places which the Spaniards surrendered to her. "Sire," Guise and Brissac said bitterly, "you give in one day what would not be taken from you in thirty years of reverses." Some towns in Italy were neither necessary nor desirable for the French, for they would have served them as a perpetual temptation to return across the Alps. But they were abandoning French territories which should have been preserved at all costs, especially as the Spaniards did not restore Jeanne d'Albret the portion of her kingdom of Navarre which they had held for half a century.<sup>m</sup>

Thus the great game of international politics that for half a century had been played on the boards of Europe was brought to apparent termination, — and France had lost. Since the time of Charles VIII, France, as represented by its king, had longed for foreign conquests. We have seen Francis I in a life-long struggle with Charles V, striving vainly to give imperial influence to his kingly office. Henry II has kept up the game, with Philip II for his counter-player. But now, after all these struggles, all this loss of property and life, the bounds of France still remain almost the same as they were when Francis I came to the throne in 1515. The glamour of the deeds of Francis I may have given a certain added *éclat* to the French name; but the actual extra-territorial influence of France has shrunk rather than extended since the time when Charles VIII marched practically unopposed to the confines of Italy (1494).

On the other hand, the duchy of Bourbon has reverted to the crown, and the recovery of Calais is an event of real significance. With the expulsion of the English troops from this last coign of vantage, the work begun by Joan of Arc a century before is finished. If the imperial hopes of the French kings have been doomed to disappointment, at least France is now mistress of her own territory; hers is a compact and unified kingdom, if not an empire in the modern sense of the word.

#### THE LAST DAYS OF HENRY II

It is not to be supposed, however, that the French king regarded the imperial contest as really over. Doubtless Henry II, while momentarily turning his attention to the interior of his kingdom, dreamed of a future day when he should return to the imperial struggle. But if so, the dream was not to be realised. The end of his life was at hand. The same year that witnessed the signing of the treaty of Câteau-Cambrésis was to see Henry II pass finally from the scene; indeed there is nothing more to record of him except the manner of his death. This came about in a way characteristic of the times, but impossible in any other age; it was the accidental outgrowth of the festivities that marked in a sense the culminating features of the treaty.

It had been arranged that a double marriage of international significance should be effected. Henry's daughter was to marry the king of Spain; his sister to marry the duke of Savoy. Thus the great imperial drama was to close in the conventional way amidst the peal of wedding bells. The weddings took place; but the fates mocked at such an ending, and insisted that what had commenced as a tragedy should remain a tragedy to the end.<sup>a</sup> In scandalous contrast to the feverish agitation — an exaltation mingled with dread — that pervaded all France, the court had given itself over to pleasures and festivities: nothing but balls, masquerades, jousts, and banquets on the

occasion of the double marriage of the princesses of France. But the joyous sounds were soon to be changed to the silence of death. On the 20th of June, 1559, Madame Elizabeth of France, daughter of the king, was married at Notre Dame to the duke of Alva, proxy of the king of Spain. On the 27th the contract of the duke of Savoy and Madame Marguerite, the king's sister, was signed. Splendid lists were marked out, at the end of the rue St. Antoine, facing the royal palace des Tournelles, and almost at the foot of the Bastille where the deposed magistrates were imprisoned. During three days the princes and lords tilted there in presence of the ladies. On the 29th of June the champions (challengers) of the tournament were the dukes of Guise and Nemours, the son of the duke of Ferrara and the king in person, wearing the colours of his sexagenarian lady, the white and black of widows, which Diana had never left off. When the passage at arms was finished the king who had ridden in several races as "swift and expert rider" wished to break another lance before retiring, and in spite of the entreaties of the queen he ordered that the count de Montgomery should be his opponent.

Montgomery in vain tried to be excused. The two jousts rushed violently against each other and broke their lances with dexterity. But Montgomery, forgetting to throw away instantly the fragment remaining in his hand as the rule was, involuntarily struck the helmet of the king, penetrating the bars of his visor, and thrusting a splinter of wood into his eye. The king fell on the neck of his horse, which carried him to the end of the enclosure; here his equerries received him in their arms, and carried him to Tournelles amidst the greatest confusion and indescribable dismay. All the aids of science were ineffectual; the wood had penetrated into the brain. Vainly the renowned Vesale hastened from Brussels on the command of Philip II; Henry II languished eleven days, and expired on the 10th of July after having the marriage of his sister Marguerite with the duke of Savoy celebrated in his chamber the day before his death. He was a few months over forty years of age. All Protestant Europe hailed the arm of the Almighty in this thunderbolt which had struck down the persecuting king in the midst of his "impious" festivities.

The reformers were not mistaken. The race of Valois was doomed. Restored in the fifteenth century by the greatest marvel in French history, it had disregarded the will of God as indicated by Joan of Arc. In the sixteenth century it outraged humanity and hampered the natural development of France. Its days were numbered. Now replacing the fanaticism of Henry II by a policy devoid of principle or sincerity, it was to strive at random during thirty years against the tempests of the religious wars, to disappear finally in a sea of blood.&





### CHAPTER XIII

## CATHERINE DE' MEDICI AND THE RELIGIOUS WARS

[1559-1589 A.D.]

The lance-thrust with which Montgomery struck down Henry II in the tournament of June 29th, 1559, was to change the aspect of France. The reign so rudely interrupted in the midst of festivities had not always been happy or brilliant, but it had maintained an appearance of grandeur. The reigns of which it led the sorrowful series, could not bring it the same honour or the same profit. It was no longer the question as to who should have the first place in Europe, the house of France or that of Austria; but who in France would gain by the unchained religious passions — the Guises or the Bourbons. In future it is no longer a question of fighting the Spanish or the English; when they are mentioned, it will be to open the French frontiers to them and have them take part in the country's struggles. — *DE LACOMBE.*<sup>b</sup>

VOLTAIRE—struck with the violent contrast between the misery and brilliancy of this century, the sudden rise of the arts, the refinement and chivalry of the court which glittered even in the midst of crimes—cries out: "It is a robe of silk and gold stained with blood." The gold and silk have been shown; now appear the blood and ruin.

Henry II left to Catherine de' Medici four young sons. Sickly from birth, and already weakened by excess, three of them rapidly succeeded to the throne, having themselves no heirs; and thus for a quarter of a century the weight of absolute power, so difficult to carry, falls into the hands of children or young men without experience. Grandchildren of one of the most brilliant of monarchs, and with the blood of the Medici in their veins, they were able to show happy qualities of spirit and great defects. They were eloquent speakers, occasionally poets, and always friends of literature and art, but with vices that endangered the state; and the crimes which resulted from their characters, at once violent and perfidious, overshadowed their gifts of mind. The oldest, Francis II, was not able to show the sad effects of these contradictions in his nature; he reigned less than a year and a half.<sup>c</sup> His successor, Charles IX, a child of ten on his accession, reigned fourteen years, but never ruled, being dominated by the baleful influence of his mother. To Charles succeeded his weak and perfidious brother Henry III,

with whose troubled and ineffectual reign the house of Valois came to an end. Such are the reigning monarchs of our present epoch. But the real ruler of France during this dark period of thirty years is the mother of the kings, the scheming, pitiless Catherine de' Medici. It is her story that we tell as we follow the fortunes of her weakly offspring, the first of whom now claims attention.<sup>a</sup>

#### FRANCIS II (1559-1560 A.D.)

The law declared the king a major at thirteen years of age; at sixteen Francis II was still weak of will and under the tutelage of others. With a prince feeble both in mind and body at the head of the state, it was natural that the queen-mother should be called upon to take an active part in public affairs. The widow of Henry II had not as yet made her influence strongly felt; with all her superstition she was known to possess intelligence and a refined taste in art and in matters pertaining to her personal pleasures, but in moral sense she was notably deficient. Always kept by her husband in ignorance of public affairs, she had hitherto revealed no higher qualities than a rare constancy under affront and a marvellous ability to carry on intrigues. Now passing as she did without transition from court circles into state factions, and from minor intrigues into war, she was taken at a disadvantage and did not at once show herself equal to the requirements of her new rôle; without convictions of any kind as without scruples, she was not led to adopt the firm and open policy that would best have served the state, but carried all the artifices of the boudoir into the conduct of public affairs. Her method of government consisted in ruling men by their passions, a method which augments corruption by doubling the strength of the parties it places in opposition to each other. The many outrages which had been inflicted upon her by the triumphant Diane de Poitiers had effaced in her mind all distinction between good and evil, and there was left her but a single worthy sentiment, her affection for her children. All her efforts were directed toward keeping the power in the hands of her sons, and to fulfil this end she unhesitatingly made use of every means, from love intrigues to assassination. A policy so perverse must inevitably bring its own punishment, and the blood-stained crown of the Valois, falling from the hands of this unscrupulous Italian woman, came near to being irretrievably shattered.

The young Mary Stuart, wife of Francis II, superseded Catherine de' Medici in power for a brief period. Henry II had wedded his son to this daughter of James V and Marie de Lorraine in order to make sure of the aid of Scotland in any future quarrel with England. Beautiful, gracious, intelligent, and witty, Mary had not yet committed those faults which were to be expiated by a long term of suffering, that ended only in death. At the brilliant court of France, surrounded by the poets, scientists, and artists that attended her every step, Mary threw herself unrestrainedly into the pleasure of exerting those rare charms of mind and person which have silenced all adverse criticism on the lips of modern historians. The influence exercised by the young queen on all around her, the empire she had gained over the mind of the king, might have operated powerfully for the welfare of the state had she been surrounded by disinterested advisers; as it was she gave herself up completely to pleasure and left the management of affairs in the hands of her uncles, the cardinal De Lorraine, and Duke Francis of Guise.

The house of Guise, a younger branch of the ducal house of Lorraine, had, although but newly established in France, rapidly risen to power. Claude, chief of the house, had obtained in recompense for his services the governor-

[1559-1560 A.D.]

ship of the province of Champagne and the elevation of his property of Guise into a duchy, his brother John being made a cardinal. Two of his sons were destined to play a prominent part in the affairs of France: the elder, Francis, had bravely defended Metz and reconquered Calais; while another, Charles, had succeeded his uncle John as cardinal and possessed as many as twelve ecclesiastical sees, among which were three archbishoprics. The young king left to the first-named, Francis, all matters pertaining to "the militia," while Charles was given jurisdiction in civil affairs. Thus the entire administration of the state was practically given into the hands of these two brothers, the "general superintendence" over the government which Catherine de' Medici was supposed to retain being only a high-sounding, empty title.

There were other candidates that aspired to power, some by reason of their birth and others from pure ambition—the Bourbons, for example, and the Montmorencys. The house of Bourbon had for chiefs at that time Anthony who married Jeanne d'Albret, heiress of the kingdom of Navarre, and his two brothers, Charles, Cardinal de Bourbon, and Louis, prince of Condé. These three were the nearest kindred to the Valois, and Anthony, in case of minority, could have laid claim to the regency; but since the treason committed by the constable, the Bourbons had been somewhat in disgrace, and for the time being were making no demands.

The aged and inflexible constable, De Montmorency, the chief who had met defeat at St. Quentin, showed himself less disinterested; but the king, pretexting his advanced years, gradually relieved him of the burden of affairs. Thus the two Guises remained undisputed masters of the power, the king, and the court, until a new enemy rose up to challenge their supremacy. It was forty years since Luther had begun to preach against the established church, and Europe was now divided into two communions.<sup>c</sup>

### *Religious Parties*

In France the religious parties were political factors at the same time. The Huguenots, as they came to be called, were largely recruited from among the nobility which was hostile to the Guise party. This must be kept in mind as we enter upon the long story of crime and civil war which marks the religious settlement in France. It was particularly unfortunate that this great question of religious differences came at a time when a line of weak kings left authority the prize of faction or in the control of women.<sup>a</sup>

A conspiracy against royalty became the first act of Protestantism in France; and thus hundreds of loyal subjects and rational minds were alienated from it, and their dislike was strengthened by prejudice. The court, with some reason, henceforth declared against it an eternal war. Many of the noblesse had already joined the party of Coligny and of Condé, though the king of Navarre and the constable hesitated and held back. La Rochefoucauld, Jarnac, and the vidame de Chartres declared for them. An atrocious impertinence on the part of the cardinal De Lorraine, opportunely occurring, swelled this band of foes to the Guises. Tormented by demands, some for debts due and some for places promised, the all-powerful prelate in a fit of spleen published a proclamation by sound of trumpet, ordering all petitioners, of whatever rank, to quit Fontainebleau, where the court then was, without delay, and this under pain of being hanged. The cardinal, perhaps, meant to be facetious; for the court instantly became a desert. The host of noble suitors, proud though mendicant, could not forgive the threat, and many joined the discontented.



The party had numerous meetings in the château of Vendôme, and in other places. La Renaudie, a gentleman of Périgord, and an agent of Coligny, was employed by him to be the ostensible leader. A meeting was secretly convened at Nantes, where the Protestants and enemies of Guise united to the number of six hundred, and took counsel together. It was agreed to attack Blois, where the king then was, obtain possession of his person, and get rid of the odious Guises. Amongst such a host of conspirators secrecy was almost impossible: the duke received warning of the plot, and removed the court to the castle of Amboise. The cardinal De Lorraine was terrified; he proposed to summon the *ban* and *arrière-ban*, and gather an army against the rebels. All the anxiety of Guise, on the contrary, was that his enemies should show themselves; and for that purpose he affected confidence. Coligny and Condé both repaired to Amboise, where Guise received them without betraying the least mark of suspicion, and he appointed them to different posts of defence about the castle; each, however, watched by his own trusty partisans. The rising had been appointed for the 15th of March: it took place on the 16th, the baron de Castelnau seizing the castle of Noizé, not far from Amboise. La Renaudie was marching to join him: they hoped to surprise the court; when on a sudden the royal troops sent by Guise made their appearance, attacked La Renaudie, slew him, and besieged Noizé.

An amnesty was now published in the hope of allaying the insurrection; but, as if in contempt of it, the château of Amboise was attacked on that very night. All the vigilance and valour of Guise were required to repel the rebels. By secret information he had time to prepare for them, and they were routed. The amnesty was revoked, and no mercy was shown to the captives. Twelve hundred of them were hanged, or otherwise despatched; even Castelnau, who had surrendered on the faith of the duke de Nemours, was executed in the presence of the court. In the confessions forced from many by the torture, none of the real chiefs of the conspiracy was mentioned except the prince of Condé. History is even in doubt to decide if those chiefs were concerned in the attack: the Protestant party will not admit that they by this rash and unwarrantable act produced the civil war. Condé was brought to trial in presence of the court: he disdained to defend himself but as a knight. "Let my accuser appear," said he, regarding Guise, "and I will prove upon him, in single combat, that he is the traitor, not I, and that he is the true enemy of the king and of the monarchy." Guise rose to reply to this challenge: "I can no longer suffer these dark suspicions to weigh upon so valiant a prince; I myself will be his second in the combat against whoever accuses him." Most of those present were as perplexed as no doubt the reader is, to comprehend this conduct in the duke of Guise. Some called it chivalric generosity, others the perfection of guile.

In the trouble excited by the conspiracy, the young king, for the first time, manifested an opinion of his own. He was shocked at finding himself the object of hatred, and he began to mistrust the Guises. The queen-mother, Catherine, after the example of her son, also took courage; and the chancellor Olivier, as well as Vieilleville and other courtiers, joined her party. Hence arose the first amnesty—a concession on the part of the Guises which was recompensed by the duke's appointment as lieutenant-general of the kingdom. The executions which followed, especially that of Castelnau, which the court witnessed, shocked the princesses (the cardinal De Lorraine hoped that the sight of heretic blood would have had an opposite effect), and they, with the young queen Mary, flung themselves into the scale of mercy. Guise was unable to resist this influence; he saw that the prince of Condé

[1560 A.D.]

must in consequence be released, and he sought to take to himself full credit for a generosity that was forced upon him. Here then Catherine de' Medici, for the first time, appears as the leader of a party.

The continued mistrust and independence of the Guises shown on the part of the queen-mother and the young king produced an assembly of notables, summoned soon afterwards at Fontainebleau to take the affairs of the kingdom into consideration. In it the Protestant leaders, even prelates, spoke openly the apology for reformation; and Coligny demanded tolerance for the sectarians, relying upon the neutrality of the court. Guise could no longer command his temper, as he did at Amboise: mutual recrimination and menaces were heard in the assembly of peace. Both parties struggled in their discourses to convince the monarch of the justice and expediency of their counsels; but the weakness and indecision of the court were at the same time seen by both; and an appeal of equal earnestness was made by them to the people. The Protestants continually cried out for the states-general and a national council. And now the cardinal De Lorraine forgot his nature so far as to join in the cry, and make the same demand. The independent attitude of the queen rather forced the Guises to strengthen themselves by popularity.

Such appear the true reasons why the states-general were summoned to meet at Orleans, in October, 1560. Historians in general perceive in them merely a snare to catch the Protestant chiefs. They served that purpose indeed, but they had been already summoned ere Condé, just released, could have recommenced his intrigues. The arrogance and boldness of the Protestants, and of Coligny, in the assembly of notables at Fontainebleau, were revolting to Catherine and Francis. Between August, when that assembly was held, and October, the period for the assembling of the states, the Guises had completely won the court to themselves, and regained their influence. The prince of Condé attempted during that interval to seize Lyons, and convert it into a stronghold of rebellion. He failed, however; and his traitorous enterprise became thoroughly known at court. Notwithstanding this, the brothers of Bourbon, the king of Navarre and the prince, were induced to join the assembly of the states. Though full of mistrust, they still ventured on the secret favour or neutrality of Catherine, who joined in enticing them to come. They were ill received by the king. Catherine was troubled, and shed tears on beholding them, knowing them to be victims betrayed by their confidence in her. The king's mind had been filled with the bitterest calumnies against them: he accused Condé of having attempted his life, and ended by committing that prince to prison. The king of Navarre instantly complained, and expostulated with the queen-mother; but she could not now retract the consent she had given, or unbend the mind of the young monarch. Condé was tried by a commission, and refusing to answer, was condemned to death. The day was appointed for the execution, and Catherine de' Medici betrayed to all who approached the agony and misgivings of her mind.

### *Death of Francis II*

Historians will maintain that this sensibility on the part of Catherine was affected; but it would seem that she was now sincere in wishing to save the life of Condé, and fortune placed this in her power. The young king was stricken with sudden illness, arising, it is supposed, from formation of an abscess in his head. The supreme authority rested with the queen-mother. The Guises urged her to execute the sentence upon Condé; but she hesitated,

and resolved to save him. She determined, however, to turn her mercy to advantage; summoning the king of Navarre, she offered to spare the life of his brother, provided he signed an agreement renouncing all claims to the regency in case of the young king's death. Navarre signed; and Francis II expired on the 5th of December, 1560.<sup>d</sup>

France would quickly have forgotten this unfortunate young man but for two ineffaceable memories which were connected with his reign — that of the rise to power of the Guises, together with the beginning of the terrible religious wars, and the far pleasanter one of the presence on the throne of the lovely Mary Stuart. Obligated, after the death of her husband, to leave the land of her adoption and return to her native Scotland, she wept long on sailing away from the shores that had witnessed “evil luck depart from her and good fortune take her by the hand.” Leaning on the rail in the stern of the ship that was bearing her westward, she kept her brimming eyes fixed on the receding coast-line of the country she was leaving, and “remained in this attitude full five hours,” says Brantôme.<sup>e</sup> “repeating unceasingly, ‘Adieu, France! Adieu, France!’” When night came she caused rugs to be spread in the same place and laid herself down there to sleep, refusing all food. At daybreak she could still perceive a point of land on the horizon, and at the sight she cried out, “Adieu, dear France, I shall never see you again!” She was to find a crown, it is true, in the country towards which she was journeying, but there awaited her chains as well, an eighteen-year period of captivity, and instead of ascending a throne she mounted the steps of the scaffold.<sup>e</sup>

#### THE ACCESSION OF CHARLES IX (1560-1574 A.D.)

Charles IX, a boy ten years of age, succeeded his brother Francis. Catherine de' Medici, according to her promise, liberated the prince of Condé; and as the king of Navarre, according to his promise, supported the queen's pretensions, she took upon her the office of regent.<sup>d</sup>

The dangerous experiment of a meeting of the states-general was now unavoidable, and all parties paused to see what the result would be. The result was not so considerable as either side expected. The universal voice was for reform in the management of the state and diminution of taxation. Reform also in the church was strongly advocated; but the priests voted that it could only be procured by strengthening the laws against the Protestants; the third estate voted that the object was to be gained by freedom of conscience; and the nobles were almost equally divided in their votes. All, however, agreed in re-establishing the Pragmatic, and diminishing the contributions to the pope. After a session of six weeks the states-general was prorogued, and factions breathed again. Guise reconciled himself to his enemies, the constable and the marshal Saint-André; and the three put themselves under the protection of Philip of Spain in defence of the Catholic church. This gave them the name of the “triumvirate.” Condé and Coligny, on the other hand, strengthened their relations with the Huguenots. They looked in all quarters for assistance, and the Protestant prospects were not so desperate abroad as to discourage their hopes at home. In Germany, indeed, the Huguenots were at that moment triumphant. Not more than one tenth of the people had retained their allegiance to the pope.

Catherine, the queen-mother, pretending an impartiality she did not feel, condescended to listen to a controversy carried on in her presence between the doctors of the contending faiths. She was struck with the ability of the Huguenot champions, whom she had considered hitherto as mere fanatical



[1561-1562 A.D.]

enthusiasts, and the admiration of such an enemy is more dangerous than her contempt. From this time she brooded over plans for the extermination of a sect who could argue so well and fight so bravely, and in the meantime gave them some delusive privileges, which irritated their opponents and dissatisfied them. They were permitted to worship outside the walls of a town, but they must go to the meeting unarmed, and disperse when ordered to do so.

It chanced that Francis de Guise was travelling with a stout escort near the little town of Vassy, in Champagne, on a Sunday in the March of 1562. The Protestants were worshipping in and around a barn beside the road, and the gallant escort drew sword upon the unhappy congregation, slew sixty of them on the spot, and wounded almost all the rest. Guise, who had been struck by a stone upon the cheek, rode on and took no notice of the outrage committed by his guard.<sup>f</sup>

## CIVIL WAR (1562-1569 A.D.)

This was the signal for a war which, interrupted seven times by precarious treaties and as many times renewed, covered the land of France during a period of thirty-two years with blood and ruins. At the news of the massacre of Vassy the Huguenots everywhere took up arms; the duke of Guise seized the king's person in his castle of Fontainebleau and carried him, with his mother, to Paris where there were but few Protestants.

"As regards the efficient and assured force of the reformers," says Michel de Castelnau,<sup>g</sup> "it consisted of three hundred noblemen and as many soldiers accustomed to arms; besides four hundred volunteers, students and citizens, utterly without experience. What was this body, in face of the infinite number of the people, but a fly measuring forces with an elephant?" Outside of Paris, however, the Protestants thought they could count upon a tenth of the population, and the greater part of the provincial nobility was on their side.

They proclaimed Condé<sup>1</sup> defender of the king and protector of the realm; and at the end of a few weeks they had gained possession of two hundred towns, among which were Rouen, Lyons, Tours, Montpellier, Poitiers, Grenoble, Orleans, and Blois. The Guises had not expected such prompt action on the part of their antagonists. Though ill-prepared for war, they had the king in their hands, and strong in this advantage they declared the Calvinists guilty of rebellion and Condé of the crime of lèse-majesté; whereupon Philip II, the champion of Catholicism over all Europe, sent them a corps formed of members of those old Spanish bands that were as noted for their cold-



CATHERINE DE' MEDICI

<sup>f</sup> Louis I of Bourbon, first prince of Condé (1530-1569), brother of Anthony, King of Navarre, and great-grandfather of the "Great Condé."<sup>g</sup>

blooded ferocity as for their valour. Condé on his side appealed for aid to the Protestant Elizabeth, who sent him an equal number of troops for the defence of Rouen, on condition that he would deliver over to her Le Havre as a pledge for the sums she had advanced. Thus was committed by the chiefs of both parties the criminal error of invoking foreign intervention in their affairs.

It was at the north, where the leaders had taken up their position and where the fighting was consequently thickest, that the fortunes of the war were finally decided. The duke of Guise, at the head of the Catholic army that Anthony de Bourbon had recently rejoined, marched directly upon Rouen, which, though scarcely tenable by reason of its position in the midst of commanding heights, offered a brave resistance. Anthony de Bourbon, king of Navarre, received during this conflict a wound of which he died. Montaigne<sup>h</sup> relates that during the siege a Protestant gentleman was apprehended who had been charged with the mission of assassinating the duke. The latter pardoned and set him free. "I will show you," he said, "how much more merciful is my religion than that which you profess. Your faith inspired you with the project of slaying me without hearing me in my own defence, and without having received from me the least cause for offence; mine commands me to pardon you, convinced though I am that you were preparing to kill me without reason." These were noble words, such as are sometimes spoken by ambitious individuals who aspire to every earthly glory, but are rarely borne out in their lives. The duke had not behaved with such magnanimity at Vassy and at Amboise, where he made reply to one of his victims, "My trade is not to make speeches but to cut off heads;" nor did he show greater clemency at Rouen when that city was at last obliged to surrender. "This great city," says Castelnau,<sup>g</sup> "full of riches of all sorts, was pillaged, without regard to the religion of either side, in the space of a week, notwithstanding that the very next day after the capture the crier had announced that every company or standard-bearer, of whatever nationality, must at once leave the city on pain of death." When all the pillaging was at an end judicial proceedings were begun.

Condé, in the hope of repairing the loss of Rouen, and reinforced by seven thousand men whom he had received from Germany, set out for Paris, the outskirts of which it was his purpose to attack. He turned first in the direction of Le Havre with the intention of joining the English troops there, but was forced by the duke of Guise to come to a stand at Dreux, on the 19th of December. There were arrayed against each other at this place fifteen or sixteen thousand men on either side. For some time the two armies were directly facing each other—"each man," says La Noue,<sup>g</sup> "thinking in his heart that the soldiers he saw coming towards him were neither Spanish nor Italian but French, that is to say, the bravest among the brave, and that in their ranks were doubtless many of his own comrades, relatives, or friends, whom in less than an hour he must seek to kill. Those reflections lent additional horror to the situation without diminishing the courage of a soldier." Condé penetrated to the centre of the Catholic ranks, wounding and taking captive the constable; but the Swiss restored the balance of forces, and Guise was made victor by a successful flank movement which took the prince of Condé prisoner.

The admiral Coligny made good his retreat, however, with the Germans, and rallied the fugitives. The marshal Saint-André, in endeavouring to harass him, was taken and slain. The singularity of the battle of Dreux was, that each of the two generals became prisoner to the opposite party. Guise gained both ways—not less by the removal of the constable, whose

[1562-1563 A.D.]

rank entitled him always to the superior command, than by the captivity of Condé. This prince was treated with the utmost generosity by his rival: they shared the same tent, the same bed; and while Condé remained wakeful from the strangeness of his position, Guise, he declared, enjoyed the most profound sleep. There were, indeed, heroic traits about the duke of Guise, that mark him to have been naturally of a generous and noble disposition. It appears that, especially when in arms and away from his brother, he could shake off the hard-heartedness, the guile, and even the ambition which in the cabinet rose to stifle every better quality.

Guise followed up his victories by laying siege to Orleans. While he was engaged in reducing this stronghold of his enemies a Huguenot gentleman named Poltrot treacherously shot the duke with his pistol. He lingered nine days, and expired with exemplary fortitude and piety. He was a brave and great man, with such power of nerve and concentrated pride that, notwithstanding his equivocal rank in France, the stern constable himself and the princes of the blood quailed before him. His virtues were his own; his vices those of his party.



CHARLES IX

(From an old French print)

### *The Edict of Amboise and its Results*

The death and captivity of the chiefs on both sides, Coligny excepted, necessarily brought on an accommodation. Peace was declared; and the Edict of Amboise, issued in March, 1563, granted full liberty of worship to the Protestants within the towns of which they were in possession up to that day. Thus ended the first religious war, which, in addition to the events we have recorded, deluged the entire south of France with the blood of the contending parties.

The conclusion of peace restored Catherine de' Medici to the supreme authority. In order to exercise it under a less invidious title than that of regent, the parliament of Rouen, by her order, declared King Charles, now thirteen years of age, to have attained his majority. Reared by the crafty and prudent Catherine, he early acquired, in perfection, the power of dissimulation; but he never imbibed that utter indifference to both religious parties which distinguished his mother, and which allowed her to consult her own interest or the public good in leaguings with either, or in balancing and alternating between them. On the contrary, Charles, thrown among the Catholic party at an age when a bias is soon and strongly gained, amidst the bustle of war and of a camp, which pleased him, soon imbibed the zeal of the partisans of Guise. He had the sagacity to perceive that orthodoxy



was much more favourable than the doctrines of the reformers to his kingly authority. A worse effect on his character was produced by sights of cruelty; for at this tender age he beheld the atrocities practised on the Protestants at the siege of Rouen, and during the campaign. The young king was thus led to adopt, in his sober counsels, the sanguinary measures that the heat of war engendered but could not excuse.

This decision of her son in favour of the Catholics had a very great influence in finally drawing over Catherine to that party. Other causes also impelled her: the Catholics were without leaders; there was a place, therefore, for her at their head; and, in a little time, the pope and Philip of Spain both declared so strongly against the Protestants, that the queen was driven, from a principle of self-preservation, to adopt the winning side. This abandonment of her impartiality Catherine, however, delayed as long as it was in her power. After the conclusion of peace, she endeavoured to soothe Condé, and win him over to moderate demands; thus preparing the way for an accommodation. Condé was a man of pleasure, prone to indolence, in which he gladly indulged whenever an interval occurred in war or in business. Catherine held out to him her usual bait, the charms of her maids of honour; and Condé loitered, like another Rinaldo, in the toils of this Armida, until the ministers of the reformed religion recalled him from licentiousness and compelled him to marry. These stern disciplinarians were said to have hanged one of their flock for the crime of adultery. This alone was enough to alienate the courtiers of France and the demoiselles of Catherine.

The Edict of Amboise had not long been issued, when a modification of it was found necessary. That edict had allowed to the Protestants the celebration of their worship in towns which they possessed. It was found that several bishops and clergy, construing its terms in their favour, had established the new rites in their cathedrals and churches. This would have outraged the pope and the Catholic princes. Indeed, notwithstanding the clamours of the Protestants, so great a concession was not to be expected; and accordingly the privilege was withdrawn. The ancient cathedrals were not allowed to become temples of the reformed religion. New differences consequently arose: the Guises accused Coligny of instigating the murder of the duke; and the admiral arrived to answer the charge with his suite, which amounted almost to an army. Either Catherine or Charles himself took this opportunity of increasing the usual royal guard of 100 Swiss to upwards of 1,000 men. The old constable came to instigate the Parisians, and a tumult ensued, in which lives were lost.

In the following year, 1564, the young king resolved on making a progress through his dominions, especially in the south. The cardinal of Lorraine went to Rome at the same time, and Charles was met at Bayonne by his sister, the queen of Spain, and the duke of Alva. This meeting, in which the minister of Philip communicated the views of his master, completed in the mind of Charles his hatred of the Reformation, and instructed him concerning the means by which it might be eventually crushed. The Edict of Roussillon,<sup>1</sup> which appeared while the court was in the south, imposed new restrictions on the toleration granted by that of Amboise; so that, as Pasquier observes, "edicts took more from the Protestants in peace than force could take from them in war." The Huguenots, therefore, despairing of impartiality or justice from the court, already began to look forward to another struggle.

<sup>1</sup> It was this edict which ordered that the year should commence on the 1st of January, instead of, as heretofore, commencing at Easter.

[1564-1567 A.D.]

During this state of things an assembly of notables was held at Moulins. Catherine, who, notwithstanding her sagacity, very often mistook the form for the reality, insisted on a public reconciliation between the Guises and Coligny. It took place at her bidding; the cardinal and the admiral embraced; but young Henry duke of Guise showed even there, by his cold and mistrustful demeanour, that his first ideas were those of vengeance and hatred. It was in this assembly that the chancellor De l'Hôpital proposed his improvements in the administration of justice. Whilst all others, prince, noble, and functionary, were absorbed in the spirit of religious party, De l'Hôpital alone, professing at once Catholicism and tolerance, but unable to obtain attention, followed the unambitious track of judicial amelioration.

Religious troubles, similar to those of France, began to agitate the Low Countries. Philip, resolving to present a high example to France, established the Inquisition among his Belgic subjects in all its vigour; and as this only made matters worse, the duke of Alva was despatched to those provinces with an army in 1567. The French court affected to fear this course, and raised an army as if against it. When the duke of Alva, however, appeared on the frontiers of France, he was treated as a friend; and the Huguenots immediately perceived that the troops were levied, not for the defence of the kingdom, but for the oppression of themselves. They accordingly leagued and armed in secret, determined to meet the perfidy of the court with corresponding guile. Their consultations ended in a project to surprise the court at Monceaux, and get possession of the king. It failed, however, as a similar plot had previously failed at Amboise, through the postponement of a single day. The queen had warning; the Swiss were summoned; and the court retired to Meaux, and from thence to Paris, pursued and menaced by the disappointed Condé.

#### THE SECOND RELIGIOUS WAR

Thus commenced the second religious war, in September, 1567. "Catherine," says Henault, "caused the first civil strife by favouring the reformers, and the second by irritating them." She was now at least zealously hostile to them. She had been provoked by the numerous calumnies and libels which the Huguenots directed against her, and she accordingly joined in the opinions of her young son, and of his and her ally, Philip. She no longer sought an habitual adviser in the moderate De l'Hôpital, who was of opinion that the reformers were unfairly treated. The chancellor always asserted their loyalty. After their attempt to surprise Meaux, the queen asked De l'Hôpital: "Would you now answer that their sole aim is to serve the king?"—"Yes, madam," replied he, "if you assure me that they will be treated with good faith."

Condé took up his quarters at St. Denis. The Catholics under Montmorency were posted at La Chapelle, a village that is now the suburb of Paris on that side. The constable wished as usual to procrastinate, but the impatience of the Parisians forced him to attack. The battle was fought in the plain of St. Denis: it began with a cannonade; but the Huguenots, to avoid the destructive effects of the artillery, charged the Parisians furiously, and routed them. Their flight left the constable unsupported; Condé turned on him his victorious cavalry, and Montmorency defended his position, when Stuart, the captain of the Scotch company in the service of the Huguenots, coming up close to the constable, against whom he had cause for hatred, fired his pistol and shot him. A furious and confused *mêlée*, somewhat like a

Homeric fight, immediately took place around the dead body of the constable — the Huguenots with savage zeal seeking to carry it off. They were beaten, however, and driven from the field in the attempt. Thus fell, in civil strife, and engaged against his own nephews, the veteran warrior of France. His years, his hardihood, and his name, have rendered him deservedly celebrated. His defence of Provence against Charles V is particularly memorable. By French historians he is characterised in terms of the highest encomium: they commend his sternness, his courage, his orthodoxy, and forget that avarice and selfishness sullied and almost neutralised all of his virtues.

The constable's death was a victory to Condé, who was able to offer battle to the Catholics on the following day. He denied having lost that of St. Denis. Young Charles, who was witness to a dispute on this point, asked Vieilleville who had won the battle. "Neither Catholic nor Protestant," responded the marshal: "it is the king of Spain who has won by our discord." The Huguenots had neither pay nor provisions, and were therefore obliged to quit the vicinity of Paris, directing their course across Lorraine towards the frontier of Germany, as they expected a body of auxiliaries from that country. They were pursued, but not much harassed in their retreat. Catherine endeavoured incessantly to decoy them into negotiations, the department of warfare which she felt herself most competent to direct. She restrained the warlike disposition of the king; arguing with truth that, from the violent animosities of the time, the leaders of armies marched to meet a certain fate, either in battle or at the hand of the assassin. The king's brother, Henry duke of Anjou, was created lieutenant-general. Catherine, who knew the weak and yielding nature of her second son, would gladly have made him the hero of the Catholic party in preference to young Guise, whose name she dreaded.

After much privation, during a march in winter, the Huguenots fell in with their German auxiliaries: and as they now outnumbered their enemies, they marched back into France. They laid siege to Chartres, which, being stoutly defended, kept the army fixed before it, and gave the queen full opportunity for employing her favourite efforts at negotiation. Coligny saw plainly the perfidy of these overtures: but their followers and supporters, anxious for peace, obliged them to listen to terms. A treaty was concluded at Longjumeau, in March, called the *Lame Peace*, as well from its infirm and uncertain nature as from the accidental lameness of its two negotiators. Its terms were a medium between the Edict of Amboise and that of Roussillon.

### THE THIRD RELIGIOUS WAR

The peace was, as Coligny already saw, but a trap to ensnare the Huguenot chiefs as soon as their army should be disbanded. They were on their guard, however, keeping away from the court, and far apart from each other, that at least one might escape in case of treason. Notwithstanding this resolve, Condé and the admiral found it necessary to consult together, and for this purpose met at Noyers, a little town in Burgundy. The court was soon informed of it: and orders were instantly despatched to Tavannes, and to the other governors in the south, to arrest them. Tavannes was not vigilant in the execution of their commands, and Condé and Coligny escaped. By this order the queen had thrown off the mask; though, indeed, without such an indication, the executions and murders throughout the south sufficiently proved that the *Lame Peace* was never intended to be observed by the Catholics. Through inconceivable difficulties, the two chiefs traversed the



[1568-1569 A.D.]

country, and reached Rochelle in safety, where the Protestants now found themselves obliged, for the third time, to raise the standard of revolt. Troops did not fail to join them from all quarters; but the most welcome aid came from Béarn, the queen of Navarre and her young son [the future Henry IV] arriving at the head of 3,000 of their subjects.

This young prince, destined to run so glorious a career, was born at Pau, in 1553. His father was Anthony of Bourbon, king of Navarre, slain at the siege of Rouen. Chroniclers never forget to relate that his mother sang at the birth, and that old Henri d'Albret, the infant's grandfather, held up the child in delight, rubbing its lips with garlic, and moistening them with wine. Excepting a short period spent at court, the boy lived the rude and healthy life of a mountaineer, and imbibed from his mother the rigid principles of the Reformation. It was in September, 1568, that he accompanied her to Rochelle.

As if to add to the horrors of civil war, winter was always chosen as the period of operations. The duke of Anjou was at the head of the Catholic army, with the marshal Tavannes for his adviser. When Condé and the Huguenots approached, the cold was so extreme as to chill the zeal of both armies. They found it impossible to engage in battle. Mutual pillage and cruelties too horrid in many instances for the pen to record were the only feats of the soldiery. During the inaction that ensued (for the winter grew to that extreme rigour which is seldom known even in France), a great part of the Huguenot army dispersed: the bourgeois and volunteers, of whom it was principally composed, each betook himself to his own home. The Catholic troops, on the contrary, were soldiers by profession, paid and disciplined. Hence, in the spring, Condé was far inferior in force to his enemies, before whom he was obliged to retire towards La Rochelle. In his retreat, the prince, having crossed the Charente, took post at Jarnac, determined to keep the river between himself and the enemy, and to dispute his passage.<sup>d</sup>

There was some preliminary manœuvring on the banks of the Charente; at last Tavannes surprised the rearguard of the admiral [Coligny] near Jarnac (March 13th, 1569). Condé, on receiving news of the attack, rushed up with three thousand cavalry, but at the moment of charging a kick from a horse broke his leg. Oblivious of this, however, as of the wound he had received in the arm the previous day, he continued to rush upon the enemy, crying out to those behind him: "Remember in what condition Louis de Bourbon does battle for Christ and his country!" This impetuous onslaught at first made a breach in the enemy's ranks, but Condé's horse being shot under him, he fell, and a terrific combat immediately ensued around him. An old warrior, De la Vergne, who had brought with him into battle twenty-five men-at-arms, all sons, grandsons, or nephews, made heroic efforts to protect the prostrate body of the prince, but he was himself killed, and fifteen of his followers fell with him, "all in one heap."

Condé was in the act of giving his gauntlet to a gentleman when Montequieu, the duke of Anjou's captain of the guards, fired his pistol point-blank at his head. Thus perished a prince as energetic as he was brave, whose loss was irreparable to the party of which for nine years he had been the head that plans and the arm that executes. The Protestants talked of abandoning the campaign and shutting themselves up in La Rochelle, but a woman caused them to change their plan. Jeanne d'Albret, accompanied by her son Henry of Béarn and the young prince of Condé, presented herself in the midst of the discouraged army at Saintes. "My friends," she said, addressing the soldiers, "here are two new chiefs that God sends you,

and two orphans that I confide to your care." Prince Henry,<sup>1</sup> the future king of France, up to his present age of fifteen years had been brought up with all the severity that went to the training of a country gentleman. Brave, intellectually brilliant, and with the faculty of carrying away his auditors by his words, he pleased all with whom he came in contact. He was appointed general-in-chief of the army, and Coligny was given him as counsellor and lieutenant.

*Admiral Coligny; the Peace of St. Germain*

Coligny possessed many of the qualities necessary to a party-leader in a war such as was then waging. A Protestant of exemplary piety and austerity, he was beloved and respected by ministers and soldiers alike. He fell short of being a general of the very first rank, perhaps, and Catherine in common with the other Italians at her court did not attribute to him great depth as a politician; but he could never be made to accept defeat, which is in itself one form of power, and he had the faculty of rendering just judgment, which is another. He was a master of limitless resource, and if no particularly brilliant victory was to be expected under his leadership there was at least to be feared no irremediable defeat. In two respects his name is entitled to come down with distinction to posterity: the first of these claims is the great deed which opened his career, the defence of St. Quentin; and the second is his last political aim, the ambition to conquer the Spanish Netherlands, whither he wished to conduct his Huguenot bands that France might enjoy the double blessing of rich provincial possession and internal peace. In his deep desire to avert domestic dissensions and to assure religious liberty he had conceived still another method of accomplishing this end; namely, the Protestant colonisation of America. The very purpose which the Puritans of Great Britain brought into effect in the seventeenth century had been cherished by him. Had he succeeded, French blood and French speech might to-day dominate in the New World.

Jarnac had been nothing but a rearguard action in which the Protestants had lost no more than four hundred men. Coligny was still strong enough to defend Cognac and Angoulême; having been joined by 13,000 Germans he even assumed the offensive and inflicted a check on the Catholic army near La Roche-Abeille. But Tavannes repaired the harm done. German Catholics, Spaniards sent by the duke of Alva, Italians sent by Pius V, increased the forces of the duke of Anjou. Already pushed back to the Loire, the duke returned on his steps by means of a diversion, relieved Poitiers which Coligny had been besieging for the last six weeks, and succeeded in surprising the Protestant army between the Dive and the Thoué, near Moncontour. The position was a wretched one; six hundred Huguenot soldiers were left on the battle-field (October the 3rd).

Yet this victory of Moncontour was as useless as that of Jarnac. Charles IX, jealous of the laurels which were being gathered for his brother, came to the army, and instead of pressing the Protestants to the Pyrenees wasted his time in besieging Niort and St. Jean d'Angély. Coligny traversed the whole breadth of the south, replenishing his army as he went; and he suddenly appeared in Burgundy, at the head of all the Protestant nobility of Dauphin and Provence. A Catholic army of 12,000 men tried to stop him at Arnay-le-Duc; he held his own against them and reached the Loing, a short distance from Paris.

[<sup>1</sup> He did not take the title of King of Navarre until after the death of his mother in 1572.]

[1570 A.D.]

Catherine de' Medici now triumphed in the council, events having proved the justness of her views. Some other means than war must be devised to gain control over a party that rose up in renewed strength after each defeat. In order to disarm the Protestants, she caused the Peace of St. Germain to be proclaimed, with terms extremely favourable to their side. They were to be allowed full liberty of worship in two towns in every province, and in all those in which the reformed religion had already been established; Calvinists were to be admitted to all kinds of office, and four fortified towns, La Rochelle, Cognac, Montauban, and La Charité, were to be given up to them as strongholds in which to place a garrison (August 8th, 1570). "A traitorous, violated peace, the perdition of those who trusted in it."<sup>c</sup>

#### A TROUBLED PEACE; THE MARRIAGE OF HENRY OF NAVARRE

What were the real intentions of Catherine at the moment when she concluded the agreement of St. Germain? She had conceived a policy in 1563, which she tried to carry out by fraud from 1563-1567, then by force mingled with fraud from 1567 to 1569. She certainly had still the same views, the same desires, but no longer the same confidence. As she had firmly believed that her object was attained after the murder of Condé, the defeat of Coligny, and the triumph of her favourite son the duke of Anjou, so she was proportionately stupefied and discouraged at seeing the final victory escape her and the unforeseen powers of those moral forces which she could not understand defeat the calculations of her Macchiavellian wisdom.

It is almost certain that in 1570, when she entered into negotiations, she desired, above all, time to breathe and to look about her, and had no fixed plan; this is what appears from the diplomatic documents. There is however no doubt that she continued to meditate the ruin of Coligny, the man who was the great obstacle in her way; the idea of destroying the leaders of the party was never absent from her mind; but in 1570 her hopes on this subject were very weak and very vague. As to the general extermination of heretics planned two years in advance by this "great queen" and pursued without deviation to the dénouement with "an admirable dissimulation," it is a romance invented by the depraved fanaticism or the cynical Macchiavellianism of Catherine's Italian panegyrists, and accepted by the resentment of the Huguenots.

The historians of Catherine have associated Charles IX with the two years of plotting and with "the admirable dissimulation" of his mother: they have done more than the Protestants themselves to draw on the name of this unfortunate and guilty prince the immense execration which has descended on him. Here it is no longer a question of mere exaggeration, but of complete error. It was not by sentiments of morality that Charles IX was incapable of deserving the hideous praises which posterity has changed into maledictions; the lessons of the masters whom his mother had imposed upon him had destroyed in him all principles; in his eyes good faith was but folly, compassion nothing but cowardice; but the passion and inequality of his humour would not have permitted him such a long perfidy, and above all he was absolutely without bias: the grudge which he nourished against the Protestants for the attempt of Meaux was balanced by the jealous hatred he bore his brother Henry, and by his distrust of his mother and the Guises. He submitted to Catherine's skilful domination as to a sort of fatality, but at times he chafed at the curb in anger, and he was quite as capable of proceeding to final acts of violence against the house of Lorraine or even against the



duke of Anjou as against Coligny. Although Catherine held him by chains scientifically forged, he might well end by turning against her the lessons she had given him.

What should he do? Whither should he turn? He had no idea. He received the schemes of betrayal laid before him by Tavannes, the adviser of his brother who desired to become his; but immediately he gave ear to the most opposite projects.

Meantime, at court the politicians had got the better of the Catholic zealots: little was wanting in order that a bloody tragedy should exhibit this at the expense of the house of Lorraine. Even before the peace was signed, the partisans of toleration had worked to prepare a complete understanding between the court and the Protestant leaders: the Montmorencys had proposed the marriage of Prince Henry of Navarre with the king's third sister, Marguerite of France. This marriage had been talked of almost ever since the birth of the two young people; Charles IX eagerly recurred to the idea, but Marguerite, then aged eighteen years, had made another choice; she was beginning the series of her innumerable gallantries and had surrendered to the young duke of Guise, the most brilliant cavalier in France, all possible rights over her heart. Henry of Guise, encouraged by the cardinal De Lorraine, wished to turn the victory of his love to the profit of his ambition and aspired to the hand of the princess. In the month of May, 1570, the marriage of Marguerite and Guise was regarded at court as a thing decided on: suddenly, in the middle of June, the king, the queen-mother, and the duke of Anjou turned indignantly against the bold pretensions of Guise; the king, who knew no half measures, gave orders to his brother the bastard d'Angoulême to kill the duke of Guise at the hunt. The bastard, not from repugnance to the crime, but from cowardice, missed the opportunity for action: the reproaches made to him by the king were heard by a courtier who, perhaps at Catherine's instigation, warned Guise: the murder of Guise would have thrown the king into the arms of the Huguenots and overturned the power of the queen-mother. The young duke, forced to renounce Marguerite, found no better expedient to appease the king than to marry another woman; he espoused Catherine of Cleves, countess d'Eu, sister of the duchess de Nevers and widow of the prince de Portien.

At this price Guise was restored to favour and followed the court to Champagne where the king, in his turn, was to be married: after long negotiations the emperor Maximilian II had granted Charles IX the hand of his second daughter, Elizabeth, without further insisting on the restoration of the Three Bishoprics to the empire. This alliance with the house of Austria in no way impelled France towards Spain: it made Charles IX for the second time brother-in-law of Philip II, who, the widowed husband of Elizabeth of France, had just taken as his fourth wife his niece, the eldest daughter of the emperor; but on the other hand it gave Charles a father-in-law from whom he had to expect no counsels but those of toleration and humanity. However, Elizabeth of Austria, a gentle, simple, and modest young woman, did not have, or seek to have, any share of influence in the events of her husband's reign. The wedding was celebrated, November 26th, 1570, at Mézières, whither the archduchess Elizabeth had been conducted by the archbishop elector of Treves, chancellor of the empire. The princes and the great Huguenots had been invited to the marriage festivities. They excused themselves, and did not quit their refuge at La Rochelle, although the admiral had written in respectful terms to the queen-mother to protest his forgetfulness of the past and his devotion.<sup>4</sup>

[1570-1572 A.D.]

Almost two years of relative quiescence followed, during which the Huguenot party gained an increasing influence at court, chiefly through the favour shown Coligny by the king. The admiral, ever mindful of the interests of his fellow-Huguenots, attempted once more to put into execution a colonisation scheme that had long been a favourite project with him. He had made an effort to establish a colony in Brazil as early as 1555; and in 1562 and again in 1564 Charles IX had given him permission to found colonies in Florida; but all of these colonies had failed, nor did anything tangible come of his present effort.

This colonisation project tended to bring France into antagonism with Spain. But another plan of Coligny's still more directly menaced that power; this plan involved nothing less than a direct attack upon the Spanish forces in the Netherlands. Charles IX lent an attentive ear to this idea, actuated in part, perhaps, by the desire for military glory, in part by Coligny's belief that a foreign war would be the best possible means to harmonise the political factions at home. It will be understood that the Huguenot question at this time had come to be quite as much a political as a religious problem. The antagonism between the Guise faction and the Coligny faction, which led to the appalling scenes we are now fast approaching, was based by no means exclusively — perhaps not even prominently — upon differences of opinion regarding questions of doctrine. It was essentially a personal and political rivalry that actuated the chief personages in the drama. This, of course, does not necessarily impugn the sincerity of their religious differences; it was merely that these differences were not sufficient in themselves to supply motives for the bitter and ineradicable hatred with which Catherine de' Medici and the Guises regarded Coligny.

The fact that the negotiations for the marriage of the king's sister Marguerite with the Protestant Henry of Navarre were carried forward, sufficiently illustrates the superficiality of the religious element as a source of political jarrings. This marriage was, indeed, opposed by the pope, who declined to give to a heretic the dispensation necessary to legalise the marriage of second cousins. None the less were the negotiations carried forward at court in open defiance of the papal decision. Jeanne d'Albret, the mother of Henry, came to Paris and was received at court with at least the outward appearance of friendliness. Her death there in 1572 was probably due to natural causes, though the usual intimations of foul play — which the partisanship of that time never neglected as an aid to practical politics, however shadowy the evidence — were not wanting. The marriage of Henry, now king of Navarre, with the not over-willing Marguerite, took place on a specially erected platform in front of the cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris on the 22nd of August, 1572. The story goes that the bride refused to make the customary affirmations, and that her brother, Charles IX, pushed her head forward with his own hands; but this most likely is an embellishment suggested by the known preference of Marguerite for another lover, and by the uncongenial wedded life that followed the spectacular nuptials.

It may well be supposed that the Huguenots looked upon the marriage of their leader with the sister of the king of France as a great political triumph. Doubtless a large number of Huguenot nobles who had long been conspicuous by their absence from court came to Paris in honour of the occasion. To many of them it proved a fatal visit, for the awful tragedy of St. Bartholomew's day followed hard upon the wedding, turning the seeming triumph of the Huguenots into disaster and threatening actual annihilation of their party. Such being the sequence of events, it is but natural that the surviving

Huguenots should have tried to trace a causal connection between the marriage of Henry of Navarre and the massacre of St. Bartholomew. It has been alleged that the real pretext for the marriage was to beguile the Huguenot nobles into visiting Paris that they might be caught, as it were, in a trap and the more readily massacred. No one doubts that Catherine de' Medici was quite capable of such a plan. But, on the other hand, it must not be overlooked that King Charles was most anxious for the consummation of the marriage; and all historical evidence tends to exonerate him from early complicity in the plot, if plot existed. Still the fact of so many enemies being at hand may no doubt have influenced Catherine to carry into effect an idea which had at least been dear to her heart. Just how much she was influenced by this; just when the first thought of it all came to her—these are questions which Catherine herself probably could not have answered, and which it is quite futile for any interpreter of her actions to attempt to solve. Here, as so often elsewhere, the threads of design make a web too intricate for disentangling. This much, however, seems sure: the tangled mesh, whatever the relation of design to accident in its structure, was one of which Catherine de' Medici was the main artificer; her chief assistants being her son the duke of Anjou, and the Guises.<sup>a</sup>

#### THE ATTACK ON COLIGNY

A murderous coil had been woven around the king and the admiral. Catherine had been for some time torn between her natural timidity and her ardent desire to free herself from Coligny: at one time she had hoped to obtain the admiral's destruction from the king; after a first success she had failed; a scene of an opposite kind drove her to the last extremities. The duke of Anjou himself has revealed these mysteries of crime: in a night of trouble and fear if not of remorse he dictated with his own lips the history of his own and his mother's guilt. "Every time," he says, "that the queen had conferred privately with the admiral, the queen-mother and I had found him marvellously angry and sullen, rough in countenance and aspect and still more in his answers. One day when I entered the king's room, without saying anything to me he walked up and down with long strides, often looking at me askance and putting his hand on his dagger with so much animosity that I expected to be poniarded. I managed so dexterously that while he was walking about and with his back turned to me I retreated to the door which I opened and, with a brief reverence, I made my exit." Charles IX was nearer striking at Anjou than Coligny; the admiral certainly did not urge him to raise the dagger against his brother, but he conjured him to despatch him with all speed to Poland that there might no longer be two kings in France. Catherine and Anjou, brought to bay, took their resolution. They secretly sent for the duchess de Nemours, widow of the great Guise, the woman in whose veins flowed the blood of Louis XI mingled with that of the Borgia. She had continually professed an implacable hatred for Coligny. Catherine declared to her that she placed in her hands the vengeance so long pursued by the house of Guise. Catherine desired to profit by the murder but to impose the execution and the responsibility on someone else. Her Macchiavellian mind went further: she did not doubt that the Huguenots would rush to arms to avenge the murdered Coligny and attack the Guises even in their palaces; the people of Paris would go to the help of the Guises, the Montmorencys and their friends to the help of the Huguenots, all the great nobles, partisans of Lorraine,



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Huguenots and politicians, would cut each other's throats; the Huguenots would finally be overwhelmed by numbers, the Guises would be exhausted by their very victory; and royalty, held in reserve during the conflict, would remain mistress of a field strewn with dead.

Whatever *arrière-pensées* there may have been, an agreement was arrived at as to the action to be taken. Young Guise, in his furious joy, at first wished that his mother should herself kill the admiral with an arquebuse in the midst of the court; more practical means were resorted to; the blow was intrusted to a hand more expert in crime, that of the same Maurevert who had already been hired during the last war to assassinate Coligny, and who in his stead had killed one of his lieutenants under the most odious circumstances. He was sent for mysteriously and the duke d'Aumale's maître d'hôtel concealed him in the house of a canon, a former tutor of the duke of Guise, in the cloister of St. Germain-l'Auxerrois, on the road from the Louvre to the rue de Béthisi, where the admiral was staying. Maurevert remained there three days on watch. On the morning of Friday the 22nd of August, as the admiral was returning from the Louvre on foot, walking slowly and reading a petition, a shot from an arquebuse came from behind the curtain of a window, carried off the first finger of his right hand, and lodged a ball in his left arm.

Coligny, with his mutilated hand indicating the place whence the shot had come, sent to tell the king what had occurred and to ask him to judge what fine fidelity that was, considering the understanding between him and the duke of Guise; then he returned to his hôtel, supported by some gentlemen, whilst his suite broke down the door of the dwelling in which the assassin had lain in wait; the arquebuse was found still smoking; "but not the arquebusier." Maurevert had flung himself on a horse belonging to the duke of Guise which was held in readiness for him, and had fled by the rear of the house. He left Paris by the porte St. Antoine; two Protestant gentlemen had discovered his track and pursued him for several leagues, but without being able to come up with him.<sup>4</sup>

The king was playing at tennis when he was told that Coligny was wounded, and that the king of Navarre and the prince of Condé were coming to him to demand justice against the Guises. The circumstance both surprised and alarmed him. He threw away his racket in a passion, and after giving vent to a number of oaths, he declared he would have the assassin sought for, even in the recesses of Guise's hôtel. Charles succeeded in satisfying the young princes that the assassins should meet with exemplary punishment, and immediately ordered the president De Thou, the provost of Morsan, and Veale, a counsellor, to commence an investigation; this calmed them in some measure, and made them give up the plan, which they had agreed on, of leaving Paris immediately.

But the king felt convinced that something more must be done. He announced his intentions of visiting the admiral in the afternoon. He could not with prudence go among the Huguenots unprotected, nor could he consistently be attended by his guards; he therefore desired that all the court should visit Coligny also.

Charles entered the admiral's dwelling, accompanied by his mother, the duke of Anjou, De Retz, and his other counsellors, the marshals of France, and a numerous suite. He began by consoling the admiral, and then swore that the crime should be punished so severely that his vengeance should never be effaced from the memory of man. Coligny thanked his sovereign for such testimonials of his kindness, and conjured him to support with his authority

the execution of the different edicts in favour of the Protestants, many points of which were violated, or misunderstood. "My father," answered the king, "depend upon it, I shall always consider you a faithful subject, and one of the bravest generals in my kingdom; confide in me for the execution of my edicts, and for avenging you when the criminals are discovered." "They are not difficult to find out," said Coligny, "the traces are very plain." "Tranquillise yourself," said the king, "a longer emotion may hurt you and retard your cure." The conversation then turned upon the war with Spain, and lasted nearly an hour. Coligny complained of the Spanish government being informed of whatever was decided on; and as the intimacy between the queen-mother and the Spanish ambassador was very great and caused suspicion, he spoke to the king in a low voice. The war in Flanders was a subject of great alarm for Catherine; she knew her son's secret wishes, and she dreaded the effect which Coligny's remarks might have upon him; she interrupted the conversation and prevailed upon the king to leave the place. Charles, who was exerting himself to efface any suspicion which might have arisen in Coligny's mind, became vexed at the anxiety displayed by his mother; and as they were returning to the Louvre, being pressed to tell what Coligny had said, he declared, with an oath, that the admiral had said what was true — that he had suffered the authority to fall from his hands, and that he ought to become master of his own affairs. When the king and his suite retired, the admiral's friends expressed great astonishment at his affability, and the desire he showed to bring the crime to justice. "But," says Brantôme,<sup>e</sup> "all these fine appearances afterwards turned to ill, which amazed everyone very much how their majesties could perform so counterfeit a part, unless they had previously resolved on this massacre."<sup>k</sup>

#### PREPARING FOR THE MASSACRE

Catherine and Anjou returned in consternation: "We remained," said Anjou, "so bereft of counsel and knowledge of how to act that being, for the moment, unable to resolve on anything we retired, putting off our decision until the next day." Meantime they despatched to the king the count de Retz, Gondi, the man who best knew how to manipulate that fiery and pliable mind, to endeavour to appease him. Retz made him uneasy, agitated him, but got nothing from him.

The king's attitude towards the Huguenots remained the same: Charles IX launched great threats against the Guises, who were more and more compromised by the information collected by the commissioners: orders were given to arrest certain servants of their house. On the morning of Saturday the 23rd the dukes of Guise and Aumale came to seek the king and said to him, that it seemed to them that his majesty had not been well pleased with their service for some time, and that they would retire from court if their withdrawal was agreeable to him. The king "with an ill countenance and worse words," answered that they might go whither they would, and that he would always be well disposed towards them if they were recognised as guilty of what had been done to the admiral. They left the Louvre about midday, mounted on horseback and with a good following took their way towards the porte St. Antoine; but they did not quit Paris, and shut themselves up in the hôtel de Guise.

Meantime the king was giving the Reformed fresh tokens of interest: he had a general list made of the Protestants who were present in Paris; he offered lodging to the Huguenot nobility about the admiral; he invited the

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king of Navarre and the prince of Condé to accommodate their friends at the Louvre. The security of the Protestant princes, of Têligny and almost all those about the admiral, was complete: the vidame de Chartres (Ferrières-Maligni) twice endeavoured to persuade them to leave Paris; his advice was rejected with impatience. Ambroise Paré answered for the life of the wounded man, and this great failure in crime seemed to promise the ruin of its authors.

Most of the Huguenots indulged in vain clamours against the house of Lorraine, passing and repassing "in great companies, in cuirasses, before the lodging of MM. de Guise and d'Aumale," but they took no precautions for the night, trusting to the protection of a detachment of the king's guard and in the tranquillity of the first night which had followed the wounding of the admiral.

In the afternoon the queen-mother and the duke of Anjou summoned the count de Retz, the chancellor Birague, Marshal de Tavannes, and the duke de Nevers to the garden of the Tuileries. Of the three advisers who helped the widow and sons of Henry II to soil the annals of France with an inefaceable stain, three were foreigners. They arranged their plan, and then all six went to seek the king in his cabinet in the Louvre. Fatal hour, which decided for Charles IX between glory with Coligny and eternal shame with Catherine; between the redemption of his misguided youth and his eternal damnation in history. The destiny of France hung on a word, on the motion of a weak head, of a mind without compass and without curb, of one who was almost a madman. And the unhappy man was alone, abandoned, in the midst of these demons!

We have the account of this infernal council dictated by that one of the accomplices who became Henry III. A few other writings of the time almost complete our knowledge on the subject. We see this impious mother artfully distilling the poison into the shuddering soul of her son, and closing round him every other issue save that of crime. "The Huguenots," she said to him, "are everywhere arming, not to serve you but to make themselves your masters: the admiral has sent for six thousand *reiters* and ten thousand Swiss; at home their leaders have an understanding with a number of towns, communities, and peoples, all agreed to reduce your authority to nothingness under pretext of the public advantage. The Catholics, on the other hand, are resolved to put an end to this state of affairs. If you refuse their advice they have decided to elect a captain-general and to form an offensive and defensive league against the Huguenots. You will be left alone between the two. Already Paris is under arms."

"How is that? I had forbidden them to arm in the *quartiers*."

"The *quartiers* are armed."

In fact the demonstrations of the Huguenots and the rumour circulated by Anjou and the Guises that the marshal De Montmorency, who after the wedding had returned to his château of Chantilly for a few days, was about to re-enter Paris "with a great force," had greatly excited the masses, and had brought out the citizen militia.

Fear began to take possession of the king. Anjou and others ardently supported Catherine. She continued, "One man is the leader and author of all this ruin and calamity; the admiral is deluding the king, making him the instrument of his ambitions and of his party, urging the state to its downfall while pretending to aggrandise it! Let the king remember the attempt of Amboise against his brother, and that of Meaux against himself when he saw himself constrained to flee before his revolted subjects!"



The memory of Meaux, as Catherine knew too well, always acted on the pride of Charles IX as a hot iron on a wound.

"The Huguenots," she resumed, "demand vengeance on the Guises. Well, you cannot sacrifice the Guises; for they will exonerate themselves by accusing your mother and your brother! And they will accuse us with good reason. It was we who struck the admiral to save the king! The king must finish the work or he and we are lost!"

Charles IX seems to have lost his head. He was seized with a fit of blind, mad fury against all and everything; his only clear idea was that he would not "have the admiral touched"; then, sinking into a melancholy dejection, he conjured all these sinister advisers to seek some other means of salvation.

Tavannes, Birague, Nevers insisted on the death of the admiral and of all the principal leaders. Retz, if Anjou is to be believed, opposed himself, contrary to all expectation, to the execution of a design which he, more than anyone, had contributed to prepare. Was it fear or was it an awakening of conscience in this corrupt man? "You will dishonour the king and the French nation; you will plunge again into civil wars, and you will be able to speak no more of peace! You will summon again the arms of the foreigner, and calamities and ruin whose end we, and perhaps our children, shall never see."

There was a moment of stupor amongst the conspirators. The man who had ruined the youth of Charles IX was holding out to him the plank of safety. The king was to escape!

They recovered themselves and made a simultaneous and desperate effort. "It is too late! The Guises are on the verge of denouncing the king himself with his mother and his brother! The Huguenots will not believe in the king's innocence. They will turn their arms against all the royal family! War is inevitable! Better to gain a battle in Paris where we have all the leaders than to risk it in the open country!"

Retz was silent. The king resisted for more than an hour and a half. "But my honour! — but my friends! the admiral! — La Rochefoucauld! — Téligny —"

Catherine saw that he was panting and exhausted: "Sire, you refuse. Give us, myself and your brother, permission to take our leave of you — to go."

He realised that Catherine and Anjou would not go far, and that the "captain-general" of the Catholics was already found. He shuddered.

"Sire, is it from fear of the Huguenots that you refuse?"

He arose; he sprang forward intoxicated and furious: "By the death of God," he cried, "since you think good to kill the admiral, I will have it so; but kill all the Huguenots in France as well, that there may not be left one of them to reproach me with it afterwards! By the death of God give the order promptly!" And he went out like one frantic. Catherine had won — the race of Valois was devoted to the furies!

The conspirators passed the rest of the day, the evening, and a great part of the night in preparing for the enterprise. The king having gone they had discussed the heads to be proscribed. Should they strike at the princes — Henry of Navarre, a king, and the king's brother-in-law? They shrank from this. Henry of Condé, son of him who died at Jarnac? The duke de Nevers, whose sister-in-law he had just married, had, it is said, great difficulty in obtaining his life. Catherine was aware that to kill the Bourbons would be to render the Guises too strong. Should they strike at

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the friends of the Huguenots, the Montmorencys? Retz, soon recovered from his scruples, advised it. Tavannes opposed it. The head of the house, who was at Chantilly, was not in their power; to kill the younger members in the absence of the eldest would be to give a leader to the civil war.

Thus it was agreed to kill only the Huguenots. All the Huguenots, as the king had exclaimed in his madness. Catherine afterwards pretended that she had the blood of only five or six on her conscience. Hypocrisy! She insisted on the deaths of only these five or six, but she foresaw and accepted the deaths of all the others. At the pass to which things had come it was no longer a question of isolated assassinations but of massacre — the massacre at least of the nobles who had come with the princes and the admiral.<sup>1</sup>

Everything was soon decided on; the duke of Guise was to begin the massacre by despatching the admiral directly he heard the signal given, by ringing the great bell of the palace, which was used only on public rejoicings. Tavannes in the meantime sent for the provost of the trades and some other persons of influence among the inhabitants; he ordered them to arm the companies and to be ready by midnight at the Hôtel-de-Ville. Those persons made some excuses and scruples of conscience, for which Tavannes abused them in the king's presence. He told them that if they refused they should all be hanged and advised the king to threaten them too. The poor frightened men then yielded and promised to do such execution that it should never be forgotten. The instructions they received were that directly they heard the bell, torches were to be put in the windows and chains placed across the streets; pickets were to be posted in the open places; and, for distinction, they were to wear a piece of white linen on their left arms and put a white cross on their hats. Notwithstanding the awful crime in contemplation, the king rode out on horseback in the afternoon accompanied by the chevalier d'Angoulême, his natural brother: but the sight of his unsuspecting people had no effect upon him. The queen also showed herself at court as usual in order to avoid suspicion.

Secrecy was desirable till the last moment and no one was informed of the plan who was not necessary to its execution. But there were several persons who caused great concern and anxiety to both the king and queen. The queen of Navarre describes herself as altogether ignorant of the affair previous to the execution; and when she retired after supper to go to bed, her sister, the duchess of Lorraine, entreated her not to go. The queen-mother was angry at that and forbade her telling anything further. The duchess of Lorraine thought that it would be sacrificing her to let her go to bed; and the queen-mother said that if she did not go it might cause suspicion and observed that if it pleased God no harm would befall her.



A COURT GENTLEMAN, TIME OF  
CHARLES IX

The count de la Rochefoucauld was a great favourite with Charles, who took such delight in his company that he wished to save his life. He had passed the evening with the king, and when he prepared to go home Charles advised him to sleep in the Louvre. In vain did he press him; the count resolved to go; the king was grieved that he could not preserve him without violating his secret, and observed as his guest retired, "I see clearly that God wishes him to perish." Ambrose Paré, his surgeon, was a person indispensable for the king's health and comfort, and he used less ceremony with him. He sent for him in the evening into his chamber and ordered him not to stir from thence; he said, according to Brantôme,<sup>e</sup> "that it was not reasonable that one who was so useful should be massacred, and therefore he did not press him to change his religion."

#### THE MASSACRE OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW, AUGUST 24TH, 1572

As midnight approached the armed companies were collecting before the Hôtel-de-Ville. They required some strong excitement to bring them to a proper mind, and in order to animate and exasperate them they were told that a horrible conspiracy was discovered which the Huguenots had made against the king, the queen-mother, and the princes, without excepting the king of Navarre, for the destruction of the monarchy and religion; that the king, wishing to anticipate so execrable an attempt, commanded them to fall at once upon all those cursed heretics (rebels against God and the king) without sparing one; and afterwards their property should be given up to plunder. This was sufficient inducement for a populace who naturally detested the Huguenots: everything being thus arranged, they impatiently waited the dawn and the signal which it was to bring with it.

The wretched king of France had gone so far that a retreat was impossible; but there is every reason to believe that even at the last moment he would gladly have obeyed the dictates of nature and have desisted from the cruel purpose. But the queen had perceived the inquietude which tormented him; she saw that if the signal depended upon him he would not have resolution enough to give it; she considered that the hour should be hastened to prevent any rising remorse from destroying her work: she therefore made another effort to inflame her son by telling him that the Protestants had discovered the plot; and then sent someone to ring the bell of St. Germain l'Auxerrois, an hour earlier than had been agreed upon. A few moments after was heard the report of a pistol, which had such an effect on the king that he sent orders to prevent the massacre; but it was then too late.

Guise, who had waited with impatience for the signal, went at once to Coligny's house accompanied by his brother Aumale, Angoulême, and a number of gentlemen. Cosseins, who commanded the guards posted there, broke open the doors in the king's name and murdered some Swiss who were placed at the bottom of the stairs. Besme, a Lorrainer, and Pestrucci, an Italian, both in Guise's pay, then went upstairs to the admiral, followed by some soldiers. He was awakened by the noise, asked one of his attendants what it was; he replied, "My lord, God calls us to himself." Coligny then said to his attendants: "Save yourselves, my friends; all is over with me. I have been long prepared for death." They all quitted him but one, and he betook himself to prayer, awaiting his murderers. Every door was soon broken open, and Besme presented himself. "Art thou Coligny?" said he. "I am he indeed," said the admiral; "young man, respect my gray hairs but do what you will you can shorten my life only by a few days." Besme



[1572 A.D.]

replied by plunging his sword into Coligny's body; his companions then gave him numerous stabs with their daggers. Besme then called out of the window to Guise that it was done: "Very well," replied he, "but M. d'Angoulême will not believe it unless he sees him at his feet." The corpse was then thrown out into the court from the window; and the blood spurted out on the faces and clothes of the princes. Guise wiped the murdered man's face in order to recognise him, and then gave orders to cut off his head.

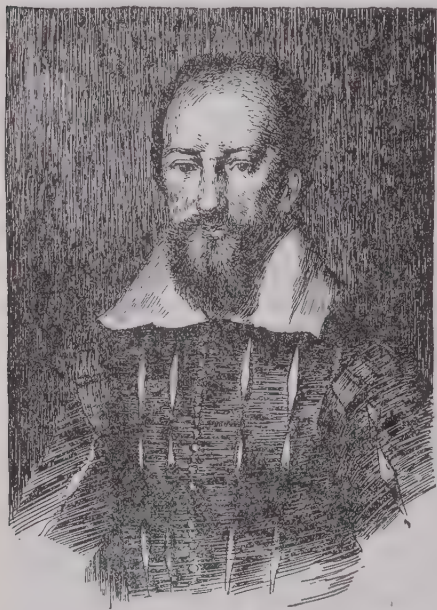
The ringing of the bell of St. Germain l'Auxerrois was answered by the bells of all the churches, and the discharge of firearms in different parts. Paris resounded with cries and howlings which brought the defenceless people out of their dwellings, not only unarmed, but half naked. Some tried to gain Coligny's house in the hope of obtaining protection, but the companies of guards quickly despatched them; the Louvre seemed to hold out a refuge; but they were driven away by men armed with spears and musketry. Escape was almost impossible; the numerous lights placed in the windows deprived them of the shelter which the darkness would have afforded them; and patrols traversed the streets in all directions killing everyone they met. From the streets they proceeded to the houses; they broke open the doors and spared neither age, sex, nor condition. A white cross had been put in their hats to distinguish the Catholics, and some priests holding a crucifix in one hand and a sword in the other preceded the murderers and encouraged them, in God's name, to spare neither relatives nor friends. When the daylight appeared, Paris exhibited a most appalling spectacle of slaughter: the headless bodies were falling from the windows; the gateways were blocked up with dead and dying, and the streets were filled with carcasses which were drawn on the pavement to the river.

Even the Louvre became the scene of great carnage; the guards were drawn up in a double line, and the unfortunate Huguenots who were in that place were called one after another and were killed with the soldiers' halberds. Most of them died without complaining or even speaking; others appealed to the public faith and the sacred promise of the king. "Great God," said they, "be the defence of the oppressed. Just judge! avenge this perfidy." Some of the king of Navarre's servants who lived in the palace were killed in bed with their wives. Tavannes, Guise, Montpensier, and Angoulême rode through the streets encouraging the murderers; Guise told them that it was the king's wish; that it was necessary to kill the very last of the heretics, and crush the race of vipers. Tavannes ferociously exclaimed, "Bleed! Bleed! the doctors tell us that bleeding is as beneficial in August as in May." These exhortations were not lost upon an enraged multitude, and the different companies emulated each other in atrocity. One Crucé, a goldsmith, boasted of having killed four hundred persons with his own hands.

The massacre lasted during the whole week, but after the third day its fury was considerably abated; indeed, on the Tuesday, a proclamation was issued for putting an end to it, but no measures were taken for enforcing the order; the people however were no longer urged on to the slaughter. What horrors were endured during that time can be best described by those who were present, or by contemporaries.

Sully gives the following account of his suffering: "I went to bed the night before, very early. I was awakened about three hours after midnight by the noise of all the bells and by the confused cries of the populace. St. Julien, my governor, went out hastily with my valet-de-chambre to learn the

cause, and I have never since heard anything of those two men, who were, without doubt, sacrificed among the first to the public fury. I remained alone dressing myself in my chamber where a few minutes after I observed my host enter, pale and in consternation. He was of the religion, and having heard what was the matter he had decided on going to mass to save his life and preserve his house from plunder. He came to persuade me to do the same and to take me with him. I did not think fit to follow him. I resolved on attempting to get to the college of Burgundy where I studied, notwithstanding the distance of the house where I lived from that college, which made my attempt very dangerous. I put on my scholar's gown, and taking



SULLY

(1560-1641)

a pair of large prayer books under my arm, I went down stairs. I was seized with horror as I went into the street at seeing the furious men running in every direction, breaking open the houses and calling out, 'Kill! Massacre the Huguenots!' and the blood which I saw shed before my eyes redoubled my fright; I fell in with a body of soldiers, who stopped me. I was questioned; they began to ill-treat me, when the books which I carried were discovered, happily for me, and served me for a passport. Twice afterwards I fell into the same danger, from which I was delivered with the same good fortune. At length I arrived at the college of Burgundy; a still greater danger awaited me there; the porter having twice refused me admittance, I remained in the middle of the street at the mercy of the ruffians, whose numbers kept increasing and who eagerly sought for their prey, when I thought of asking for the principal of the college, named Lafaye, a worthy man who tenderly loved me. The

porter, gained by some small pieces of money, which I put into his hand, did not refuse to fetch him. This good man took me to his chamber, where two inhuman priests whom I heard talk of the Sicilian Vespers tried to snatch me from his hands to tear me to pieces, saying that the order was to kill even the infants at the breast. All that he could do was to lead me with great secrecy to a remote closet, where he locked me in. I remained there three whole days, uncertain of my fate and receiving no assistance but from a servant of this charitable man who came from time to time and brought me something to live upon."k

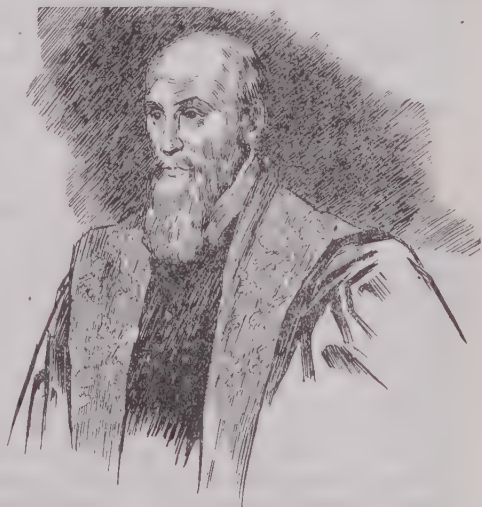
## EFFECTS OF THE MASSACRE

No allowable space would suffice for the records of such indiscriminate massacre. Charles, by his missives, ordered the same scene to be renewed in every town throughout his dominions. And the principal cities but too zealously responded. Fifty thousand Protestants are said to have fallen

[1572 A.D.]

victims of the monarch's order.<sup>1</sup> A few commanders refused. The viscount d'Orthe wrote back to the court, that he "commanded soldiers, not assassins." And even the public executioner of a certain town, when a dagger was put into his hands, flung it away, and declared himself above the crime. The family of the Montmorencys, though Catholic, showed their abhorrence of these acts, and had the courage to take down the body of the admiral, which had been hung to the common gibbet, and to give it burial at Chantilly. Charles IX had not failed to visit it, while yet suspended. His followers complained of the odour. "The body of a dead enemy cannot smell otherwise than sweet," was his reply. He now avowed that all was committed by his orders; and even held a "bed of justice" in his parliament for the very purpose. The trembling judges, with De Thou, their president, could not but applaud his zeal. As for De l'Hôpital, who had long been banished from court, and who had abandoned the friendship of Catherine since she had joined the Guises, he expected not to be spared, and ordered his domestics to throw open the gates. They disobeyed, and the murderers were unable to reach him. But De l'Hôpital did not long survive to deplore the miseries of his country. His words were, "After such horrors, I do not wish to live." The joy of the pope, on the other hand, and of Philip of Spain, knew no bounds. The supreme pontiff went in state to his cathedral, and returned public thanks to heaven for this signal mercy.

Charles had spared his sister's husband, the young king of Navarre, and his companion the prince of Condé. It was only at the price of being converted. Death or the mass was the alternative offered to them; and both, after some resistance, yielded in appearance. On the other hand, mere abhorrence of the massacre caused many Catholic gentlemen to turn Huguenots. Amongst these was Henry de la Tour d'Auvergne, viscount de Turenne. After all, the crime, from which so much was expected, produced neither peace nor advantage. The Huguenots were, indeed, paralysed by the blow; but the Catholics were no less stupefied by remorse and shame. King Charles himself seemed stricken already by avenging fate. He was



MICHEL DE L'HÔPITAL

(1505-1573)

[<sup>1</sup> Martin<sup>7</sup> says: "Nothing definite can be affirmed as to the exact number of the victims: the *Martyrologe des réformés* places it at 30,000; M. de Thou thinks this figure somewhat exaggerated; the *Réveille-matin* speaks of no less than 100,000 dead; Capilupi speaks of 25,000; La Popelinière of more than 20,000; Papyre Masson, one of the panegyrists of the occasion, reduces the number to 10,000. The last figure is too low; about twenty thousand appears to be the most probable estimate." This estimate of Martin's, confessedly only conjectural, is perhaps a trifle conservative. Sully<sup>7</sup> thought that 70,000 perished throughout France. Davila<sup>7</sup> estimated the number killed in Paris at 10,000, over 500 of whom were nobles. This is manifestly overdrawn, when we consider that the massacre of the first night was for the most part confined to the north of the Seine. Possibly about three thousand may have perished in and about Paris and twenty-five thousand in the rest of France. But this, let it be repeated, is mere conjecture.]



nervous and agitated. The blood he had spilled seemed ever to stream before his eyes. A continual fever took possession of him, and henceforth never ceased to consume him. The chiefs were equally languid, equally disunited. The Huguenots had time to rally, and to prepare for defence. Rochelle and Montauban shut their gates. Charles in his blindness sent La Noue, the Huguenot, to Rochelle; he became its commander. The town was at length besieged, and thousands of the Catholics fell before it; among them, not a few of the murderers who assisted in the massacre on St. Bartholomew's eve. At length Charles, unable to conquer, and incompetent to carry on the war with vigour, granted the Huguenots a peace. Rochelle and Montauban preserved the freedom of their religion; and Charles had the pain of perceiving that the grand and sweeping crime to which he had been impelled had but enfeebled the Catholic party, instead of insuring its triumph.

#### LAST YEARS, DEATH, AND CHARACTER OF CHARLES IX

Catherine, in the meantime, had the address to procure the crown of Poland for the son of her predilection, Henry duke of Anjou. She had lavished her wealth upon the electors for this purpose. No sooner was the point gained than she regretted it. The health of Charles was now manifestly on the decline, and Catherine would fain have retained Henry; but the jealousy of the king forbade. After conducting the duke on his way to Poland the court returned to St. Germain, and Charles sank, without hope or consolation, on his couch of sickness. Even here he was not allowed to repose. The young king of Navarre formed a project of escape with the prince of Condé. The duke of Alençon, youngest brother of the king, joined in it. A body of horse were to wait in the forest of St. Germain for the princes, and protect them in their flight. The vigilance of the queen-mother discovered the enterprise, which, for her own purposes, she magnified into a serious plot. Charles was informed that a Huguenot army was coming to surprise him, and he was obliged to be removed into a litter, in order to escape. "This is too much," said he; "could they not have let me die in peace?"

Condé was the only prince that succeeded in making his escape. The king of Navarre and the duke of Alençon were imprisoned. The former, accused of conspiring against the king's life, defended himself with much spirit, and asked if it were a crime, that he, a king, should seek to free himself from durance? This young prince had already succeeded by his address, his frankness, and high character in rallying to his interests the most honourable of the noblesse, who dreaded at once the perfidious Catherine and her children; who had renounced their good opinion of young Guise after the day of St. Bartholomew; and who, at the same time professing Catholicism, were averse to Huguenot principles and zeal. This party, called the *politiques*, professed to follow the middle or neutral course, which at one time had been that of Catherine de' Medici; but she had long since deserted it, and had joined in all the sanguinary and extreme measures of her son and of the Guises. Hence she was especially odious to the new and moderate party of the *politiques*, among whom the family of Montmorency held the lead. Catherine feared their interference at the moment of the king's death, whilst his successor was absent in a remote kingdom; and she swelled the project of the princes' escape into a serious conspiracy, in order to be mistress of those whom she feared. Lamole and Coconas, both confidants of the princes, were executed for favouring their escape. The marshals De Cossé and De Montmorency were sent to the Bastille.

[1574 A.D.]

In this state of the court Charles IX expired on the 30th of May, 1574, after having nominated the queen-mother to be regent during his successor's absence.<sup>d</sup> His end was so miserable that even Huguenot writers express pity for it. His short and infrequent sleeping moments were troubled by hideous visions. Exhausted by violent hemorrhages, he sometimes waked up bathed in his own blood, and this blood reminded him of that of his subjects which had been shed in streams by his orders. He saw again in his dreams all their dead bodies floating with the current of the Seine; he heard mournful lamentations in the air. The night before his death, his nurse, of whom he was very fond, although she was a Huguenot, heard him complaining, weeping, and sighing: "Ah nurse," he cried, "what streams of blood, how many murders! What wicked counsel I have had! O my God, pardon me and grant me mercy! I know not where I am, so much do they agitate and perplex me! What will become of all this country? What will become of me, to whom God intrusts it? I am lost, I know it well!" Then his nurse said to him: "Sire, the murders and the blood shall be on the head of those who influenced you, and on your evil counsellors." His last words were that he was glad he left no male child to wear the crown after him.

This prince, who was so guilty and so unhappy, whose name has been handed down from generation to generation, loaded with anathemas, was born with the most brilliant gifts of mind and imagination, and with less inclination to vice than most of his race. He had that real love of art which had been the glory of his ancestor, Francis I, and verses of his have been preserved, which are far superior to those of the captive at Pavia—beautiful verses, addressed to Ronsard, who might have taken lessons in good taste and spontaneity from this essay of royal genius. He loved music no less than poetry, and during his last illness melody alone had the power to soothe his pain for a moment. A detestable education had destroyed all the gifts of nature in Charles IX. When real glory was offered to him, when the chance was given him to snatch France from factions, to make her enter upon her real destiny by a bound towards her natural frontiers, by a brilliant and legitimate conquest, the unfortunate man did not have the strength to seize this unique opportunity. It came too late for him; his soul was confused and without a guide, his mind vacillating. After long struggles he became a prey to the infernal inspirations of his mother, and, as if carried away by furies, he leaped into the gulf of shame and of blood, into which he was followed by the rest of his race, and in which France came near being destroyed with the Valois.<sup>f</sup>

The above version of the end of Charles IX expresses the opinion held by most of the historians. Daresté,<sup>m</sup> however, finishes the reign of Charles IX with the following remark in regard to this generally accepted description: "During his last days there were current rumours which have been transmitted to us by D'Aubigné,<sup>n</sup> L'Estoile,<sup>o</sup> and other contemporaries. They recount his great inquietude, his idea that the phantoms of the victims of the massacre of St. Bartholomew besieged his death-bed; they tell us that he succumbed to his great remorse and these avenging hallucinations. All these accounts, of doubtful origin, are at least greatly exaggerated. His last illness, the phases and progress of which were followed by the Venetian envoys,<sup>1</sup> was of a most natural character. Cavalli<sup>p</sup> contents himself with saying that the plots during the last days of his life caused him great torture of mind and prevented his tasting an instant's repose."

[<sup>1</sup> The Venetian despatches are regarded as among the most reliable historical sources.]

Charles IX does not lack defenders. In great contrast to the almost universal condemnation of him are the writings of some of his contemporaries. Sorbini, after a description of his physical qualities, goes on to express his admiration of him in these words: "His manners were the most gentle in the world; he loved peace and quiet for his people, and desired nothing so much as to see his subjects reunited in the faith and religion of the Catholic church, which made apparent to everyone his great generosity, and showed how worthy he was to have reigned in a more happy period than the one he lived in, when the malice of his subjects kept him in difficulties. Had he reigned in a more fortunate time, the opinion of his intimate friends and his most faithful subjects and servants would have been correct, for they called it a golden age. He would have been loved by all in a good and virtuous age."<sup>a</sup>

### THE ACCESSION OF HENRY III (1574-1589 A.D.)

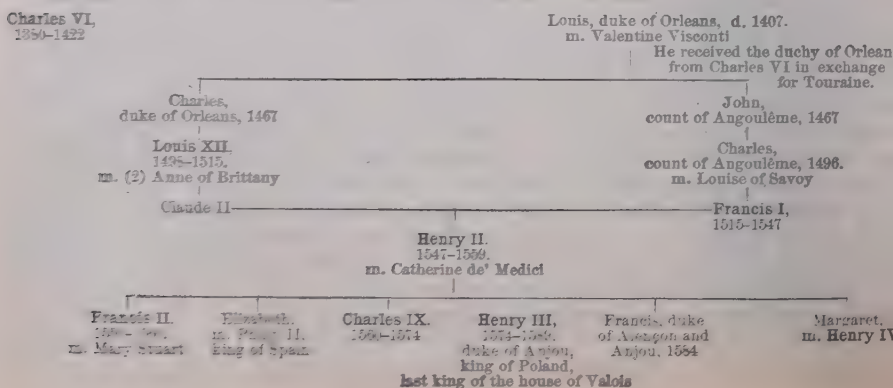
The duke of Anjou,<sup>1</sup> heir presumptive of Charles IX, was in Poland at the time of his brother's death. Henry was no sooner in possession of this crown than he took a dislike to the "land of the Sarmatians," where the rough and virile nobles knew nothing of the refinements of luxury and vice which the corrupt civilisation of Italy had inoculated upon France. Upon the news of his brother's death, he fled from his capital at night, like a malefactor. Pursued by his subjects, who wished to keep him, he did not stop until he was on Austrian soil. The pleasures of Vienna and of Venice captivated him for a long time: he did not set foot within his new kingdom until two months after he had secretly left the old one.

The prince was ill-fitted to master the situation that his brother had left him. The victories won in his name by Tavannes had given him a great reputation: but abuse of pleasure had cooled that early ardour which had at first made him as brave as his ancestors. He no longer had a taste for any but childish or effeminate pastimes, when he did not surrender himself to horrible debauchery. It could hardly be said that his ostentatious devo-

<sup>1</sup> The following table shows the genealogy of the last kings of the house of Valois:

#### HOUSES OF ORLEANS AND ANGOULÊME

Charles V (third king of the house of Valois), 1364-1380.





[1574 A.D.]

tion was a trick of impiety, but all his religion consisted in certain external practices. He thought that all his accounts with heaven and his own conscience could be settled by a fast and a few penances. Charles IX, his brother, had sometimes had ideas and plans worthy of a king. Henry had almost puerile occupations; and D'Aubigné,<sup>a</sup> seeing this man so careful of his toilet, his complexion, the whiteness of his hands and face, was uncertain whether he beheld "a woman-king or a man-queen." Charles IX was vicious in anger and on occasion; Henry in character and constantly. He read nothing but Macchiavelli, and, in a word, he never knew that which makes pardonable much of his brother's conduct — remorse.

His first acts showed what was to be expected of him. At Turin he repaid the hospitality of the duke of Savoy with prodigal magnificence by giving him Pinerolo, Perugia, and Savigliano, the last remains of the conquests of Francis I beyond the Alps. Hardly had he entered France when he commanded the Protestants to turn Catholic or leave the kingdom. His words were indeed menacing: but the reformers were reassured when they saw that action was limited to sending a few officers to the southern provinces, which were then much disturbed, and to processions of flagellants, in which the king took part and which went through the streets scourging their shoulders for the remission of their sins. He made a solemn entry into Paris, where he greatly scandalised serious people by having about him a great number of monkeys, parrots, and little dogs. At Rheims, "when the crown was placed upon his head," says L'Estoile,<sup>b</sup> "he said in a loud voice that it hurt him; it slipped twice as though it were going to fall." An evil omen was seen in this, and with reason. This head, which could not bear a crown, could no more bear the strong and virile ideas that would have been so necessary to defend it.

#### POLITICAL CONDITIONS

France had need, however, of an able, honest, strong chief to take up the reins of government. Castelmau<sup>c</sup> estimates that "already, by reason of the civil wars, more than a million persons had been put to death, all under the pretext of religion and public utility, with which both parties shielded themselves." It was only with great difficulty that Catherine de' Medici had been able to prevent a new explosion during the last days of Charles IX and the two months of her regency. Between the extreme Catholics and the fanatical Protestants a new party was gaining ground, that of the *Politiques*, composed of moderate Catholics who desired the re-establishment of public tranquillity by religious tolerance and energetic repression of factions. The three Montmorencys, Damville, Thoré, and Méru, were the most conspicuous men of this party, which includes a great number of magistrates and of rich bourgeois. A prince of the blood, the duke of Alençon, had undertaken the leadership of it, less through patriotism than through ambition, for he counted upon making use of it for his personal ends. The Guises were at the head of the Catholics, the Bourbons at the head of the Protestants; in order to be neither isolated nor second in one or the other camp he had thought it possible to form a third party that should be devoted to his interests. The Béarnais [Henry IV] justly calls him "a double heart, an evil and misshapen mind, like a deformed body." We must, however, give him credit for two things: he wished to be French, he said, in name and in fact, and an enemy of Spain; and he never stained his hands with the blood of the Huguenots.<sup>c</sup>

On his return to Paris, Henry III remained there for the winter and during Lent, taking part in the feasts and the devotions. Accompanied by the queen, and carrying a large rosary in his hand, he visited the churches, the oratories, and the different religious houses; an action which gave rise to numberless lampoons, libels, and satirical writings.

L'Estoile in his journal, indifferent in the main and censorious, gives a faithful portrayal of the feelings of the Parisian people. They were anything but disposed to pardon the effeminacy and ridiculous actions of the king.<sup>m</sup>

They saw the descendant of St. Louis and Francis sink religion into ridicule, and knighthood into disgrace. They saw a king of France, surrounded by minions or favourites, dress himself in woman's clothes, and sing infamous ballads in a public meeting, and on

the same day sing psalms through the streets dressed in the robe of a penitent—a Christian Nero, with the solemn voice of Coligny scarcely

hushed, and the grim eyes of the Bible-reading Huguenots fixed on all his proceedings. As a consequence there was strife and misery in the land. Alençon, wicked as the king, and not so clever, joined the levies which were gathering round the old leaders.

Henry of Navarre escaped from his honourable and close-watched detention by the swiftness of his horse at a hunting-party, and bade his adherents, who came to him in great numbers, once more "to follow the White Plume, always in the front of battle." He celebrated his recovered independence by resuming the exercise of the Protestant faith. But the great families of the Montmorencys



HENRY III

[1575-1576 A.D.]

and others, who were merely discontented with the government, were disinclined to mix their standards with the avowed Huguenots. It was, therefore, easy for the queen-mother to break up the ill-assorted union. She sent embassies of her bedchamber-women to wait on the duke of Alençon, and in a very short time that feeble prince was detached from the cause. He, however, mediated a peace which was very favourable to the reformers. Their worship was permitted in all parts of France except in Paris; all edicts against them were withdrawn; the massacre itself was disavowed; and several additional towns were surrendered to them as pledges. This was the fifth peace since the religious wars began, and was called the Peace of Monsieur, in honour of Alençon.<sup>1</sup> The king, who appeared at ball and theatre with rich necklaces round his bare neck, and affected the appearance of a female beauty, had no wish, in signing this pacification, but to be left undisturbed by the anger of faction or the ambition of his brother. To separate Alençon from the Huguenots, he would have made greater sacrifices still. But the sacrifice he made was quite enough. The Catholics saw the overthrow of their faith in the terms of the treaty; the Huguenots the finger of God in the spread of their opinions.

#### THE HOLY LEAGUE

The Holy League began in 1576—a league which bound itself by the most awful sanctions to extirpate heresy—to spare neither friend nor foe till the pestilence was banished, and even, if need be, to alter the succession to the throne. The next heir after the childless Alençon was a Huguenot; but ascending far above the successors of Hugh Capet, Bourbon, or Valois, there was a prince whose whole heart was devoted to Rome, and who traced his lineal descent to Charlemagne—and this was Henry of Guise, son of that old Francis who was assassinated by Poltrot, and who himself bore marks of his Catholic soldiership in a wound upon his face, which made him known as the Balafré. “No Protestant king of Navarre! We will have Catholic Henry of Guise!”

But Alençon [who hated Guise and had tried once or twice to assassinate him] was by no means pleased with this part of the league's intentions. He threw himself into its ranks by way of stemming its course, and was lost or forgotten in the tumult which raged in every heart. The king summoned the states to meet at Blois, but the states showed the somewhat contradictory symptoms, not only of hatred of dissent, but of something very like republicanism. They wished to control the royal power by commissioners appointed by themselves, whose decision on any disputed question was to be final; and being bribed and coerced by the party of the Guises, they passed an edict interdicting the Huguenot faith, and withdrawing all the guarantee towns from their hands. This was, in fact, a declaration of war; the white plume was waving in the breeze in a moment, and all the party were in arms. More-sincerity arose on both sides in viewing the matters in dispute, and amalgamation became almost impossible. The king brought discredit on the league and on himself by joining it as a member. This move degraded him from being monarch of France to being one of a faction, and not even the chief of it; for in spite of Henry's calling himself the leader of the confederacy, the real authority remained with Henry of Guise. The king, for instance,

[<sup>1</sup> The title of Monsieur for the king's brother next himself begins to be used from now on. But, according to Saint-Simon, it was not used regularly and constantly until the time of Gaston, brother of Louis XIII.]



wished to raise money, but the Balafre frowned, and the Catholic purses remained closed. He could neither command nor persuade. [In fact there seems to have been some idea of setting him aside somewhat as his fabled ancestor Pepin had set aside the last of the Merovingians.] His thoughts, therefore, were soon bent on peace. He managed to obtain a treaty at Bergerac in 1577, by which the former state of affairs was restored. A compliment at the same time was paid to the Huguenots, and a triumph gained to himself, by the abolition of the league.

But one of the articles of the league was the indissoluble "association and brotherhood of its members till its objects were obtained." Now, its objects could not be obtained while a Huguenot was favoured, or even tolerated in France, or while there was a chance of the accession of so dangerous a heretic as Henry of Navarre. War after war broke out, to the number of seven in all, and with still increasing hatred; but it is useless to particularise them. It will serve to show the curious mixture of motive and action that one of these is called the War of the Lovers, because it arose from the jealousies and rivalries of the leaders who were invited to meet at the palace of the queen-mother. That astute Italian introduced a sort of chivalry of vice in the prosecution of a campaign. She invited the young king of Navarre to come to her court with all the cavaliers he chose. There were balls and dances every night, and the appearance of the greatest cordiality; for a radius of a mile and a half was established round the house, within which quarrels and fighting were unknown. It was an oasis consecrated to the coarser Venus. But outside those narrow limits the war raged with undiminished ardour. A Huguenot lord, after joining in the same dance with a Catholic, would ask him to accompany him for a ride across the line, and the survivor came in with bloody sword to boast of the result. One night Henry gave a return entertainment to the queen and all the court. When the supper was over, and the dances were resumed, Henry slipped out of the garden, joined Sully and some other young nobles who were waiting his arrival, and rode all night. On the following day the queen-mother heard that one of her towns about thirty miles off had been surprised and pillaged; and when Henry rode back within the peaceful circle, complimented him on the success of his stratagem.

But gloomy forebodings began to mingle with these festivities. Alençon, to weaken the power of Spain, was allowed to place himself at the head of the revolted provinces. The revolt was religious as much as political, and the furious leaguers saw the brother of the king and heir of the throne enlisted against the church. His visit to London, to prosecute his claim to Elizabeth's hand, also, though terminating in ridicule and disappointment, showed his want of attachment to the true faith. He came back to Paris humiliated and unsuccessful, both in love and war. His want of zeal was discovered, and not much reliance could be placed on a man who supported the rebels of Holland and wooed the great heretic Elizabeth of England. His death, in 1584, was not lamented on any other account than that it advanced by one step the cause of a far more hated, because far more terrible opponent.

#### THE WAR OF THE THREE HENRYS

The next heir to the throne was now the Huguenot Henry of Navarre. With such a prospect before them the Catholic party grew stronger and more determined. Three men, all Henrys, now stood forth as leaders of these parties, and of these the royal faction was least. The vacillating king sought

[1584-1587 A.D.]

alliance first with one side and then with the other. His own inclination led him away from the Huguenot cause; his safety was not assured with the cause of Guise. He was not strong enough himself to have a loyal and determined following of his own.<sup>a</sup>

The conduct henceforth of Navarre and Guise proved a remarkable contrast. It was the interest of the Bourbon to elevate and dignify the throne to which he saw himself likely to succeed; he therefore treated with profound reverence the office of the king, and his person with outward respect. It was the business of the Guise to degrade the crown, which would otherwise have been too sacred for a sacrilegious hand to touch; he therefore treated the king with marked indignity, and stirred up the lowest passions of the mob in opposition to the highest authority in the land. By his success in this policy he made a narrow escape of exciting feelings of hatred to royalty itself, which would have punished his ambition by taking away the object of it.<sup>f</sup>

An interesting result, however, of this attitude of the Guise party was an advance in political thought. There were hints abroad of the sovereignty of the people. The Jesuit opponents of Elizabeth and Navarre must give up the idea of hereditary monarchy. Orthodoxy was the indispensable qualification, however, rather than popular choice; the church rather than the nation was the source of sovereignty. It was on this basis that the Guise party made a treaty with Philip of Spain. The Pact of Joinville at the end of 1584 made the league party not only a menace to hereditary monarchy in France, but by junction with Spain it became anti-national in its character. The war now became more political and less trivial. The destinies of France were at stake. But the foreign aid which made the Guise cause a European question, and widened the quarrel to one of universal religious war, was not destined to amount to enough to repress Protestantism in France. The year 1585 was spent in useless negotiations in France; during the next year the war was hardly begun, and before decisive action had been taken in France the foreign situation had changed entirely through the action of Elizabeth.<sup>g</sup>

On the 18th of February, 1587, the execution of Mary Queen of Scots fell like a firebrand on the Catholic plans. She had once been queen of France, and was related to the Guises. She had been true to but one object throughout her life, but that object justified and ennobled all her deeds, for it was the supremacy of the church. The violences of the league, the curses of the pope, and the threats of Philip of Spain and of all the Catholics of Europe, had led to the sad catastrophe, by showing the wise counsellors of Elizabeth that while Mary lived and plotted there was no safety for Protestantism or freedom; and now the blow recoiled with tenfold force on the persons who had made it unavoidable. Philip began his preparations for the Armada. Guise concealed no longer his enmity to the king, and roused



A GALLANT, TIME OF HENRY III

the populace and parliament of Paris, both of which were entirely at his command, against him. The infatuated monarch showed his usual want of judgment. He replied to the reclamations of the magistrates by confiscating their salaries, and threatening to throw them in sacks into the Seine. But no course of proceeding would probably have altered the result. Victories and defeats all had the same effect.<sup>f</sup>

### *The Battle of Coutras (1587 A.D.)*

One great battle stands out in the dreary stretch of these years. Henry of Navarre had marched from La Rochelle across the Loire country to meet a German force which was advancing from the east. Henry III sent an army under Joyeuse to intercept the forces of the Huguenots and he succeeded in doing this at the strong position of Coutras. The situation was such that the Huguenots had no hope of escape except through victory. Henry had reached the château of Coutras an hour before Joyeuse and on the evening of the 19th of October, 1587; the advance guard of the Huguenots drove the duke's Albanian scouts from the town. Joyeuse, however, was afraid that the enemy would try to escape and began preparations for battle in the middle of the night.<sup>a</sup>

The young courtiers had sworn to give quarter to no one. The king of Navarre had only time to leave Coutras and prepare for battle, a little before day, in the angle of land formed by the two rivers Dronne and Isle. According to D'Aubigné,<sup>n</sup> who has left us the most circumstantial account of this day [and who was himself a soldier in the service of Henry IV] the Catholics had about five thousand foot-soldiers and twenty-five hundred cavalry; the Protestants, almost as many infantry, but hardly half as many cavalry.

The battle began with volleys of cannon. The Catholics suffered from the Huguenot artillery, which was better aimed than their own, and with loud cries demanded a charge. At the moment when the Catholics started, the ministers Chandieu and D'Amours began to chant in front of the Protestant army the twelfth verse of Psalm cxviii. At the sight of the kneeling Protestants the frivolous youths who were about Joyeuse uttered insulting cries. "They tremble, the cowards, they are confessing." "You are mistaken," replied a more experienced captain, "when the Huguenots look like that, they are determined to conquer or die." In an instant the Huguenot men-at-arms had mounted. "Cousins!" cried the king of Navarre to Condé and Soissons, "I will say no more to you than that you are of the blood of Bourbon, and, as God lives, I will show you that I am your senior." "And we," replied Condé, "we will show that you have good juniors."

The Huguenot line was formed in a crescent on a little plain. The light cavalry of Poitou, which formed the point of the crescent on the right, were driven back by a great force of Catholic cavalry, and drew the Gascon squadron of the viscount de Turenne along in their rout. The left wing of the Catholics with a shout of victory pushed on to the baggage in order to plunder, without heeding what was taking place on the rest of the battlefield. Three hundred Protestant arquebusiers, believing the battle lost and inspired by a heroic despair, threw themselves upon a large battalion of nearly three thousand of the enemy's foot-soldiers with such violence as to break through the first ranks. The rest of the Huguenot infantry followed this movement and the two bodies of infantry attacked each other with great violence.



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But in the meantime the fate of the day was decided elsewhere. Joyeuse had started at a gallop with his men-at-arms spread out in a single line of lances; the three Bourbons were awaiting him steadfastly at the head of three squadrons formed six files deep. Most of the Huguenot cavalry was armed with sword and pistol; when the enemy was fifteen paces distant they threw themselves with all their might from their horses and fired point blank, while some platoons of arquebusiers stationed between the squadrons fired with surer aim upon the Catholics. The latter could not even make use of their lances. Their long line was driven back and broken. There followed a short and terrible hand-to-hand conflict, in which the king of Navarre and his cousins kept their word to one another and fought like true knights. The nobles of the court, gaily decked, plumed, dressed in velvet and embroidery, were crushed like glass by the poor and rude gentlemen of the south. These young effeminate knew only how to die.

The first squadrons had met at nine o'clock; at ten there was not a man of Joyeuse's army who had not either fallen or fled. The infantry had also dispersed after the defeat of the cavalry. The king of Navarre had great difficulty in stopping the carnage. The Protestants took cruel revenge for the barbarities practised by Joyeuse upon their comrades; more than four hundred gentlemen and two thousand soldiers were put to the sword. Joyeuse surrendered to two Huguenots when a third split open his head with a blow of his pistol butt. Nearly all the lords and gentlemen who had followed him were killed or taken prisoners. The booty, including the ransoms, amounted to more than 600,000 crowns. The victors had not lost forty men.

The king of Navarre showed himself worthy of this brilliant triumph by moderation and humanity. He exhibited no more pride after the victory than fear before the combat. He received all the prisoners with kindness, restored their arms to some, released others without ransom, and declared that as before he demanded only the edict of 1577.

At the same time Guise repulsed the enemy from the soil of France in Alsace. The defeat was attributed to the king, and the victory to the duke—a fatal contrast between him and Guise, of which he could not weaken the effect by comparison with Navarre. The two uncrowned Henrys were held up as models for the third, for even the Catholics saw with a sort of pride the achievements of Henry, who, though a Huguenot, was a prince and a Frenchman still. This state of affairs could not last long. Guise



A FRENCH SAVANT, TIME OF HENRY III

made a solemn entry into Paris, and was received with all the ceremony usually reserved for a king.<sup>f</sup>

Henry de Guise at this time was thirty-eight years of age. He was tall and well proportioned, with blond curly hair and piercing eyes. The scar on his cheek gave him a martial appearance. Although not a great general, he possessed all the military qualities necessary to gain the love of the populace. Indefatigable, prompt of decision, rapid and sure of execution, affable, generous, familiar even, though ever guarding his dignity, he had the external gifts and the successful personality which Henry III lacked. Madame de Retz said that in comparison to him the other princes were but people. All were devoted to him. "France," Balzac said of him later, "went mad over this man; to say they loved him is too weak an expression."<sup>m</sup>

### *The Day of the Barricades and the Treaty of Union*

Henry was at the Louvre, and trembled at his subject's approach. When the interview was over, Guise returned to his house and surrounded it with armed men, as if to hint that his life was in danger from the king—a very old trick, and very often successful. Everything continued quiet on both sides till some Swiss royal guards marched into the town. In a moment the mob were up in arms. Barricades were erected in the streets; pistols were fired at the passengers. The Swiss were attacked, and indiscriminate massacre began. Catherine strove in vain to induce her unworthy son to go and show himself to the malcontents. He heard the firing on his troops, and had not the courage to order them to defend themselves; and while his mother rode boldly into the streets to quell the insurrection, he slipped noiselessly to his stables, where the Tuileries gardens now are, and galloped without pause to Rambouillet. On the following day he got safe within the walls of Chartres. This was called the day of the Barricades, and for a while it certainly advanced the cause of the duke of Guise. With affected moderation he rejected the acclamations of his party, allowed the Swiss guards to escape, and in other ways endeavoured to pacify the adherents of the king. To Chartres the king was followed by the now triumphant Guise, who dictated there, to the degraded king, what was thenceforward called the Treaty of Union of July, 1588. It forgave, or rather it applauded, all the outrages of Paris. It declared all heretics incapable of any public trust, office, or employment. It excluded the heretical members of the house of Bourbon from the line of succession to the crown. It raised the duke to the office of lieutenant-general of the kingdom; and it provided for the immediate convention of the states-general of France. To the observance of these terms, Henry pledged himself in the most solemn forms of adjuration.

### *The Meeting of the States-General*

Again, therefore, the states-general were summoned to meet at the city of Blois; and, on the 16th of October, 1588, 505 deputies were assembled to listen to the inaugural oration of the king. "Among them," says the contemporary historian, Matthieu, "was conspicuous Henry, duke of Guise, who, as great master of the royal household, sat near the throne, dressed in white satin, with his hood thrown carelessly backward; and from that elevated position he cast his eyes along the dense crowd before him that he might recognise and distinguish his followers, and encourage with a glance their reliance on his fortune and success; and thus, without uttering a word,

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might seem to say to each of them, 'I see you;' and then (proceeds Matthieu) the duke rising, with a profound obeisance to the assembly, and followed by the long train of his officers and gentlemen, retired to meet and to introduce the king."

The lofty consciousness of his royal character still imparted some dignity to Henry's demeanor. Addressing the states with a majestic and touching eloquence, he asserted his title to the gratitude of his people, claimed the unimpaired inheritance of the prerogatives of his ancestors, pronounced the pardon of those who had already entered into traitorous conspiracies against him, and threatened condign punishment of all who might in future engage in any similar attempts. Even Guise listened, with evident discomposure, to this unexpected rebuke, and public menace, from the lips of his sovereign. It was, however, the single gleam of success with which Henry was cheered in his intercourse with the representatives of his people; and the rest of the history of the states-general of 1588, is little else than a record of the humiliations to which they subjected him.

He spoke, as we have seen, with royal indignation, of the outrages of Paris and of Chartres: but he was compelled to omit all those passages of his address in his subsequent publication of it. He publicly claimed for himself the cognizance of all questions respecting the verification of the powers of the deputies: but he was constrained, with equal publicity, to retract that pretension. He entertained an appeal from one of the members of the Tiers État against a decision of his order: but he was sternly reminded that the states had met at Blois, not as supplicants to obey, but as counsellors to advise, him. He pardoned the dukes of Soissons and Conti their having borne arms under the Huguenot standards, that so they might be qualified to take their places among the order of the nobles: but the validity of his pardon was contemptuously denied. He resisted, as an insult, the demand of the states, that he should repeat, in their presence, the oath he had already taken to observe the Treaty of the Union: but he was taught that submission was inevitable. He demanded that the states should, in their turn, swear fidelity to himself, and to the fundamental laws of the realm: but he was obliged to withdraw that demand. He insisted that the exclusion of Henry of Bearn from the succession to the throne should be preceded by an invitation to that prince to return into the bosom of the church: but his proposal was inflexibly and scornfully resisted. He commissioned two of his officers to lay before the order of the clergy his objections to the acceptance of the decrees of the Council of Trent: but his officers were driven away with insult. He solicited pecuniary aid for carrying on the war against the Huguenots: but the suit was answered by a demand for his surrender of a large part of his actual revenue.

This long series of indignities was readily traced by Henry to the guidance of a single hand. Guise was but too successfully exerting his influence at Blois to dethrone the king by degrading him. The crown, which must inevitably fall from the grasp of a prince whom all men had been taught to despise, might readily be transferred to the brows of a prince to whom all were looking with admiration.

Yet it was a hazardous policy. The king who had conquered at Jarnac and Montcontour, and who had concurred in devising the massacre of St. Bartholomew, was not a man to be restrained by the voice either of fear, of humanity, or of conscience. The friends of Guise saw, and pointed out to him, the danger of provoking the dormant passions of the enervated Henry; but he received their remonstrances with contempt, and habitually and



ostentatiously placed himself within the powers of the sovereign whom he at once despised, exasperated, and defied.<sup>10</sup> This contemptuous attitude was to lead to his undoing.

#### THE ASSASSINATION OF HENRY, DUKE OF GUISE (1588 A.D.)

On December 23rd, at three o'clock in the morning, the duke of Guise left the room of Charlotte de Beaune, and found on returning to his house five notes which warned him to leave Blois immediately. His attendants begged him to take refuge without delay with his troops; but being weary he retired to sleep. At about eight o'clock, he got up, dressed himself in a new gray satin doublet, too thin for the season, took his cloak, went out, passed over the drawbridge and entered the castle.

Henry III, during the same night, prepared the ambushade. The evening before, at seven o'clock, he told Liancourt, the chief equerry, in a loud voice, to order his coach for four o'clock in the morning, because he wished to visit a shrine and return in time for the council. He gave a secret order to the Corsican Ornano, and to the forty-five Gascons of his especial guard, to be near his room the following day at five o'clock; then he shut himself up in his private chamber. At four he rose and went out, saying nothing to the queen, who was uneasy. He ascended one flight with Du Halde, led him into a gallery which he had divided into fifty cells, during the last two or three days, under the pretext of lodging there some Capuchin friars whom he wished to have constantly near him, but in reality to hide and separate all those who were to take part in the premeditated act. He pushed Du Halde into one, and without speaking a word shut him in. Towards five o'clock the forty-five guards presented themselves, one by one. He took each one in turn to the higher landing, and locked them up, each in a separate cell.

The members of the council convoked for six o'clock arrived, and not noticing anything strange on the staircases or in the corridors, began their sitting. As soon as the king had seen Cardinal De Guise, who was staying in the town, at the hôtel d'Allaye, enter the large hall, he ascended to his cells, opened the doors, made his men come down, took them into his room, having commanded them to make no noise so as not to awaken the queen-mother, who was dying on the lower landing. The glimmering light of the December dawn and the light from the king's candle but dimly showed their uneasy countenances and eager eyes. The king made a speech to his forty-five men, urging them to avenge him; he was delighted to find that his oratory was more successful than it was with the state deputies. These young noblemen, suddenly transported from their Gascony cottages, where they suffered hunger and every sort of privation, to become the confidants of the king, to enter his chamber, to hear themselves called his champions, his avengers, his friends, must have been the more amazed at this sudden fortune, in that the duke of Guise had threatened to plunge them back into their former misery.

By the advice of the duke of Guise these forty-five noblemen, sent by the states to entreat the king to reform his household, were to be dispersed as unnecessary. Still boorish, and knowing nothing beyond the patois of their villages, they remained homely and unaffected. One of them, called Périac, dimly understood that the king's speech showed that it was necessary to stab the duke of Guise, and he interrupted him with a joyous familiarity, striking him in the stomach with the flat of his hand, and crying out to him,

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"Cap de Jou, I'll kill him for you!" Reassured by the enthusiasm of these young men, Henry III himself posted them in his room and in the passages; then he retired to his private chamber, impatient and troubled at not having seen the duke of Guise arrive, but learning finally, at half-past eight, that Henry of Guise had just entered the council-room.

Henry of Guise had felt very cold in his satin doublet; his night had exhausted him. As he entered he felt sick and faint; his eyes were full of tears. "I am cold," said he, "let me go to the fire." Whilst more wood was being thrown on the fire, he said to M. de Morgondaine, keeper of the treasury, "I beg of you to ask M. de Saint-Prix to give me some Damascus raisins, or some preparation of roses." They could only find some Brignolles plums, which he began to eat. M. de Marillac, master of requests, read a report upon the salt-taxes, when the door opened and Revol, secretary of state, was seen to advance. He said to the duke, "Monsieur, the king asks for you; he is in his old room." Then he hastily went out. The duke did not notice this hasty retreat, nor the agitation of Revol, who was so white that the king had come to him a minute before, and said, "My God, Revol, how white you are! Rub your cheeks, Revol, rub your cheeks." The duke of Guise got up, put some prunes in his silver comfit plate, leaving the rest upon the cloth. "Gentlemen," said he "who will have some?" He threw his cloak upon his left arm, took his gloves and the comfit plate in the same hand, placed the fingers of his right hand upon his beard, was saluted and followed by the forty-five who were waiting for him. Two paces from the door of the old room he turned to see why they followed him, and immediately received first a sword-thrust in the back, then innumerable stabs from sword and dagger. Seizing hold of some of his murderers he dragged them along with him, and fell near the king's bed.

On hearing this noise Cardinal De Guise broke up the council and rose: "Ah," he cried, "they are killing my brother!" "Do not move, sir," answered the marshal D'Aumont, drawing his sword, "the king has need of you!"

At the same moment, the king half-opened the door of his room, and seeing the body gave orders for the pockets to be searched. Whilst they were carrying out this command the Balafré, uttering a long, deep, and husky sigh, died. The body was covered again with a gray cloak and with a cross of straw, and left lying there for some time exposed to the taunts and mockeries of the courtiers, who called him "the handsome king of Paris." They were not content with insulting him by words alone. "A diamond heart," someone says, "was taken from his finger by the sieur D'Entragues." To prevent the members of the league procuring any relics of their leader, the dead body was burned, by order of M. de Richelieu, grand provost of France, and the ashes were thrown into the Loire.<sup>s</sup> The cardinal De Guise and many other partisans of the house of Guise were arrested. The president of the Tiers État, and three other conspicuous Leaguers among the members of that body, were made state prisoners. The cardinal De Guise was murdered next day.<sup>a</sup>

It is said that when Henry III was certain that Guise had expired, he stepped from his room, sword in hand, and cried out: "We are no longer two! I am now king!"<sup>1</sup> then pushed with his foot the still quivering body. It was just sixteen years since Guise, at dawn of a fatal day, had struck with his foot another corpse!

[<sup>1</sup> When he repeated the remark to his mother, she is said to have replied: "God grant you have not made yourself king of nothing."]

## DEATH OF CATHERINE DE' MEDICI

Another famous death soon followed that of the Guises. The queen-mother had been violently affected by the catastrophe of December 23rd. Several days after, she visited the cardinal De Bourbon in the apartment whither he had retired. The cardinal broke forth in reproaches and accused Catherine of having caused the assassination of the Guises. This scene so disturbed the aged queen that her gout became worse; she was confined to her bed and never recovered. The 5th of January, 1589, at the age of sixty-one years, she joined her accomplice in the disaster of St. Bartholomew. The other accomplice, doubly an assassin, was not long in following his mother.

The death of this woman, who had figured so prominently in Christian affairs for thirty years, made but a feeble sound in the midst of the tempests that rose from the ashes of the Guises. The importance of Catherine had diminished greatly in the last few years: justly punished through the only source which could affect her, her love for Henry III, she had seen her power wane at the moment when she hoped to reign completely: neglected by her favourite son, half sacrificed to the favourites, at enmity with her son-in-law the Béarnais, she finally was without guidance; the race of Valois, which she had dreamed to place on all the thrones, being without issue, the Bourbons being her enemies, with the instinct of family, always found in a woman even the most corrupted, her hopes turned to the children of her eldest daughter; she thought to found a Lorraine dynasty; and only made herself the instrument and the puppet of the league. Her qualities as a ruler cannot be judged by the last years of her life: although morality and patriotism equally forbid the justification of this fatal woman, the historian must acknowledge that when it was possible to combine the policy of her family with the policy of state, she pursued two ideas which were beneficial to the destiny of France—the humiliation of the great, and resistance to the house of Austria. The end which she failed to attain by treachery and deceit might have been gained by the force and audacity of a genius more magnanimous: Richelieu was in this regard the happy inheritor of Catherine's idea.<sup>1</sup>

## THE SIEGE OF PARIS AND THE DEATH OF HENRY III

Heaven and earth rose against the massacre of Blois. It seemed a wilful playing into the hands of the Huguenots to remove the Catholic chief, and the pope looked on the deed not only as murder, but as heresy. The unruly capital burst into a cry of disobedience, and the Sorbonne formally withdrew the allegiance of the people from an unworthy king. The name of royalist was as fatal as that of Huguenot had been. The president Harlay, and sixty of the councillors, who bore the royal commission, were only saved from death by being taken to the Bastille. But in the midst of this general indignation, the states-general, and they alone, were, in appearance at least, unmoved. Occasionally, indeed, and even earnestly, they solicited the release of the prisoners. But they breathed not so much as a single remonstrance to the king against his enormous infringement of their sacred character and privileges in the persons of their colleagues. With an almost incredible abjectness they addressed themselves at once to the ordinary business of the session, and discussed with Henry, amendments in the law of treason, schemes for the admission of his officers to join in their deliberations, and plans for bringing to account all public defaulters. They pre-



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seited to him, not indignant defiance, but humble descriptions of the sufferings of his people, and meek supplications for the redress of them; and continued, during a whole month after the death of the Princes of Lorraine, to prostrate themselves before the king, as in the presence, not of an assassin, but of a conqueror. The session then closed with the royal audience customary on such occasions; when, in the hope of propitiating his favour to the imprisoned deputies, they addressed him in a speech in which his royal virtues, and especially his *clemency*, were lavishly extolled. On the 16th January, 1589, they at last took their leave of their sovereign, and of each other: when "we parted," says their great orator and memorialist, Bernard, "with tears in our eyes, bewailing what had passed, and looking forward with terror to what was yet to come; and observing that, in our separation, France had an evil augury that she herself was about to be torn in pieces."

The augury was but too well verified. The states-general of France never again assembled till they met ineffectually in the reign of Louis XIII, to be then finally adjourned till the eve of the French Revolution.<sup>w</sup>

Notwithstanding all this, however, when the meeting at Blois was dissolved, the members spread the flame of disaffection through town and country. The duke of Mayenne, brother of the murdered Guise, was declared by the council of Sixteen, consisting of deputies from the sixteen quarters of Paris, lieutenant-general of the kingdom, till the states-general could be assembled. In short, the king was deserted by his people, and nothing was wanting but the formal sentence of his deposition. Henry of Navarre saw his inheritance endangered, and came to the rescue. An interview took place between the cousins—the most Christian king, and the most chivalrous Bourbon. It was not altogether regard for his own interests which moved the new ally. In so unsettled a nation as France then was, a forcible change of dynasty would have led to unending conflict. To save his country from perpetual civil war or total anarchy was the object of Henry's efforts. His plans were bold and masterly. The few devoted adherents who still clung to their sovereign, from hereditary attachment, or from the poetic compassion which binds noble natures to a fallen race, accepted the guidance of the Huguenot chief. Mayenne was repulsed from Tours, and when men saw such measures of tenderness, as now distinguished the royal army, announced in the royal name, and such admirable military tactics displayed under the royal banner, the personal vices of the nominal monarch began to be forgotten.

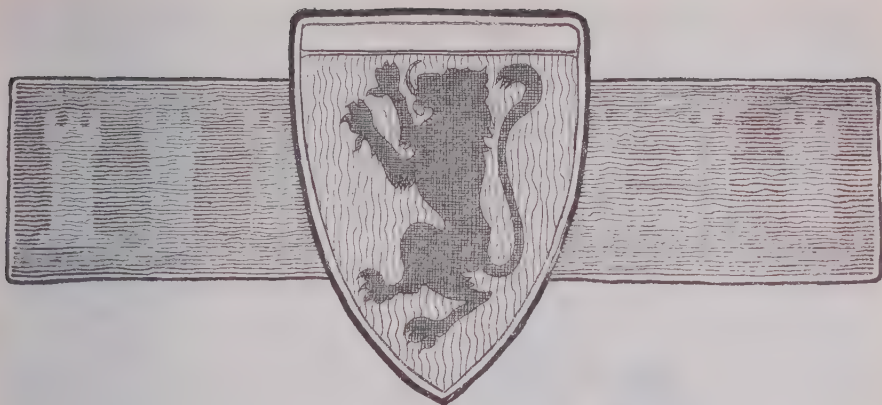
Opposition was paralysed by the consciousness that the royal authority was now supported by conduct worthy of a king; and at the end of July, an army of forty thousand men, confident in their leader, and restored to the full feeling of loyalty to the throne, commenced the siege of Paris. Henry of Valois gazed on the hated battlements with delight. "Farewell, Paris," he said; "from this time your towers and pinnacles shall offend my eyes no more. I will make it difficult to discover where your position was." But Henry of Navarre was more wisely employed. He was superintending the placing of the troops, bringing up the guns, arranging the tents; and it was understood that the day of assault was fixed for the 2nd of August. Mayenne saw no chance of safety. His garrison was weak and dispirited; the populace, with its usual fickleness, was cowardly where it was not mad.

But among the rabble there was a youth of twenty-two, who had been a Jacobin friar for some time, and had degraded the cowl by the wildest excesses, both of debauchery and blood. Every crime was sweet-smelling odour to Jacques Clément the monk. He wore a dagger which was displayed

with ferocious energy in every quarrel, and yet was fanatical in his religious beliefs, and carried the practices of superstition and idolatry to an almost insane extent. This was a sort of man who might be extremely useful in the distress to which the Catholic party was reduced. He was sent for by the duchess de Montpensier, sister of the duke of Guise, a woman so wicked that her conduct drives us into a charitable unbelief of its reality, who used such arguments and arts with the blinded, arrogant, sensual young fanatic, that he went forth on the 1st of August determined to repay his benefactress for her goodness and condescension in the way she herself had prescribed. Letters were furnished to him, which were obtained by false pretences from the president Harlay in the Bastille, and on presenting them he was admitted to the camp of the besiegers, and taken into the presence of the king. While Henry was reading the missive which Clément put into his hand, the Jacobin drew a knife from his sleeve, and stabbed him in his chair. It was not at once fatal. The king started up, and, drawing the weapon from his side, wounded his assailant in the face, thus mixing on the same blade the blood of the assassin and his victim. The attendants rushed forward and killed the murderer at once—a happy chance for his employer, for her name escaped the formal revelation which a trial would have produced. Henry was placed in his bed, and for a while hopes were entertained of his recovery.

Nothing in his life became him like the leaving it. An undiscovered spring of goodness welled forth as his last hour drew nigh. He forgave his enemies, recommended himself to his friends, embraced the hero of Navarre, and thanked him for all his aid. He turned to the crowd in the apartment, and declared Henry his rightful and true successor, and added, "Dear cousin and brother-in-law, be sure of this, you will never be king of France unless you profess yourself a Catholic." If the dignity and tenderness of a death-bed could have wiped out the vices and deficiencies of all his former years, Henry III might have been reckoned among the kings who have done honour to the crown. But the inflexible verdict of history must be delivered upon the course of a man's life, and not on the expressions or aspirations of his last hours; and the last of the Valois must be pronounced a king without honesty or patriotism, and a man without courage or virtue.<sup>f</sup>

The Valois had given to France thirteen kings in the space of 261 years. They had assisted and contributed to the decline of old feudal France: they seemed at first during several reigns to institute a new order; then, incapable and weak, they let slip from their hands this great work, and disappeared after having plunged France into chaos.<sup>m</sup>



## CHAPTER XIV

### HENRY OF NAVARRE, FIRST OF THE BOURBONS

[1589-1610 A.D.],

It is my wish that every peasant may have meat for dinner every day of the week, and a fowl in his pot on Sundays. — HENRY IV.

#### HENRY'S STRUGGLE FOR THE CROWN

JACQUES CLÉMENT in killing Henry III, whom he found not Catholic enough, opened to a Huguenot the road to the throne. This was Henry, king of Navarre, to be known in future as Henry IV of France.<sup>b</sup>

Henry IV has been compared to Francis I. His face has, in fact, the same large outlines, the same sensual mouth and brilliant eye, the same smile full of an attraction that is sometimes deceptive, the same expression of countenance whose openness is not always that of sincerity. But we must not be misled. This quick, ardent eye sometimes looks within to depths unattainable to Francis I; and above these projecting eyebrows, a sign, as with the Valois, of quickness of perception, rises instead of the low forehead of Francis I the vast brow of genius. Though Henry too pushed voluptuousness to the point of license, he nevertheless had tenderness if not constancy of heart. Though his language has too much of the unstable levity with which his Gascon race is reproached, though the confinement of his youth in the most depraved of courts and later the infinite difficulties of his position changed the cordial spontaneity of his nature, he nevertheless has a reserve of true and strong feeling that Francis I never knew. Apparently selfish, he was able in reality to associate his interests and his glory with the idea of the welfare of France and the interest of humanity. Infinitely superior in essential things to the Valois and the Guises, he is their inferior in elegance, in external dignity. Compared with the other two Henrys he has the air of a soldier of fortune before princes, but he redeems this inferiority of manners by a singular charm; he attracts the imagination and the heart by an irresistible mixture of shrewdness and good nature, of tenderness and sharp railery, of ardour and calculation, of gaiety and heroism, of authority and the



comradeship of the soldier. After two centuries and a half he is still irresistible when we see him act and hear him speak in history, when we follow him almost day by day in the truly unique monument of his prodigious correspondence. The most severe, whether historians or moralists, after many and too often deserved reproaches, almost always end, if they are French, by extending their hands to the most French of the kings of France.

We shall witness the stubborn struggle in which he fought for his throne; after the struggle we shall see what his work was as re-organiser of domestic

peace and founder of foreign politics. The immediate effects of the death of the last Valois in the rebellious capital and in the besieging army announced only too forcibly to the first of the Bourbons the immense tasks and the immense perils that confronted him. The news of the death of Henry III was spread in Paris after the morning of the 2nd of August; all doubts were dissipated when the duchesses de Nemours and de Montpensier were seen driving through the city in their coaches and crying out on all the squares: "Good news, my friends — good news! The tyrant is dead! There is no more a Henry of Valois in France!" The mother of the Guises, mad with joy and vengeance, mounted the steps of the high altar of the church of the Cordeliers to harangue the crowd. Her daughter distributed everywhere scarfs of green, the colour of hope and joy, instead of black scarfs. In a few moments the multitude passed from consternation to frenzy. There was nothing but "laughter and singing," tables set in the streets, feasts in the open air. In the evening bonfires burned on all the squares. Everywhere resounded the praises



HENRY IV

of the "new martyr" who had given his life for the good of the people. The blessed Jacques Clément was honoured in the pulpits, sung in the streets, invoked as a saint. Images of him, painted and sculptured, were set in the place of honour in private houses, in public places, in churches, and even on the altars! His old mother was brought to Paris, loaded with presents and

[1589-1590 A.D.]

shown to the people "as a wonder," who had borne in her bosom the liberator of the church.<sup>c</sup>

When the intelligence reached Rome, the rejoicings were still more revolting. Sixtus pronounced the assassin's praises in full consistory, and compared his achievement in usefulness and self-sacrifice to the incarnation and crucifixion. In Germany and England the deed was differently viewed. Elizabeth got ready troops to be landed in Normandy in aid of the new king. Lutherans and Swiss came pouring into France. Yet Henry's position was dangerous and undefined. The nobles who commanded his armies were Catholics as zealous as the enemy. Before the corpse of the late king was cold, they proposed to his successor a retraction of his Huguenot errors, and conformity to the church. "You don't know what you ask," replied Henry. "You require a change which would argue no sincerity either in one faith or the other. If you think to terrify me to so sudden an alteration, you know neither my courage nor my conscience." "Sire," cried the gallant Givry, and kneeled at his feet, "you are the true king of the brave, and none but a coward would desert you."

The others, however, hung back. The spirit and principles of the league remained unbroken. The cardinal De Bourbon was even proclaimed by Mayenne under the name of Charles X. All the victories which made Henry's name distinguished had been gained over Catholic foes. If full powers were conveyed to him, would his policy of depressing the leaguers not be continued? Henry came to an agreement. He consented to accept a conditional allegiance, binding himself to study the doctrines of the Catholic faith; to summon a states-general at Tours; to restore to the churches the goods of which they had been despoiled; and to limit the privileges of the reformers to the places in which they at present existed. These things were all to be done within six months. In reliance on these terms, he was recognised sole sovereign of France, and entitled to the obedience of all.

But Paris still resisted, and riots and massacres were continually renewed under pretence of religious fears, till Mayenne himself was glad to leave that city of contention and misrule, and take the field against the Man of Béarn, as he was insultingly called. The quality and composition of the contending forces had greatly changed. Mayenne, at the head of preponderating numbers, besieged Henry in Arques, and was only repelled by the union, which his great rival displayed, of the courage of despair and the calmness of military skill. With a mixed army of English, French, Germans, and Swiss, he found it difficult to keep them together, as his purse was low, and the diversity of tongues and nations prevented the unity of the force. To fight was the only way to combine those discordant elements; and on the 13th of March, 1590, the battle of Ivry took place.<sup>d</sup>

### *The Battle of Ivry*

The plain on which the king desired to offer battle to the leaguers extends to the west of the river Eure, between Anet and Ivry; neither bank, hedge, nor any natural obstacle intersects it, but in the middle the ground slopes almost imperceptibly, so that the royal army, protected on the one side by the village of St. André, and on the other by that of Turcanville, could not be reached by the enemy's artillery. Henry IV, having seen to the rest and refreshment of his forces, occupied this position on Tuesday, March 13th; his cavalry, which was almost entirely composed of nobles, and upon which he consequently placed most reliance as being more dependable in point of

honour, he divided into seven divisions, each of them supported by two regiments of infantry. Marshal D'Aumont, the duke de Montpensier, the grand-prior assisted by Givry, the baron de Biron, the king, the marshal De Biron, and Schomberg, commandant of the *reiters* (German troopers), were at the head of the seven divisions.

Whilst the army was taking up its position, it was joined successively by Duplessis, De Muy, La Trémouille, Humières, and Rosny, who, with two or three hundred horse, came from Poitou, Picardy, and the Île de France to take part in this much desired engagement. The last comers were nearly all Huguenots; up to now but very few had been numbered among the army.

The duke of Mayenne did not suppose that Henry wished to await him, but flattered himself he would overtake him in crossing some river in his retreat upon Lower Normandy, so hurried on his march in expectation of this, not without exposing his own forces to that disorder in which he expected to find the enemy. But on reaching the plain of Ivry, on the afternoon of March 13th, he beheld before him the royalists awaiting him, drawn up in order of battle with the advantage of position. He slackened his march to restore order to his forces, and did not come within range of the enemy until evening, when it was too late to contemplate beginning hostilities. The weather was very unfavourable, and the soldiers of the league, wearied by the cold rain they had experienced throughout their march, were forced to sleep in the open, only a few officers succeeding in pitching their tents, whilst the royalists established themselves for the night in the villages of St. André and Turcanville.

On the morning of Wednesday, March 14th, the royal army occupied the same position as on the previous day. The two armies were not ranged in order of battle until ten o'clock. D'Aubigné relates that whilst putting on his helmet Henry addressed these words to his companions-in-arms: "My friends, God is for us! Behold his enemies and our own! Behold your king! At the enemy! If your ensigns fail you, rally round my white feather. You will find it in the path that leads to victory and honour!" These words were received with a universal cry of "God save the king!" and the battle began.

The royalist artillery directed their fire full upon the leaguers, who were exposed upon the rising ground; that of the league, on the contrary, was unable to reach the royalists, sheltered as they were in their hollow. Count Egmont, stationed at the extreme right of Mayenne's army, would not wait for a third discharge from this artillery, and fell furiously upon the light cavalry of the grand-prior, which was opposite him and which he overthrew. With the same impetuosity he came up to the cannon of the king, which had cut up his company. "Friends," cried he, "I will show you how the weapons of cowards and heretics should be served," and, turning his horse at the same moment, he backed it up against the royalist guns. Not one of his warriors but wished he could boast of having done as much. They lost not only their time in this extraordinary manœuvre, but all Egmont's cavalry fell into disorder. No longer carried forward by that impetus which constituted its strength, it was attacked simultaneously by Marshal d'Aumont, the baron de Biron, the grand-prior, and Givry. Egmont and his chief officers were killed, all his followers routed and cut to pieces.

In another part of the line the duke of Brunswick, who led the leaguers' reiters, was also killed. These reiters were accustomed after each charge to pass through gaps left for the purpose between each battalion to form again behind the line; but the viscount de Tavannes, to whom Mayenne had



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intrusted the drawing up of his army in battle array, was so short-sighted that he mistook the interval that should be left between the corps, so that there was not sufficient space left for this manœuvre. Thus the reiters returning from the charge, bore down upon the duke of Mayenne's squadron of lancers, and threw it into disorder. The duke was forced to repulse them at the point of the lance, for there was no room to manœuvre his horses, and whilst striving in vain to restore order, he was violently charged by the king, who perceived his predicament; he was routed and forced to fly to the woods. Soon all the cavalry of the league shared the same disastrous fate, the battalions of infantry, hitherto covered by the cavalry, now found themselves alone in the middle of the plain, and attacked on all sides by the king's forces.

The Swiss, though as yet not routed, held up their arms in token of surrender, and were immediately given quarter by the marshal de Biron; the lansquenets, encouraged by this example, and at the same time weakened by this defection, also held up their arms, declaring that they surrendered. But Henry and his soldiers held them in particular abhorrence. Several of them had been already concerned in the treachery of Arques, where they had feigned to give themselves up; several, engaged by the Protestant princes to reinforce the royal army, had gone over to the enemy; the king declared that they had transgressed against martial honour, and that he would give them no quarter. The massacre lasted a whole hour, but whilst they were being killed without resistance, the king cried, "Spare the French and put the foreigners to the sword!" And, as a fact, after the *mêlée* no more French were killed.

The fugitives of the league sought refuge, some in Chartres, some at Mantes. The bridge of Ivry, by which they made their escape, gave way, and the king's cavalry, in order to pursue them, was forced to go by a longer route and to cross the Eure at Anet. The losses of the army of the league were nevertheless very considerable. Davila<sup>f</sup> reckons them at six thousand men; D'Aubigné,<sup>g</sup> calculating the armies as being weaker by one-half than his estimate, also reduces the loss of the leaguers by the same amount, namely one-half. Since the beginning of the civil wars no such brilliant victory had yet been won. Henry IV, victor at Coutras, victor at Arques, victor at Ivry, seemed to surpass his rivals both in military ability and good fortune, and the people rejoiced as much in his good luck as in his skill.<sup>g</sup>

After this a new power displayed itself, which had never played a part in the quarrels of a nation before. It was the brilliancy of the sayings of the new king, which spread all through France, the land of all others in Europe where a brilliant saying has most weight. After the combat of Arques, where he had been foremost in the attack, he wrote to his friend the duke de Crillon, "Hang yourself, brave Crillon; we have fought at Arques, and you weren't there." At supper, on the night before the battle of Ivry, he had spoken harshly to an old German of the name of Schomberg; and while he was marshalling the troops before the charge, he stopped his horse. "Colonel," he said, "we have work before us, and it may chance I don't survive; but I must not carry with me the honour of a gentleman like you. I beg your pardon for what I said last night, and declare you a brave and honourable man." He embraced the colonel. "Ah! sire," said the German in his broken language, "you kill me with your words, for now there is nothing for it but to die in your defence." Schomberg did so. He rode up to the rescue of the king in the hottest of the fight, and fell before Henry's eyes.<sup>d</sup>

*The Duke of Parma and the Spaniards*

The change that came over public opinion after the battle of Ivry raised the hopes of the royalists. Henry was no longer a contestant but the logical master of the realm. This feeling of the people caused Henry to move but half-heartedly against Paris where the strength of his opponents lay. He besieged the city, but he did not forget that the inhabitants were his own people. He permitted Mayenne to send out the useless people, said to number some six thousand.<sup>a</sup> Henry fed them, and soothed their fears. Some peasants were brought before him for having introduced provisions into the beleaguered town, and expected to be hanged for aiding the rebels. He gave them all the money he had in his purse. "The Man of Béarn is poor," he said; "if he were richer, he would give you more."

Compared to these actions and words of Henry, the conduct of his opponents was not only unchivalrous but unpopular. Divisions raged high among the leaders of the league. Mayenne wished to be king; the duke of Lorraine wished his son to be king; and when Henry of Guise, the son of Balafre, escaped from his prison of Tours, and joined the garrison of Paris, he also wished to be king. The infanta, or daughter of Spain, wished to be queen; and it did not need half the quickness which is always found in the French to perceive that, compared with any or all of his competitors, the man of the white plume and the generous spirit was the fittest occupant of the throne.

But a rigorous pontiff filled the Roman chair. Sixtus V would hear of no accommodation with a heretic, and Henry would hear of no recantation when his motives might be suspected. "Master first, disciple afterwards," was his motto, and the war went on. The Sixteen, as the sections of Paris called themselves, were in the pay of Spain. Availing themselves of the absence of Mayenne, they encouraged the brutal populace to break out into a riot; they tore the more moderate of the judges from their seats and hung them, with their president, above the doorway of the court. Mayenne came back. Great was his fear of Henry, but greater his wrath against the Sixteen. He hanged four of them from lamp-posts in the street, and restored the ordinary municipal officers to their authority. But regular authority dislikes rebellion, and the now pacified city looked kindly on the legitimate heir.

Other opponents were driven over to his side by the injudicious aid his enemies received. Alessandro Farnese, duke of Parma, was the most famous general of the time, and had been chosen to bring the legions of Spain and the chains of the Inquisition over to France in the year of the Armada, 1588. He was now selected to head the same legions to support the fantastic claim of his master's daughter. Henry was driven to extremities, for Alessandro was unluckily the most cautious of commanders, and always refused a battle. The daring gallantry of the royalists, with Henry at their head, fell back like sparkles of foam before the imperturbable solidity of the Spanish lines. They would not fight—they would not retreat—they solemnly performed the work assigned to them, the protection of a border or the relief of a town, but they would do nothing more. Alessandro of Parma had nothing of the hero in him except his courage, and trusted nothing to chance. Against policy like this the Man of Béarn had no defence. His allies were not united in their desires. The English wished to drive the Spaniards from the shores of Brittany and Normandy, where they would have been dangerous neighbours to Elizabeth; Henry wished to drive them from the middle of France and send them to the shore, where they could do least harm to himself. He

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could raise no taxes by the legal machinery of parliament and council, and would not lay hard contributions on the districts he held.

He was the poorest of gentlemen, this most lovable of kings; and hints are given that his majesty's apparel was not altogether free from darns, or his boots from holes in the leather. Nothing kept its gloss but the plume of white feathers which swayed above his head, and his bright sword and imperturbable good-humour.<sup>d</sup> But even this left him as he faced the almost certain defeat which a battle would mean. In August he wrote to Gabrielle d'Estrées: "The issue is with God. If I lose the battle thou wilt never see me again, for I am not one to flee nor to retreat."

But Parma's masterly generalship was more than a match for the king's chivalric courage. He relieved Paris after it had been reduced to the most awful straits. Two hundred thousand are said to have perished of hunger and disease. There were rumours that mothers devoured their own children; the Protestants had made merry over the fact that the one cheap thing in Paris was sermons; but such fanaticism was yet bound to conquer the king. The relief of Paris was a victory for the Spanish party which was growing stronger in the capital. In 1592 the same story was repeated at Rouen. Once more Parma outmanœuvred the king. But a wound in the hand received before Caudebec was destined to prove fatal to the great Italian, and the conqueror of Antwerp withdrew to the Netherlands, and, then turning back, died in the harness at Arras, December 3rd, 1592.

Henry's fortunes revived with the fall of this redoubtable adversary.<sup>a</sup> He gathered all his forces for a last attempt upon Paris, and his enemies as usual played into his hands. Philip of Spain, who had united all classes and creeds of Englishmen in favour of Elizabeth by his insolent Armada, now was the creator of French union by his domineering conduct in France. Mayenne summoned a states-general at his request, and Philip there in no courteous terms stated his royal will; it was very short and very decisive — they were to accept his daughter as queen, that was all. A compromise was attempted; they would declare the duke of Guise king, and he should marry the infanta. Philip refused; his daughter should be queen in her own right, and then would marry Guise. Mayenne, who saw, whether it was king or queen, his pretensions were at an end, procured a resolution of the parliament of Paris, that "any sentence, decree, or declaration contrary to the Salic law, should be void and of non-effect." Whatever strengthened the Salic law and the direct succession was a vote on the side of Henry of Navarre.<sup>d</sup>

### *Henry IV and the League*

The league was now divided into two parties, the Spanish League and the French League, who conspired incessantly, sometimes together, sometimes against one another, to promote their personal interests. But meantime the great national instinct was gradually winning France over to Henry's cause; men's eyes turned to him as the only one able to put an end to war at home and abroad, and to bring about national unity. The burning question of the day was, would Henry turn Catholic? Rumours were rife; the question was openly discussed. Such being the case, it was only to be expected that Henry would boldly face the question himself and lose no time in finding an answer.

And this he found most puzzling, notwithstanding his broad and independent mind. It is M. Guizot's opinion that Henry's religious creed was not based on mature or deep conviction, but was rather the result of first





[1593-1594 A.D.]

judgment on it. It presents, both as regards things and men, such striking contrasts, it has passed through so many different phases, and has included under one name so many motives entirely opposed to one another, that it would be impossible to criticise it from only one point of view. And yet what contrary opinions it has elicited! Some have praised, while others have condemned everything connected with it. It has been handed down as entirely faultless or utterly blameworthy.

But through all this confusion one thing is clear, and sums up the whole matter—namely, that the conversion of Henry IV was the triumph of the league and the ruin of its members. The law of France was not entirely on the side of Henry IV nor wholly in favour of his adversaries; it was divided. The accession of the king of Navarre placed in opposition two principles which had hitherto been united: hereditary monarchy, whose claims this prince represented; and the national religion, whose doctrines he did not profess. Can it be denied, unless we bring to bear on the examination of this period ideas which belong to a different age, that the union of monarchy and Catholicism had become a part of the constitution just as monarchy itself had? And had not the country some right to insist on the maintenance of this union, which was one of the first laws imposed on the sovereign? One thing remains certain, and that is that after the league this union was re-established, and peace along with it; that Henry IV, when he became king, recognised its existence by promising to be instructed in the faith; that, with rare exceptions, the best of the royalists, the bishops, those hundred bishops who so firmly supported him, the chief generals of his army, and his parliaments, continually referred to and called upon the king to remember this promise, either in the hope of attracting to him the members of the league, or of inducing him to embrace their religion; in short that France, exhausted, a prey to the horrors of civil war, and in danger of the Spanish yoke, did not rally round Henry IV till after his abjuration, but, that abjuration once pronounced, she unanimously declared in his favour.

Who can be astonished at this? Who could fail to understand that a nation accustomed to mingle its faith and its history, finding amongst its Catholic princes its greatest kings, and knowing nothing of the Protestants but the unhappy dissensions which were the result of persecution on the one side and revenge on the other, must hate the idea of seeing on the throne, which was the centre to which its dearest traditions clung, a representative of that belief which was destroying those very traditions? Was the promise of Henry IV to respect the Catholic religion a sufficient guarantee at that time, when party strife ran so high, when political law was on all sides confounded with religious law and had everywhere followed the vicissitudes of the latter, and when an instance of a king professing a different religion from that of the nation he ruled was unknown? And, as if to emphasise the apprehensions of the leaguers, did not England furnish them with an example of a nation which had changed its religion three times to suit the pleasure of three successive monarchs? This resolution to maintain the Catholic religion on the throne of St. Louis, regardless of all political considerations, was not the predominant idea of one party only: the whole of France was strongly imbued with it.

The league was responsible for more than this. How can we forget that besides inculcating the principle which it succeeded in rendering triumphant, the league was the moving spirit of many excesses, that it abolished beliefs, or used them as means to an end, as best suited its purpose; that it was responsible for the frenzied actions of the famous faction known as the Sixteen, of

which the very name is sufficient; that it appealed in turn to revolutionary and tyrannical theories; that it menaced the monarchy even before it had been threatened by the reform party; and that the result of this violent party feeling was to place before the nation the alternative that France must either have a Catholic king who was not legitimate or a legitimate king who was not a Catholic?

Of course the union of the two principles which constituted the monarchy found partisans and opponents in both camps. In both also there were many of those turbulent spirits who war against peace, who elevate hatred into a duty, and encourage strife on principle. Some of these exaggerated the rights of the king, others those of the pope; though they compromised the former by their violence, and disavowed their support of the latter by rising in rebellion when the king and the pope were reconciled to each other. In both camps also, wise and moderate men with a true understanding of religion and of France were advancing by different paths towards the same goal. Jeanmin, Villeroy, and perhaps at certain moments the duke of Mayenne, were approaching the same goal as Luxemburg, the duke of Nevers, the bishop of Paris and the archbishop of Bourges. But the royalists had the good fortune to possess as their leader a prince who, personifying one of the two great principles, was soon to submit to the other; whilst the members of the league, divided against themselves, having no recognised head, in revolt against monarchic authority and yet having no special right to be considered as the representatives of the Catholic religion, lost ground by the want of consistency in their claims.<sup>h</sup>

The extravagant enthusiasm of the league had evaporated; in part it had been reasoned down by the mild and rational philosophy promulgated in the *Essays* of Montaigne,<sup>i</sup> and in part scouted by the poignant ridicule of the *Satire Ménippée*.<sup>j</sup> These are the two chief literary works of the epoch — the former sufficiently known to every reader, the latter one of the finest specimens of political satire to be found in any language. It proved to the leaguers what Hudibras proved to the English Puritans — it exposed the absurdity and hidden selfishness of fanaticism, and showed that ridicule might be made a more effectual weapon than the sword.<sup>k</sup>

Henry, in his negotiations with the clergy, had ignored the ultramontanes, who leaned on Spain, but dealt with the patriotic national clergy. Whether Henry said that Paris was worth a mass or not, — and the saying was in accord with his wit and his sincerity, — he had left off conversion until he could deal with effect directly with the people, and not play over into the hands of the high Catholic party. France was ready for the act. By the end of 1593 the most of the kingdom had declared for Henry; the centres which had been in opposition, Meaux, Orleans, and Bourges, and finally Lyons gave in, and in the winter of 1594 he was crowned at Chartres, — Rheims not having yet declared for him. The papal absolution had not yet arrived and the higher clergy was still mostly hostile. But in March Paris opened its gates and Henry went to mass at Nôtre Dame amid the riotous joy of the citizens.<sup>a</sup>

### *Opposition of the Pope and Philip II*

The only two powers who now delayed the recognition of the king were the pope and Philip. The Catholic Henry availed himself of the Pragmatic which had conveyed the patronage of abbeys and bishoprics to the crown, and turned the tables on the holy father by employing the honours of the



[1594-1598 A.D.]

church in pacifying the state. If a zealous leaguer still held back, hesitating to believe the sincerity of the conversion, he was convinced of the Catholicism of the most Christian king by the bestowal of the revenues of a vacant stall or rich deanery. Villars Brancas, a zealous papist and gallant soldier, who was governor of Rouen against the king, never gave credit to Henry's attachment to the church till he was presented with two or three abbacies for his own enjoyment. Rouen then opened its gates, and the military abbot did suit and service to his orthodox and discriminating patron. All the leaders were softened by the same arts, and at last Guise and Montmorency were admitted into favour. Guise, a disappointed opponent, was made governor of Provence; and Montmorency, a discontented supporter, received the constable's staff. Hatred, doubt, and bitterness of course lay for a long time in the hearts of the fanatical and ambitious. Clement VIII, the fifth pope who within four years had sat on the Roman throne, had not pronounced the absolution of Henry's previous unbelief, and a youth, a pupil of the Jesuits, imbued with their principles, if not incited in this instance by their advice, attempted the murder of the king. His knife slipped, and only inflicted a trifling wound; but the whole nation was awake to the indignity of the action. The university and parliament pronounced against the Jesuits, and they were ordered from the soil of France. Henry confessed the step was necessary, but it was not legal, and in a few years he revoked the sentence of banishment, and allowed the society to return.<sup>d</sup>

When the papal absolution came it was the sign of the end of the league, which collapsed when Mayenne made his peace early in 1596. The only revenge which the king allowed himself, Sully<sup>e</sup> tells us, was to lead him on a hot, tiresome tramp around the park of Soissons, which the gouty Mayenne has to acquiesce in without grimace.<sup>a</sup>

Meantime Philip II refused to recognise the king of France under any other title than that of Prince of Béarn, and in other ways also showed his hostility. So in January, 1595, Henry formally declared war against Spain and a conflict began which lasted for three years. It is not worth while to follow step by step this monotonous conflict, pregnant with facts which had their importance for contemporaries but which are not worthy of an historical resurrection.<sup>f</sup> The succession of minor battles and sieges culminated finally in the surrender of Amiens in September, 1597; and on May 2nd, 1598, the Peace of Vervins was signed. Kitchin<sup>m</sup> remarks, with some acumen, that with this event "the aged sixteenth century seems to sink to rest." The great series of religious wars which had begun with the Reformation came to an end, heralded by the Edict of Toleration, in which all parties, weary of the conflict, were content to overlook the religious disputes that were the nominal source of controversy. All reference to exact matters of faith was avoided. Nor was this so paradoxical as might appear, for the real sources of conflict often lay in regions far severed from the domain of religion. A month previous to the signing of the treaty of peace Henry had signed and published the Edict of Nantes, defined by M. Guizot<sup>l</sup> as his treaty of peace with the Protestant malcontents. Hitherto there had never been anything but truces or armed neutrality.<sup>a</sup>

#### THE EDICT OF NANTES

The Edict of Nantes, in common with almost all measures which have been taken to redress grievances in times of disturbance, consisted of two distinct parts: one of temporary value and intended to meet the special

circumstances of the case, the other calculated to endure, and dictated by fixed principles. Much has been said about the excessive privileges granted by the Edict of Nantes to the Huguenots. This special organisation, giving them quite a peculiar position in the state; those two hundred towns, where they were to be secure from interference, and which were placed for a time in their hands; those places, strong enough to endure a siege and against which the whole of the royal forces were no more than adequate, given up to them — these, as Sully declared, were concessions quite incompatible with the security of any government, and when Cardinal Richelieu, after two civil wars, cut down these privileges without interfering with the Protestant religion, it became evident that they were not at all necessary to insure liberty of conscience.

The measures which did insure that liberty formed the very basis of the Edict of Nantes. They secured to the Huguenots the free practice of the reformed religion throughout the greater part of the kingdom, excepting certain towns belonging to the league, where the Calvinists had realised that it was better not to settle. They provided that Protestants should enjoy the same civil rights as Catholics, and the very law for depriving people of hereditary rights on account of religious opinions, which was to be formally promulgated in England against the Catholics, was as formally suspended in France with regard to the Protestants. Lastly, not to mention the less important clauses, a chamber was created in parliament called the chamber of the Edict, an allowance was granted to the Protestants for their ministers and their schools, and they were admitted to the dignities and offices of state.

The true spirit of the Edict of Nantes, temporarily obscured by the granting of the concessions which it enumerated, is contained in these latter clauses which granted toleration to the Protestants while depriving the Reformation movement of any political character whatever. At a time when sovereigns and people were in the habit of shielding their ambition and their crimes under the name of religion, Henry IV consistently tried, in his relations with foreign powers, as well as in his own kingdom, to separate the two orders, and to maintain civil unity in the midst of religious dissension; civil unity being in his eyes not only a pledge of peace, but the presage of a still higher unity.

Besides this tolerance granted to the Protestants, there is also an evident desire to encourage where it was possible a reconciliation with the church, and to put an end simultaneously to persecutions and to religious differences. He had seen that persecution, far from destroying opposition, only tended to excite it, and that the persecution itself, by a sort of reaction, tended to become more virulent. He expressed this with striking eloquence in the parliament of Paris, saying: "After St. Bartholomew four of us who were playing with dice at a table saw drops of blood appear there, and finding that after they had been wiped away twice they returned a third time I said I would play no more; and that it was a bad omen against those who had shed it; M. de Guise was one of the party." He had said elsewhere: "It is a clear proof of unreasonable excitement to begin the work of conversion by subversion, of instruction by destruction, by extermination, and by war, when one ought to begin by fraternity, admonition, and gentleness." Whilst granting these liberties to the Protestants, whilst further developing the significance of the Edict by ordering it to be enforced in Béarn and in the places where Catholics were in a minority, whilst he instanced his own example in order to protect the latter from the harshness of Protestant rulers, Henry turned his attention

[1597-1598 A.D.]

to the church ; strove to satisfy her claims, to secure her liberty, and by so doing to insure her ascendancy. "I know," he said to the clerical deputies in 1598, "that religion and justice are the pillars and the foundation of this kingdom, whose preservation depends on justice and piety ; and where these do not exist I wish to establish them, but little by little, as I wish to do everything. I will, God helping me, act in such a way that the church will be in as good a state as she was a hundred years ago. I hope to satisfy you and my own conscience."<sup>h</sup>

## REORGANISATION OF FRANCE WITH THE AID OF SULLY

In 1598 Henry IV had driven out the foreigner, united Catholic and Protestant, and finally established peace in his domestic and in his foreign relations. It was now necessary to heal France from all the blows she had received. "I have hardly a horse on which I could fight," wrote Henry in 1596 : "my doublets have holes at the elbows and my pot is often empty." The country was in a like condition. A contemporary estimated that, since 1580, 800,000 persons had perished by wars and massacres, that nine cities had been razed, 250 villages burned, 128,000 houses destroyed. And since the period preceding the league, what fresh ruin ! Workmen without work, commerce interrupted, agriculture ruined, brigandage everywhere — that was the condition from which Henry must raise France. The nobility had proposed to him a means to get out of this distress ; they offered him all the money necessary for the government and the maintenance of the army on the sole condition of a decree "that those who held governments by appointment might hold them as their property upon acknowledging them to be from the crown by simple liege homage, a thing that was formerly practised." This thing formerly practised was precisely what royalty had incessantly been destroying piece by piece for two centuries, and Henry IV was less disposed than any of his predecessors to restore feudalism. On the contrary, it was by withdrawing France from the hands of these "tyrants" in order to govern it himself that he undertook to regenerate it.

Henry had already found the man who was to aid him in this work which was more difficult than that of the battle-field ; a man of strong good sense, intrepid heart, and withal a wise mind, the Protestant Maximilian de Béthune, later duke of Sully. Born at the château of Rosny, near Mantes, in 1560, he was seven years younger than the king. At the time of St. Bartholomew he was studying at Paris. He attached himself to the king of Navarre and followed him in all his adventures and his battles, showing himself as brave as any. He was often wounded, for example at Ivry, whence he was borne apparently dying, when the king met him and "embraced him with both arms" as "a brave soldier, a true French knight." Not a knight, however, after the paladins of romance, for though he attended well to the affairs of his master, he did not forget his own. He married a rich heiress, a Courtenay. He did not disdain the profits of war, the pillage of cities or the ransom of captives, nor even the profits of business ; he bought horses at a low price in Germany and sold them in Gascony for a high price. Increasing his fortune in every honest fashion, he established order in his own house as he did in the public finances. But, devoted to the prince and to the state, this good manager cut down his forest of Rosny to take the proceeds to Henry when the latter was at the end of his resources ; and the zealous Protestant advised the king to end the war by becoming a Catholic. Sully was neither a Colbert nor a Bayard ; he had, however, some of the qualities of both.<sup>n</sup>



Sully introduced into the government the energy of a soldier, and into the prince's household the same economy and punctuality as prevailed in his own. Having become superintendent of finances, and having assumed the supreme direction of this department, he laid the traditions of method and of that perfect efficiency which cannot exist without it. He performed a very important, very difficult, but not very brilliant work. He formed men and trained them so that they could satisfactorily carry on existing institutions. By his unfailing watchfulness, he succeeded in having the accounts systematically kept, and rendered peculation almost impossible. As most of the hereditary financial offices had gradually acquired an independence which had been fostered by the civil wars, Sully tried to reunite, as far as they were concerned, the ancient ties of centralisation, so as to secure the influence of the supreme power over them. He also wished to have the census taken regularly, and to insure an accurate statement of the budget being drawn up. He wanted to find out the exact value of the taxes, and to institute a regular system for their collection; finally he took advantage of the low rate of interest to reduce the pensions paid by the state.

This change, and a better system for farming the taxes and of securing their returns enabled him to leave the ministry, having made up the deficit, and leaving several millions of savings in the cellars of the Bastille. This accumulation was very valuable at a period when there was hardly any better way of providing for future emergencies than by laying by money. Sully was the first superintendent of finance whose memory was not execrated, and even remained popular. Let us hear what is said of him in an anonymous eulogium, written probably after his death, and which, in spite of its somewhat obscure language, contains a true appreciation of his administrative powers: "He only, up to the present time, has discovered the connection between two things in the government of states, which our forefathers were not able to unite, and which they even considered incompatible: the amassing of wealth in the royal coffers, side by side with the diminution of taxation and increasing prosperity of the people: the increase of the king's wealth simultaneously with that of private individuals."

Sully called agriculture and cattle breeding the two feeders of France; he made a point of encouraging agriculture, the interests of which had already attracted attention in the sixteenth century, and he diminished the rates though he could not succeed in compelling the nobles to pay them in those provinces where the assemblies claimed the right of levying them. As for commerce and manufactures, he did not yet recognise their importance. He looked upon them simply as ministers to luxury, just as he saw nothing in luxury but the extravagance of individuals and the corruption of the public mind. Fortunately Henry IV, who did not share these very military prejudices, instituted an elective chamber of commerce, granted many facilities to manufactures which were taking root or seemed likely to take root in France, protecting them by fixing tariffs, commanded the most competent men to draw up memoranda on the economic interests of the country, created or rather tried to create an India company, and assumed the exclusive right of legislating in commercial matters—a right which had hitherto been claimed by the representatives of the provincial governments.

We owe to Sully the institution of two important administrations, one for public works by which many valuable enterprises were at once undertaken, such as the draining of marshy places, and the construction of canals; the other in connection with the mines, the working of which, having been granted as a monopoly to companies by Charles VI and Louis XI, had not

[1597-1599 A.D.]

produced very good results. His reforms extended to almost every service. In the army responsibility and discipline were re-established, the stock of ammunition, artillery, etc., was augmented, the condition of the troops ameliorated, and provision made for the wounded and for veterans. The fifteen years of this ministry were too short, though much was effected during their course; Sully could not carry out all the plans he had conceived. The most important of these were to accustom the nobility to take part in business, to form a training school for statesmen in connection with the king's council, which would have insured the maintenance of traditions and made the carrying out of reforms much easier. He retired "satisfied," he said in his letter to Marie de' Medici, "with having by his industry and ingenuity succeeded in reducing to order the most terrible confusion which had ever existed in the finances of France."<sup>b</sup>

## AMOURS AND SECOND MARRIAGE OF HENRY IV

Let us inspect another phase of the character of Henry of Navarre. Let us turn from the warrior and the reformer to the man and the lover.

Who has not heard of the fair Gabrielle? Henry saw her first at the château of her father, during one of his campaigns, and became enamoured. He frequently stole from his camp in disguise, and crossed the enemy's lines to visit her. A hundred stories are told of the romantic adventures he underwent whilst wooing. He won, and was happy. Never had illegitimate love a more flattering excuse. Compelled to espouse, when a boy, the abandoned sister of Charles IX, his wedding feast had been stained with the blood of his friend, and the dissolute Marguerite led a life such as might be expected from such a race and such espousals. Henry consoled himself in the affections of Gabrielle d'Estrées, whose society he loved, and to whom he was constant. She had borne him several children.

And now the wish of Henry was to obtain a divorce from his queen, and to sanction his connection with Gabrielle by a marriage. So serious and sincere was he in this that all his courtiers applauded the determination. Sully alone looked cold. Henry consulted him, and besought his advice; and the minister represented to him all the dangers of a disputed succession, of the pretensions of the young duke de Vendôme, who could not be legitimated, and of all the obvious objections to such a step. Henry was grieved: he saw the justice of the counsel, and remained irresolute. Gabrielle broke forth in invectives against Sully, and at length demanded his dismissal. Henry brought his minister by the hand into the apartment of Gabrielle, and entreated her to be reconciled to him. She persisted in her pride and in bursts of resentment. "Know, madam," said Henry, harsh for the first time, "that a minister like him must be dearer to me than even such a mistress as you." Gabrielle henceforth gave herself up to grief. The king was true and kind as ever. In the spring of the year 1599 she was advanced in a state of pregnancy. Henry, about to go through the pious ceremonies of Easter at Fontainebleau, felt it decorous to separate for a few days from his mistress. She retired to Paris, weighed down by despondency and the blackest presentiment. Astrological predictions were then the mode; and some imprudent or malevolent information of this kind tormented her: "We shall never meet again," were her words on parting from the king, and they proved true. She was taken with convulsions, delivered of a dead child, and expired in a few hours. Henry had mounted on horseback at the first news, and was halfway on the road to Paris, when he was told it was too late. The

brave Henry could not support this blow: he wellnigh fainted, and was obliged to be conveyed back to Fontainebleau. There he retired, and shut himself up to indulge his grief. Sully alone was able to console him, and rouse him, after a time, to the affairs of the kingdom.

It were to be wished, for Henry's character, that his amours had ended here. His intention was to marry; and the niece of the grand duke of Tuscany, Marie de' Medici, had already been mentioned. But the divorce had not yet been expedited by the pope; and the inflammable temperament of Henry took fire in the meantime with a new passion. Mademoiselle d'Entragues was the object, a being lovely indeed, but wanting alike the modesty, the sweet temper, and unambitious conduct of Gabrielle. She long enticed and tormented the monarch. Her father, the count d'Entragues, affected resentment and vigilance; and Henry had recourse to such disguise as he had formerly used to gain admission to Gabrielle d'Estrées. Henrietta d'Entragues had not the same taste: she is said to have so disliked the monarch in the humble dress of a gardener that she turned him from her presence. At length she obtained from Henry a promise of marriage in case that a son was born to her within the year, and Mademoiselle d'Entragues became marquise de Verneuil. Henry showed the contract to Sully, who, without other comment, tore and cast it under his feet. The king felt bound to write another; but in consequence of a stroke of lightning which fell on the house where the marquise resided, it ultimately became void. The fright which the lightning occasioned had the effect of destroying the hopes she had entertained of fulfilling her part of the contract, a stipulation indecent and unworthy of the monarch. Henry soon after was roused to a fuller sense of his dignity and of the nation's weal. A divorce was by this time obtained; and he espoused Marie de' Medici in the course of the year 1600.<sup>k</sup>

The duke de Bellegarde, a successful rival to Henry IV in the affections of several of his mistresses, had been sent by him to Florence to fetch the bride. The Tuscan princess, already twenty-seven years of age, had shown some inclination for gallantry. Paul Giordano Orsini, her first cousin, one of the nobles who accompanied her to the French court, was said to have inspired her with love. Concino Concini, grandson of a secretary of Cosmo, a young man of wit and pleasing appearance, but who had ruined himself by his licentiousness, came also in her train in search of fortune in France. With her also went Leonora Dori, a woman of low origin, remarkable for her slenderness and pallor, the daughter of a carpenter and of a woman of ill-fame. This woman, in attendance on the princess from her earliest infancy, had obtained a complete ascendancy over her. Leonora had profited by her patronage to induce the noble Florentine house of Galigai to bestow their name upon her. Marie gave her the post of tire-woman, destined by the king for a French lady. The new queen left Florence on October 13th, took ship at Leghorn for Marseilles, and proceeded from one festivity to another, until she arrived at Lyons on December 2nd.

It was not until December 9th that Henry, posting to Lyons, saw his queen for the first time. He was not greatly pleased with her stout figure, her round face, and her large, staring eyes. The queen had nothing endearing in her manner, nor was she of a cheerful disposition; she had no liking for the king, and did not pretend to show any; she did not propose to amuse or please him; her temper was peevish and obstinate. She had been brought up entirely according to the Spanish custom, and in the husband who appeared to her old and disagreeable she still suspected the relapsed heretic. Henry was detained at Lyons by the negotiations with Savoy, but the signing



[1598-1601 A.D.]

of the treaty of peace taking place on January 17th, 1601, he posted to Paris the next day, to be near the marquise de Verneuil, who pleased him far more than the queen, possessing precisely the charms, vivacity, and gaiety that the latter lacked.

After the departure of the king, Marie de' Medici and all her court set forth for the capital; travelling by post, she only reached Paris on February 9th. The princess of Conti (Louise Marguerite de Lorraine) relates that the day of the queen's arrival in Paris, "the king bade the duchess de Nemours (the first lady of the household) fetch the marquise de Verneuil, and present her to the queen. The aged princess attempted to excuse herself from so doing, saying she would lose all credit with her mistress; but the king insisted, and ordered her to do his bidding, and that somewhat rudely, which was contrary to his usual courteous habits. She therefore conducted the marchioness to the queen who, greatly astonished at the sight of her, received her with much coldness; but the marquise de Verneuil, very bold naturally, talked so much and so familiarly that she finally succeeded in forcing the queen to discourse with her.

"The king, tired of going two or three times a day to see the marquise, on perceiving that the queen had softened towards her, desired her to come to the Louvre where he had an apartment made ready for her. This, after some time, roused the jealousy of the queen, who had been entertained by several people with sayings of the marquise de Verneuil; who in truth, spoke of her freely enough and with little respect. The queen and the marquise were both enceinte, and the king seemed as if he did not know how to be on good terms with them both. He showed that respect to the queen to which her rank entitled her, but he was happier in the society of the marquise. Everyone wishing to please the king visited the latter, which was taken very ill by the queen. They dwelt so near one another as to be unable to avoid each other, and continual misunderstandings were the result." Sully was more than once called in to quiet their domestic broils. The birth of a son, afterwards Louis XIII, occurred at Fontainebleau in 1601 to allay the fears of a disputed succession, and also contributed to bind Henry to his queen.<sup>k</sup>

The king, though so well-meaning, never thought of cutting down the expenses of the court. Yet the desolation of the country, due to the civil wars, was appalling. The highways were lost in weeds and brambles, and wolves preyed on the country in great bands. Taxes could not be raised, so that finally the king ceased trying to collect arrears and in 1598 he gave up the taxes of 1594 and 1595.<sup>a</sup>



MARIE DE' MEDICI  
(1573-1642)

## INTRIGUES OF DE BIRON

Another obstacle to the security and happiness of the monarch lay in the intrigues of his *grandeess*. The people gave him little trouble; the turbulence of the civic class was over: they were ashamed, as well as weary, of the long disorders of the league, and in no way sought to renew them. Satisfied by the mild and economical management of the revenue by Sully, they applauded so beneficent a power, and forgot, or regretted not, that it was absolute. None clamoured for the *states-general*; they made loyalty a part of their religion; and abandoned all doctrines of liberty and republicanism to the hated Huguenots, who professed them.

The nobles, who were the contemporaries of Henry, could not find the same repose: they had lived a life of turbulence and war; they had been bred in intrigue, and in all the excitement of contending parties; peace could not content them. Then the life of a camp had placed them on a kind of equality with their monarch, who had terminated the war by yielding up the administering authority in the provinces to the several *grandeess*. He had compounded with them, as much as conquered them; and the Protestant nobles had taken a position of equal independence with that of the Catholics. The high aristocracy, in fact, that Francis I so prudently kept down, had reconstituted itself in the subsequent reigns. They now made a covert, but not less serious proposal to Henry, choosing the duke de Montpensier, a stripling and a prince of the blood, to be their spokesman on the occasion. This demand was no less than to re-establish the old feudal system, by allowing the present governors of provinces to hold them in fief, and transmit them to their descendants. Henry was not a monarch to tolerate such a demand; and his angry reply struck young Montpensier with terror. The *grandeess* determined to win by union and force what gentler means could not obtain. They conspired, leagued with Spain, with the duke of Savoy, and even with England, endeavouring to excite a malcontent party. Protestants as well as Catholics joined in this: the duke de Bouillon at the head of one, the proud *Épernon* representing the other. Such, however, was Henry's power, and such his character for courage as well as promptitude, such, too, was the vigilance of Sully, that this intrigue could never be matured into a conspiracy. Henry's frank and amiable temper won over many; and he never proceeded to punish the guilty until he had used every gentle means to admonish, to pardon, and recall them to duty.

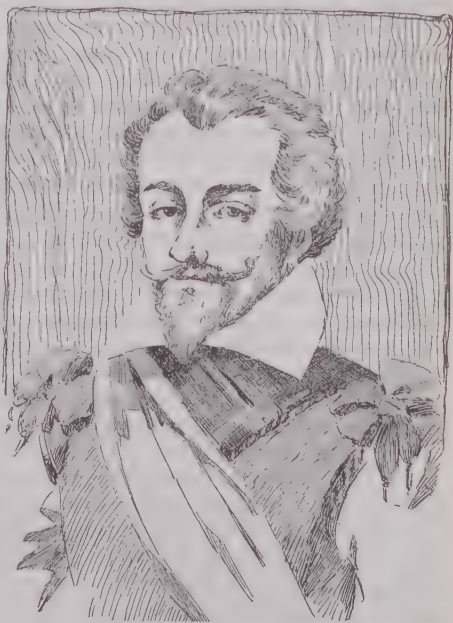
The marshal De Biron was almost the only one of his nobles who still persisted in treasonable views. The king, on one occasion, had summoned him, charged him seriously, but not severely, with the crime, and showed him that he was well informed of his intrigues. Biron fell on his knees, confessed his weakness, but vowed that he would never more forsake the path of loyalty. Henry pardoned and embraced him. But Biron, vain and fickle, jealous even of his monarch's fame, was weak enough to listen once more to the insinuations of Spain. The duke of Savoy, on a visit to Henry, manifested every sign of admiration for the king, while he occupied himself in corrupting the French courtiers, and in fomenting a party. He was ably seconded by the Spanish count de Fuentes. Biron was fascinated by the mighty promises of these intriguers: he was to have Burgundy as an independent state. The constable de Bourbon himself never received more magnificent promises. Nothing more displays the baseness and declension of the Spanish monarchy than its recourse to such weak and dishonourable machinations.

[1602 A.D.]

Henry soon after, wearied with the bad faith and subtle subterfuges of the duke of Savoy, made war on that prince. Biron was intrusted with the command, and in conducting it his treachery became manifest. One day, when Sully rode with him to view the siege of a fortress belonging to the duke, the former could perceive that the fire from the ramparts slackened, and was directed from them. Sully took the same ride alone on the following day, and was received with a heavy and well-directed cannonade. It afterwards appeared that the marshal had intended to entice the king into an ambuscade, where the fire of the enemy would have certainly proved fatal. The duke of Savoy, worsted by the arms of Henry, made his submission, and obtained peace. Biron continued his intrigues with Spain, in concert with the duke de Bouillon, with the count d'Auvergne, bastard of Charles IX, and probably with Épernon, and the whole body of the malcontent noblesse.

The king was perfectly aware of these intrigues. Biron was betrayed by his chief counsellor and instigator, a person named Lafin. Henry saw Biron once talking with Lafin, and warned him, saying, "I know that man; he will lead you into evil." But the marshal was deaf to advice. Henry did not at first place much credit in the revelations of Lafin, who accused Sully himself among others of the court. But the informer produced written documents, proofs of Biron's connection with Spain. Biron was summoned to court. It was the king's intention to reproach his ancient comrade, to endeavour to awaken his loyalty, shame him into a confession of his treason, and again pardon him. Sully received instructions to pursue the same conduct, and to try

every means short of letting the marshal know that Lafin had confessed all. Biron and the count d'Auvergne came to court boldly. Henry drew the traitor apart, led him into familiar conversation, showed himself open, frank, forgiving, yet suspicious. Biron betrayed no misgivings, no repentance, no wish to remove his sovereign's distrust. At last, as they arrived before an equestrian statue of Henry lately erected, which was ornamented with trophies, the king asked, "What would the king of Spain say were he to see me thus?" Biron, who felt that this was meant to try him, insolently replied, "Sire, he scarcely fears you." Then correcting himself, he stammered out, "I mean in that statue, not in this, your person." Henry smiled sorrowfully, and gave up his merciful and friendly purpose. Sully, on his side, exerted himself to the same effect, but in vain. Biron was hardened. It was only then that Henry gave orders for his arrest, and that of the count d'Auvergne. As they left the king's chamber, their swords were demanded. They were conveyed by water to the arsenal. Biron was tried before the parliament,



CHARLES DE GONTAUT, DUC DE BIRON  
(1562-1602)



condemned, and executed. He evinced the greatest rage on the scaffold ; it amounted to frenzy, and was excited by his horror of so disgraceful a death. The executioner was obliged to hide his sword, and strike off the head of the culprit unawares.

#### THE LAST YEARS OF HENRY'S REIGN

The last years of Henry's reign are scarcely marked by any important incidents. The few that did take place, such as the conspiracy of the family D'Entragues, and the weaknesses into which Henry's amorous disposition led him, are exaggerated in importance, and narrated by historians with a detail they little merit. The punishment of Biron, which Henry meant as a warning to his discontented nobles, succeeded in keeping them in awe. If they intrigued, it was in fear, and with a caution that marred all progress or purpose. The count d'Auvergne alone, though pardoned for being implicated with Biron, renewed his schemes in conjunction with the marquise de Verneuil ; this mistress treated the king with the capriciousness and severity which a wronged beauty might use towards a gallant more advanced in years ; the monarch construed her caprice into infidelity ; and a loving quarrel grew to be a serious misunderstanding. Henry withdrew the written document of the promise of marriage. The father and daughter, joined by the count d'Auvergne, plotted against the king, it was said against his life ; and, as usual, they found support in a Spanish emissary. They were all three arrested, tried, and condemned to death ; but Henry pardoned his mistress, as well as her relatives, and commuted their punishment into exile. The restless and false D'Auvergne was confined permanently in the Bastille.

Squabbles with his queen, Marie de' Medici, on account of her Italian favourites, Concini and his wife ; distrust of Sully, excited by the envious courtiers ; these, with national improvements, negotiations, festivals, and hunting parties, bring the reign of Henry IV nearly to its close.

In 1609, its happy and glorious monotony was varied by the enthusiastic admiration which the aged monarch conceived for Mademoiselle de Montmorency, the young and lovely daughter of the constable, who had just appeared at court and eclipsed all its beauties. There is some difference of opinion as to the nature of Henry's admiration : the memoir writers of the age saw scandal in every connection ; and certainly Henry's past life and his known failings incline to the worst side. Bassompierre,<sup>o</sup> then a young man, relates that he himself became a suitor for the beauty's hand, and that he was induced by the entreaties or commands of the enamoured king to desist. Bassompierre was a babbler, however, whose vanity breaks out in the arrogance of the mere pretension. The young prince of Condé was also smitten, but shrank back from so formidable a rival as the monarch. What belies the account of Bassompierre is that Henry came forward, and assured Condé that he might woo in all confidence, and that he had nothing to fear on that score from his king. If Henry had licentious views, Bassompierre, and not Condé, would have been the convenient husband of Mademoiselle de Montmorency.

Condé was the successful suitor, and the marriage was celebrated at court with unusual splendour. Henry, having given his word to the prince, indulged his predilection for the lovely bride by showering presents and favours upon her and her husband. The court, full of the malevolent, amongst whom the followers of the jealous queen were not the least forward, construed all these symptoms to be the homage of a guilty passion : they poured this in the prince's ear ; and Condé, alarmed for his wife's

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honour, carried her off from the court by stealth, first to Picardy, whence, on receiving a summons from the king to return, he made a second flight, and gained the Low Countries. The king showed himself strangely affected by this incident: the discovery of Biron's conspiracy did not cause him more trouble. Sully was called up in the night; and the whole court was roused by the agitation of the monarch, who was pacing and stamping up and down the chamber of the queen, while the courtiers stood "pasted to the walls," says Sully, lest they should interrupt the monarch's passion. The flight of the first prince of the blood, and his taking refuge with the Spaniards, was certainly a grave question, love and jealousy being set aside. The king demanded Sully's advice, who hesitated, but being forced, advised him to "do nothing." "Nothing!" said Henry; "call you that advice?" Sully replied that the escape of the prince was a matter of little importance, unless the king chose to make it important by raising a clamour, and showing that he took an interest concerning it. Henry, however, was not in a humour to treat the matter thus slightly and thus wisely: he instructed his ambassador to demand of the archduke to deliver up the prince and princess of Condé; and, as Sully foresaw, the court of Brussels, in refusing, filled Europe with calumnies against Henry; asserting that he wanted to take by force the wife of the first prince of the realm and of the blood. When Henry, immediately afterwards, menaced war, the outcry was that Europe was about to be deluged in blood for another Helen.

It was, indeed, unfortunate that Henry, who had remained so many years at peace, no doubt preparing and amassing the materials and resources of war, and cautiously awaiting fit pretext and proper reason, should now draw the sword for a cause at once criminal and absurd.<sup>k</sup>

### *Grand Design of Henry IV; His Death*

At home the rest of Henry's reign was perhaps monotonous; but it was none the less momentous, for on the ruins of France the Bourbon monarchy was already building up the centralised absolutism which it was the work of Richelieu to perfect and Louis XIV to wield. But in foreign affairs the schemes of Henry were not less far reaching. France was to become the centre of European politics, the dictator of Germany. In Sully's *Economies Royales* we may read of the details of the great scheme which anticipated that of Napoleon by two centuries. But such details are the work of subsequent addition and the plan of making Europe into a grand republic of fifteen states with well-balanced interests, etc., was perhaps not so clearly conceived even by Sully as historians have been accustomed to state. But some such design was undoubtedly behind the foreign policy which Henry was inaugurating at his death. He possibly intended to unite with France the Flemish, Dutch, and North German states in a movement that would overthrow Spain and Austria. His own statements make this plain.<sup>a</sup>

Henry IV had expressed on many occasions and had incessantly repeated in his diplomacy the end which he had in view. His object was to restore the cities and states of the empire to their former rights and liberties, to assure the liberty of the United Provinces, to base the politics of France upon the alliance of the secondary states, in the north the United Provinces, Denmark, Sweden, and the German principalities, in the south, Switzerland, Savoy, and the Italian principalities; finally to extend his system of religious tolerance so as to guarantee liberty everywhere to the dissenters from the established cult, whether these dissenters might be Catholics, Lutherans, or

Calvinists; and to prevent religious wars or religious pretexts assigned to purely political wars and enterprises. He had long since declared to all the courts of Europe that he had ended the era of civil war in France and wished to end it everywhere else.

However it may be as to these observations, France, according to him, must pursue a double end in her foreign relations, lay the foundations of perpetual peace, and drive the Turks from Europe. In order to bring about perpetual peace it would be necessary to reduce the possessions of Austria, establish a certain balance of power, and create periodical diets or congresses, either for this or that category of states or for all Europe, with federal armies and fleets to execute the decisions made in common.<sup>b</sup>

He now resolved to realise his dream : but this, which had been a vision of heroism and philanthropy, was now degraded and sullied by the immediate motive. Henry, who was passionately fond of glory, saw the stain that was to rob his achievements of their brightness and purity. The accusation of the Spaniards troubled him : perhaps there was even truth in the reproach that the love of a sexagenarian king for a princess, and a married princess of twenty, was the only cause and pretext for convulsing Europe and shedding its best blood. This weighed upon Henry, and fretted him : his gaiety disappeared. Remorse and mortification came to cloud the heaven of his declining days. A dark presentiment, similar to that which had forewarned his loved Gabrielle of her fate, now gathered around Henry : he could not shake it off.

He intended leaving the queen as regent during his absence at the head of his army ; and her previous coronation, a ceremony that had not yet taken place, was considered requisite. This detained him in the capital ; and Marie de' Medici, fond of state and ceremony, insisted on it, and delighted in it. Henry was annoyed and fretted : he frequently said he should never leave Paris alive, and he longed to contradict his presentiment. The coronation of the queen at length took place. On the following day, the 14th of May, 1610, he manifested strong feelings of despondency. Despatches brought him word that his enemies were making no preparations for defence, and that they gave out that the delivery of the prince and princess of Condé would at once allay his choler and arrest his schemes. This increased his ill humour : he called for Sully ; but learning that his minister was ill at the arsenal, the king's coach was ordered to convey him thither. Seven of the suite occupied with the king his ample carriage. The duke d'Épernon was in one corner, and Henry next to him. The vehicle proceeded, but was stopped in the narrow rue de la Feronnerie by two loaded carts. This was the moment chosen by an assassin, Ravallac, who, mounting on the step, and leaning full into the carriage, struck the king with a poniard, first in the stomach, and then in the breast. One of these stabs pierced the heart of the noble Henry.

To paint the rage and despair of the people would be impossible. The once detested Henry had won every heart ; and the general grief for him partook of the character of madness. Tears were the least tokens of sorrow ; many died on learning the catastrophe, amongst others the brave De Vic, the comrade of Henry. The lifeless body was borne to the Louvre, whilst Ravallac, who made no attempt to escape, was taken, brandishing his dagger, and only preserved by the guards from being instantly torn in pieces. He had been a monk, strongly imbued with the king-killing principles that the Jesuits had broached. His crime had long been meditated by him ; but no proof exists that he had been instigated either by Spain or by any knot



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of discontented courtiers. Suspicion, indeed, has scattered its stain on all with an unsparing hand. Épernon, the queen, Concini, and many others, were accused as being privy to the deed; and the record of Ravaillac's trial having been destroyed, whilst these personages possessed the chief influence, gives some colour to the charge. But the tortured culprit might idly or malevolently cast imputation on the powerful, as indeed he menaced to do. For when some one pressed him to name his accomplices, Ravaillac answered, "Suppose I name you." The seed of his crime was the diabolical maxim to which the fanaticism of the league had given birth, and which it had rendered popular. It had germinated and grown in the dark solitude of a rancorous and fanatic spirit.<sup>k</sup>

## CHARACTER AND POLICY OF HENRY IV

There are two Henry IV's; the Henry of tradition and the Henry of history. The one more heroic and, thanks to Voltaire,<sup>l</sup> more popular; the other, underneath his crafty good nature, much more able and, with his pliant character, much better fitted to raise a falling edifice than a simple character would have been. Henry of Navarre had the most brilliant bravery, a quality common to the warriors of that time and of all times. But it is pleasing in a prince, and the chief who is ever ready to offer his life to the sword point is sure to win his soldiers' hearts. Reared among the mountaineers of the Pyrenees, he possessed an agility equal to theirs and a body incapable of fatigue. The vicissitudes through which he had passed had made his religion uncertain. Charles IX said to him, "Death or the mass!" He took the mass; later he abjured, and this abjuration was not to be the last. So he felt no anger against those who professed a different doctrine; his nature made fanaticism odious to him, and his position imposed tolerance upon him. Furthermore, he was a good comrade, showing the same face to good or to ill fortune. He bent under misfortune but did not break, and found resources in the most desperate situations. He loved pleasure, but not as it was loved by Henry III. He was kind through good nature as well as experience of life. He had friends who, it is true, got from his friendship more good words than good results; but his heart was open if his hand was closed, because he was for twenty years the chief of a party obliged to give much and to take nothing except from the enemy.

One night when D'Aubigné<sup>e</sup> and La Force were sleeping not far from the king, the former complained bitterly to the latter of their master's stinginess. La Force, overcome by fatigue, did not listen. "Don't you hear?" asked D'Aubigné. La Force roused himself and asked what he was saying. "Why, he is telling you," cried the king, who heard everything, "that I am a harsh, miserly fellow and the most ungrateful mortal on the face of the earth." "He did not treat me worse on account of it," adds D'Aubigné, "but he did not give me a quarter of a crown more."

His forced residence at the court of the Valois had been fatal to his morals. For several years he forgot his rôle and his fortune. After the death of the duke of Anjou, Duplessis-Mornay wrote to him: "Pastimes are no longer in season. It is time for you to make love to France." Henry felt this rebuke; he gave up his pleasures and put on his cuirass.<sup>n</sup>

In Sully's *Mémoires* we find this description of him<sup>1</sup>: "Such was the tragical end of a prince, on whom Nature, with a lavish profusion, had

[<sup>1</sup> It must be recalled that Sully's estimate is that of a comrade in arms and a counsellor. It is a flattering tribute rather than a calmly judicious one.]

bestowed all her advantages, except that of a death such as he merited. I have already observed that his stature was so happy, and his limbs formed with such proportion, as constitutes not only what is called a well-made man, but indicates strength, vigour, and activity; his complexion was animated; all the lineaments of his face had that agreeable liveliness which forms a sweet and happy physiognomy, and perfectly suited to that engaging easiness of manners which, though sometimes mixed with majesty, never lost the graceful affability and easy gaiety so natural to that great prince. With regard to the qualities of his heart and mind, I shall tell the reader nothing new by saying that he was candid, sincere, grateful, compassionate, generous, wise, penetrating.

“He loved all his subjects as a father, and the whole state as the head of a family; and it was this disposition that recalled him even from the midst of his pleasures to the care of rendering his people happy and his kingdom flourishing; hence proceeded his readiness in conceiving, and his industry in perfecting, a great number of useful regulations. Many I have already specified; and I shall sum up all by saying that there were no conditions, employments, or professions to which his reflections did not extend; and that with such clearness and penetration, that the changes he projected could not be overthrown by the death of their author, as it but too often happened in this monarchy. It was his desire, he said, that glory might influence his last years and make them at once useful to the world and acceptable to God; his was a mind in which the ideas of what is great, uncommon, and beautiful seemed to rise of themselves: hence it was that he looked upon adversity as a mere transitory evil, and prosperity as his natural state.

“I should destroy all I have now said of this great prince if, after having praised him for an infinite number of qualities well worthy to be praised, I did not acknowledge that they were balanced by faults, and those, indeed, very great. I have not concealed, or even palliated his passion for women; his excess in gaming; his gentleness often carried to weakness; nor his propensity to every kind of pleasure: I have neither disguised the faults they made him commit, the foolish expenses they led him into, nor the time they made him waste; but I have likewise observed (to do justice on both sides) that his enemies have greatly exaggerated all these errors. If he was, as they say, a slave to women, yet they never regulated his choice of ministers, decided the destinies of his servants, or influenced the deliberations of his council. As much may be said in extenuation of all his other faults. And to sum up all, in a word, what he has done is sufficient to show that the good and bad in his character had no proportion to each other; and that since honour and fame have always had power enough to tear him from pleasure, we ought to acknowledge these to have been his great and real passions.”*p*

### *Martin's Estimate of Henry IV*

The whole reign of Henry IV, after the Peace of Vervins, had been but a preface; the half-opened book is closed forever! All the past glory of the Béarnais would have been eclipsed by the magnificent results that his policy had prepared and that his arms were to realise. In spite of the exertions and the excesses of his life his robust constitution still promised him some years of military activity, enough without doubt to make sure if not of the complete triumph, at least of the predominance of his European system; his heirs would have done the rest! The politics of France, allied with the Protestants without being absorbed by Protestantism, triumphing by the aid

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of the entire foreign and French Reformation, would have been started beyond recall upon the paths of international equity, intellectual liberty, and religious tolerance. Henry IV would have made splendid reparation for the faults of Francis I and himself. He would not have abjured Catholicism, but with his victorious sword he would have obliterated his coronation oath and the humiliation of Roman absolution. Germany would not have seen the Thirty Years' War, nor France the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The seventeenth century would have had all its glory without its fatal errors.

God did not grant it him! Henry IV bore to the tomb not only the European system which he intended to inaugurate but all the elements of order and power that he had given to his country. France fell from the height to which he had raised her, until the day when a powerful genius came anew to bring order into chaos and to revive in part the policy of Henry, but under much less favourable conditions. This genius was that of an individual, not that of a king, and Henry IV has remained the greatest and above all the most French of the kings of France; not again has there been seen on the throne a soul so national, an intellect so liberal. No one ever felt better than he the true destiny of France. It is not without reason that the popularity of Henry has increased with the growth of the modern spirit; it is not without reason that the eighteenth century tried to make him the epic hero of French history. The labouring classes have never forgotten the king who was to them the most sympathetic in manners and in heart, the king who occupied himself most seriously with the interests of the soil and of labour. Thinkers will never cease to honour in him the forerunner of a new Europe, the just and profound mind whose diplomatic plans are to-day in many respects the politics of the most enlightened men, and finally the champion and martyr of the most sacred of liberties, that of conscience.<sup>c</sup>

Having listened thus to a contemporary and to a modern French estimate of the great ruler, let us take a parting glance at him through the eyes of a scarcely less appreciative English historian.<sup>c</sup>

#### STEPHEN'S CHARACTERISATION OF HENRY IV AND HIS TIMES

It has been said of Henry IV [says Sir James Stephen], with equal truth and force, that he was l'Hôpital in arms. The principles which had been asserted by the wisdom and the eloquence of the great chancellor became triumphant by the foresight and the conquests of the great king. In an age of wild disorder and overwhelming calamity, he was raised up to restore his kingdom to affluence and to peace. He appeared to rescue his Protestant subjects from the tyranny which had so long denied to them the freedom of conscience. He came to give a firm basis to the national policy, and to open to his people at large a new direction, and a wider scope, for the martial energies by which they had hitherto been at once so highly, and so ineffectually, distinguished. For these high offices he was qualified by great talents, and by many virtues. With a capacity large enough to embrace all the social, military, and political interests of his dominions, he combined that practical good sense and flexibility of address, without which there is no safe descent from the higher regions of thought to the real business of life. The intuitive promptitude, and the enduring stability, of his resolutions attested at once his large experience in affairs, and his wide survey both of the resources at his command, and of the contingencies to which



he was exposed. He possessed that kind of mental instinct which advances by the shortest path to what is at once useful and possible, and which turns aside, with unhesitating decision, from any illusive and impracticable scheme. Never was a great innovator more characterised by practical wisdom; and never did such wisdom assume a more attractive aspect. His manners exhibited all the graces of his native land in their most captivating form. Delighted with his *bonhomie*, his gaiety, and his frankness, his subjects not

only forgave his vices, but even found in them a fascination the more. They smiled at the scandalous amours of their gallant monarch as a not unbecoming tribute paid by human greatness to human infirmity. If they looked with awe on the desperate valour of his enterprises, on the inflexible rigour of his discipline, or on the soaring ambition of his political designs, they were reconciled to the stern character of the prince by the ever-flowing and genuine sensibilities of the man. If his lofty sense of his personal and ancestral dignity sometimes gave an austere aspect to his intercourse with his people, that pride of birth did but enhance the charm of his quick sympathy with the feelings and interests of the meanest of them. And, above all the rest, every Frenchman loved and admired in Henry the lover and admirer of France; and became patriotically blind to



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the faults of his renegade, and debauched, but still patriot, king.

And even now, when the spell is broken, and we may look back on the life of Henry IV with judicial impartiality, and reprobate the apologies which would have elevated his crimes into virtues, we cannot conceal from ourselves the fact that he conferred on his people benefits which well entitled him to their lasting gratitude.

For, first, Henry of Navarre was the founder of religious toleration in France. Until the Edict of Nantes there had been many truces, but no real

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peace, between the adherents of Rome and the followers of Calvin. To compel all the fragments of the Christian church to coalesce into one body, each member of which should hold the same opinions, and worship under the same forms, had been the inflexible policy of all his predecessors. To acquiesce in their separation, and yet to maintain each section in the nearest possible approach to an equality both of civil and religious privileges, was the no less inflexible design of Henry. His charter could not, indeed, restore unity to the church, but it established, on what seemed a secure basis, the unity of the state. The two religions were thenceforward placed under ecclesiastical laws widely differing from each other, but under a civil law common to them both.

The second great praise of the first of the Bourbon line is that of having rescued France from the abyss of bankruptcy and financial ruin in which it had been involved by the improvidence of the house of Valois. For the completion of that great work the larger share of honour is, indeed, due to Sully. But from his own *Economies Royales* we sufficiently learn that, unaided by the magnanimity, the self-denial, and the affection of the king, not even the zeal, the courage, and the sagacity of the great minister would have accomplished that herculean labour.

The third title of Henry to the place which he has ever held among the benefactors of France, has at all times been acknowledged by Frenchmen with more enthusiasm than any other of his services. He was the first of her kings who had at once the discernment to perceive how high a station belonged to her in the European commonwealth, and the energy to devise the methods by which that rank might be effectually vindicated.

It is not, however, on these grounds alone, that the reign of Henry IV occupies a memorable position in the constitutional history of his country. It was a period of great consummations and of great beginnings. Like some inland sea, which is at once the receptacle of many converging, and the source of as many diverging, streams, it was interposed between two eras strikingly contrasted with each other. It marked the close of the mediæval sovereignty, and the commencement of the modern monarchy,—the first a dominion of undefined rights, of unsettled habits, and of a fluctuating policy,—the second, a government absolute in fact and in right, severely consistent in its arbitrary principles, but elaborately adapted to the various exigencies of a civilised commonwealth. The hitherto unorganised elements of the state were now, for the first time, reduced into a political unity. The invidious distinctions of earlier times now began to give place to social equality; and the slow, though steadfast, progress of that unity and of that equality may be considered as the subject of the whole of the subsequent history of France. In the triumph of these two principles consists the peculiar distinction, and the chief boast, of the French policy, whether monarchical or republican, of later times; and, therefore, the age of Henry IV when considered as the origin of these great national characteristics, demands, and will repay, the most diligent attention."



## CHAPTER XV

### THE LITERARY PROGRESS OF FRANCE IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

"It is in Rabelais, in the satire of *Ménippée*, and in Montaigne that we shall find principles of social justice, ideas of reformation, expressed with as much profundity as eloquence ; in these writers they are scattered, hidden under buffoonery in Rabelais, tempered by philosophical *insouciance* in Montaigne ; but they bear witness to the extent to which the study of antiquity, the religious struggles, and the civil war had set political ideas in motion. The great history of the President de Thou marked in the highest degree the spirit of legal freedom under the monarchy. Calvin had been the despotic legislator of a democracy, yet the Reformation everywhere raised the questions of civil liberty involved in the question of religious liberty ; and as the governments of the Middle Ages owed their origin to the church the political innovators owed theirs to dissenting theologians." — VILLEMALIN.<sup>6</sup>

WHILE we have followed the fortunes of Henry of Navarre another century has been rounded out. Almost a hundred years have passed since Francis I came to the throne ; more than half a hundred since that monarch laid down the sceptre. It has been a troublous epoch for France as we have seen : a time of foreign and civil wars that would have disrupted a less stable civil organisation. Yet the new forces of the Renaissance and the Reformation were making themselves felt throughout this period, and, as so often happens, the time of military strife has been also a time of social development. Some phases of this development we have studied, particularly in connection with the reign of Francis I ; it remains to mention in some detail the work of three great writers who made this century memorable in French literary annals. We have already cited a comment of Villemain on the retardation of the French literary Renaissance. How marked this retardation was will be even more evident when we reflect that the century which has just been rounded out saw Italian culture in its decadence, and that the immediate period of Henry IV is precisely contemporary with the age of Elizabeth in England, — the time of Bacon, Ben Jonson, and Shakespeare ; whereas French literature is only at its beginnings. Notable beginnings



these are however, for the names that we now have to chronicle are those of Rabelais, of Calvin, and of Montaigne. It is true that Stephen, whom we quote now somewhat in extenso, cites this trio as the second great literary triumvirate of France; having named Joinville, Froissart, and Comines as the great triumvirate of an earlier period. In the widest view this classification no doubt is just; yet it can hardly be asserted that these earlier chroniclers are classic in the same sense as are Rabelais and Montaigne. The earlier writers are preserved more for their method than for their manner; and it is only work in which literary form takes precedence over mere fact that can be classified on the highest plane of art. According to this standard, the work of Calvin scarcely belongs beside that of Rabelais and Montaigne; yet a study of French literary development in the sixteenth century from which that work was omitted would be obviously incomplete. Let us glance then at the work of these three greatest French writers of the sixteenth century, between whom, as Sir James Stephen asserts "the parallelisms are as remarkable as the contradictions." Taking them in the order of time we have first to consider the great humourist Rabelais, mention of whose work has already been made when we were speaking of the French Renaissance of the middle of the century.<sup>a</sup>

Rabelais, the son of an innkeeper at Chinon, was born at that place in the year 1483.<sup>1</sup> He became a Franciscan friar, a deacon, and a priest in holy orders; and then, at the mature age of forty-two, commenced the study of medicine in the college at Montpellier. Various medical treatises were the fruit of those labours; and the reputation derived from them was sufficient to obtain for him the office of physician to the public hospital at Lyons. But his professional books proving unsaleable, Rabelais, to indemnify his bookseller, wrote and published his *Pantagruel*, or *Chronique Gargantuaïne*, of which (as he says) more copies were sold in two months than of the Bible in ten years. Having thus discovered the secret of his power, he next produced the *Gargantua*; the work which has secured for him the admiration of all subsequent ages, though the reverence of none. It is a romance in which Rabelais may be considered as depicting the habits, opinions, errors, crimes, and follies of that age of religious and intellectual revolutions, in the centre of which he lived. Yet the critics have doubted, and must ever continue to doubt — whether Gargantua and his son Pantagruel are actual portraits of those who led the armaments (literary, theological, or military) of those times, or are mere impersonations of those abstract qualities by which the world was then governed — whether Panurge and Friar John had any living prototypes amongst the men of the sixteenth century — or whether the one is but a name for mediocrity, ceasing to be honest as it becomes conspicuous; and the other a name for sensuality, rescued from contempt by a shrewd and jovial spirit. But why investigate these and such other riddles, proposed by their author in avowed defiance of any such attempt? Why, indeed, read at all a book of which not only the general scope, but almost every page is enigmatical? Why squander time and patience on a writer who, of set purpose, makes his readers dependent on the guidance of some dull and doubtful commentator? For those passages which do

[<sup>1</sup> The date of Rabelais' birth is not certain, although most authorities place it about 1483. Of his early years very little is known, but from 1519 his history is more definite. He was educated at a convent school and, after his entrance into the Franciscan order, devoted himself to serious study. In 1524 he became a Benedictine, this change of order and dwelling-place being attributed by some to a disgust with the cloister. Six years later he is found studying medicine in Montpellier and afterwards practising in Lyons. John du Bellay, bishop of Paris, took him with him to Rome in 1534 as physician. Rabelais died at Paris in 1553.]

reward the toil of the student are separated from each other, not only by this profound obscurity, but by foul abysses of impurity, which no skill or caution can always succeed in overleaping. I know not how to describe them in terms at once accurate and decorous, except by borrowing Mr. Carlyle's denunciation of a work of Diderot's, and saying with him, or in words resembling his, that he who, even undesignedly, shall come into contact with these parts of Rabelais' great work, should forthwith plunge into running waters, and regard himself, for the rest of the day, as something more than ceremonially unclean.

Yet he whose business, or whose determination, it is to appreciate aright the civil, and therefore the literary, history of France, must needs pay this

heavy price of knowledge. For, in that history, the romance of *Gargantua* is an indispensable link. From the revival of heathen antiquity, Rabelais had gathered a mass of learning resembling the diet of his own Pantagruel, who had 4,600 cows milked every morning for his breakfast. From the revival of Christian antiquity, he had learned to despise the authority and the superstitions of the church of Rome; without, at the same time, learning to reverence the authority and the doctrines of the Gospel. He thus traversed the boundless expanse of human knowledge. He traversed it under the guidance of his own wit, sagacity, and humour, a wit, vaulting at a bound, from the arctic to the antarctic poles of thought; a sagacity embracing all the higher questions of man's social existence, and many of the deeper problems of his moral constitution; and a humour which fairly baffles all attempts to analyse or to describe it. For it was the result, not of



RABELAIS

natural temperament alone, but also of the most assiduous and severe studies. The language of Greece had become as familiar to him as his mother-tongue; and, while he learned from Galen and Hippocrates to investigate the properties of living or of inert matter, he was trained, by Plato, to spiritual meditation, and by Lucian to a scepticism and a buffoonery, alike audacious and unintermitted. From the union of such a disposition and of such discipline, emerged the strange phenomenon of a philosopher in his revels. In contemplating it one knows not, as it has been well said, "whether to wonder most that such wisdom should ever assume the mask of folly, or that such folly should permit the growth and development of any true wisdom." It is, however, an apparent, rather than a real, difficulty. The wisdom is never sublime, and the folly but seldom abject. Each is but a different aspect of a nature, of which the parts are, indeed, inharmonious, but not incompatible — of a genuine Epicurean gifted with gigantic powers, but of cold

affections, and of debased appetites; ever worshipping and obeying his one idol, pleasure, though at one time she bids him soar to the empyrean, and at another commands him to wallow in the sty.

Rabelais was wise in the sense in which any man may be so who delights in the strenuous exercise of a powerful understanding, and loves thinking for thinking's sake. He was wise to detect popular fallacies, and to discern unpopular truths. He was wise to see how the young might be better educated, laws better made, nations better governed, wars more vigorously conducted, and peace more securely maintained. He was wise to call down both theology and philosophy from the skies above to the earth beneath us. And he was not more wise than eloquent; sometimes arraying truth in the noblest forms of speech, though more frequently enhancing her beauty by enveloping and contrasting her with the homeliest. At his prolific touch his native tongue germinated into countless new varieties of expression; and the mines of wealth, both intellectual and verbal, which he bequeathed to future ages, after being wrought by multitudes in each, still appear inexhaustible.

The wisdom of Rabelais, was, however, of the world, worldly. It never ascended to the eternal fountains of light, nor descended to illuminate the dark places of the earth. It neither sought to interpret the awful mysteries of our nature, nor bowed down to adore in the contemplation of them. It aimed at no exalted ends, nor did it ever lead the way through any rugged and self-denying paths. It expressed neither sympathy for the wretchedness, nor pity for the sorrows, of mankind; but was satisfied to be shrewd, and witty, and comical upon them all. To the keen gaze of Rabelais, the frauds, and follies, and ignorance, and licentiousness of the papal court and priesthood afforded endless matter of scorn and merriment; but to his last hour he lived in their outward garb and communion. To that penetrating eye had been clearly revealed the majesty of the truth which the Reformers taught, and the majesty of the sufferings which they endured in its defence; but not one glow of enthusiasm could they ever kindle in his bosom, as they toiled in indigence, and died in martyrdom, to evangelise the world. Secure in the absolution of Clement VII for whatever he had done and written against the church, and secure in the license of Francis I. to publish whatever else he might please, Rabelais delighted to assume the character of a chartered libertine, or, as it might almost be said, of an intellectual debauchee. And yet, voluptuary, seoffer, and sceptic as he was, his laughter was so hearty, his glee so natural, his frolic so riotous, and his buffoonery so irresistible, that he became, not merely the tolerated, but the favoured and privileged, Momus of his times. He became also a proof to all later times, that, by the great mass of mankind, anything will be forgiven or permitted to genius, when, abandoning its native supremacy, it condescends to undertake the strangely inappropriate office of master of the revels.<sup>c</sup>

"In the works of Rabelais," says Michelet,<sup>f</sup> "the French language appeared in a greatness it never possessed before nor since. What Dante accomplished for Italian, Rabelais did for French. He employed and blended every dialect, the elements of every period and province developed in the Middle Age, adding the while a wealth of technical expression furnished by art and science. Another man would have been overwhelmed by this immense variety, but he,—he harmonised everything. Antiquity, especially the Greek genius, and a knowledge of all modern languages permitted him to envelop and master that of France." Saintsbury<sup>e</sup> declares that the only two men who can be compared to him in character of work and force of



genius combined are Lucian and Swift, adding : " He is much less of a mere mocker than Lucian, and he is entirely destitute, even when he deals with monks or pedants, of the ferocity of Swift. He neither sneers nor rages ; the *rire immense* which distinguishes him is altogether good-natured ; but he is nearer to Lucian than to Swift, and Lucian is perhaps the author whom it is most necessary to know in order to understand him rightly."<sup>a</sup>

#### CALVIN

One cannot better show how contrarieties are related than by the immediate transition from Francis Rabelais to John Calvin ;<sup>1</sup> for, probably, no two



CALVIN

men of commanding minds were ever more curiously contrasted with each other, as certainly no two minds were ever enshrined in bodies more dissimilar. To look upon, Rabelais was a drunken Silenus, Calvin a famished Ugolino. The one emptied his bottle before he wrote, while he was writing, and after he had written ; the other contented himself with a repast of bread and water once in each six-and-thirty hours. Reposing in his easy chair, the merry doctor was hailed as lord of misrule by all the jovial spirits of his age ; enthroned in the consistory of Geneva, the inexorable divine was dreaded as the disciplinarian of himself and of the whole subject city. The witty physician was L'Allegro, the austere minister Il Penseroso, of their generation. The reader of the *Gargantua* yields by turns to disgust, to admiration, and to merriment ; but Democritus himself would not have found matter for one passing smile throughout the whole of the

*Christian Institute*. To Rabelais, human life appeared a farce as broad as the knights of Aristophanes ; to Calvin, a tragedy more dismal than the Agamemnon of Æschylus. And as they wrote, so they also lived. The traditional

[<sup>1</sup> John Calvin, the celebrated Protestant reformer and theologian, was born at Noyon, Picardy, France, in 1509, and died at Geneva, May 27th, 1564. His father, Gerard Calvin, was a notary-apostolic and procurator-fiscal for the lordship of Noyon, besides holding other ecclesiastical offices. His early years are obscure, but from childhood he showed great religious feeling and an intense earnestness. He studied at Paris, Orleans, and Bourges, and although brought up with the intention of entering the priesthood, after close study of the Bible, he embraced the Reformation. In 1532 Calvin published his first work, an edition of Seneca's *De Clementia* with an elaborate commentary. In 1533, on account of speeches in opposition to the court, he was banished from Paris and it is said it was during his retirement at Saintonge that he made his first sketch of his *Institution Chrétienne*. His other works are all of a religious nature, mostly controversial. A great many of these are of an exegetical character, of which his expository comments or homilies on the books of Scripture are by some considered the most valuable of his works. (For a further account of Calvin, see the history of the Reformation movement, volume xiii.)]

stories about Rabelais, if true, attest his love, and, even if untrue, they attest his reputed love, of that kind of wit which is called practical; all the traditions of Calvin represent him as a man at whose appearance mirth instantly took flight.

The gay doctor is made in these tales to play off his tricks on the graduates in medicine, on the chanceilor du Prât, on the king and queen of France, and even on the mule of the pope himself; while the solemn theologian makes his domiciliary visits to ascertain that no dinner table at Geneva was rendered the pretext for levity of discourse, or for excess of diet.

What, then, is the congruity on which to found any comparison between these most incongruous minds? The answer is (to borrow an expressive word), that they were both devoted *ergoists*, each of them being at once a mighty master, and a submissive slave, of logic.<sup>c</sup> With the religious significance of Calvin's teaching we have no present concern. We shall have occasion to see something more of this in the course of our study of the Reformation. Here we are concerned rather with Calvin the writer—the author of the *Institution Chrétienne*.

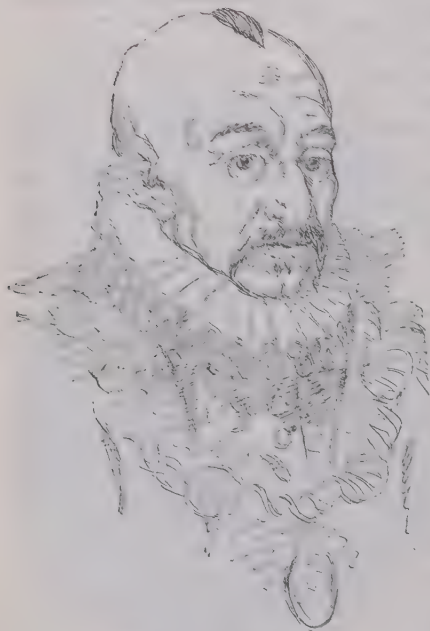
Published in 1536 this book was received with unbounded delight.<sup>a</sup> We may, indeed, reject the story, that a thousand editions of it were sold in his own lifetime; but we cannot dispute that, during a century and a half, it exercised an unrivalled supremacy over a large part of Protestant Europe. For that dominion it was indebted, in part, to the novelty and comprehensiveness of the design it accomplished,—to the vast compass of learning, scriptural, patristic, and historical, which it embraced,—to the depth and the height of the morality which it inculcated,—and to the calm but energetic keenness with which it exposed the errors of his adversaries. But the popularity and the influence of this remarkable book is also, in part, to be ascribed to its literary merits. Calvin has been described as the Bossuet of his age. Of all the French authors whom France had as yet produced, he was the most philosophical when he speculated, the most sublime when he adored, the most methodical and luminous in the development of truth, the most acute in the refutation of error, and the most obedient to that law or spirit of his nation, which demands symmetry in the proportions, harmony in the details, and concert in all the parts of every work of art, whether it be wrought by the pen, the pencil, or the chisel. In the ninth chapter of Bossuet's *Histoire des Variations* may, indeed, be found the best, as it is a very reluctant, eulogy on the literary excellence of his great rival and predecessor. Even in the haughty gloom which the bishop of Meaux discovers in the style and tone of the reformer of Geneva, there is a not inappropriate interest. The beautiful lake of that city, and the mountains which encircle it, lay before his eyes as he wrote; but they are said to have suggested to his fancy no images, and to have drawn from his pen not so much as one transient allusion. With his mental vision ever directed to that melancholy view of the state and prospects of our race, which he had discovered in the book of life, it would, indeed, have been incongruous to have turned aside to depict any of those glorious aspects of the creative benignity which were spread around him in the book of nature.

#### MONTAIGNE

The immediate effect of the servitude into which Calvin had subdued the minds of his disciples was to provoke a formidable revolt. When he was giving his latest touches to his *Institution Chrétienne*, Michel de

Montaigne,<sup>1</sup> then in his twenty-second year, had just taken his seat in the Parliament of Bordeaux. That he afterwards became a deputy in the states-general of Blois, though maintained by no inconsiderable authorities, seems to me impossible; but it is clear that his early manhood was devoted to public, and especially to judicial, affairs. He was thus brought into contact with the busy world at the moment of a greater agitation of human society than had occurred since the overthrow of the Roman Empire. Marvellous revolutions, and discoveries still more marvellous, in the world of letters, of politics, of geography, and of religion, — the welfare of inappeasable passions, — the working of whatever is most base, and of whatever is most sublime, in our

common nature, — and calamities which might seem to have fulfilled the most awful of the apocalyptic visions, had passed in rapid succession before the eyes of this acute and curious observer. It was an unwelcome and repulsive spectacle. He turned from it to seek the shelter and the repose of his hereditary mansion. In that retirement he indulged, or cherished, a spirit inflexibly opposed to the spirit by which his native country was convulsed. The age was idolatrous of novelties; and, therefore, Montaigne lived in the retrospect of a remote antiquity. It was an age of restless ambition; and, therefore, he passively committed himself and his fortunes to the current of events. The minds of other men were exploring the foundations, and criticising the superstructure, of every social polity; and, therefore, his mind was averted altogether from the affairs of the commonwealth. Because his neighbours yielded themselves to every gust of passion, he must be passionless. Because the times were treacherous, he must



MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE

punctiliously cherish his personal honour. Because they were inhuman, he cultivated all the amenities of life. Because calamity swept over the world, he was enamoured of epicurean ease. Heroism was the boast of not a few, and to their virtues he paid the homage of an incredulous obeisance. Dogmatism was the habit of very many; and, therefore, Montaigne must surrender himself to an almost universal scepticism.

The contrast was as captivating as it was complete. With a temper

[<sup>1</sup> Lacépède, referring to Montaigne's *Essays*, says: "In a work that one reads again with delight and self-improvement, Michel de Montaigne has given a new glory to France." Michel Eyquem de Montaigne, was born at Perigord, of an ancient and noble family, in 1533. Perhaps the finish of his *Essays*, his principal work, is due to his early training, his father having so managed his education, that at the age of five he spoke the purest Latin, and, as an old book gives it, "was also taught Greek by way of recreation." He was married at the age of thirty-three. He lived at the court of Francis II and Henry VIII. He became mayor of Bordeaux in 1581 and in 1592; according to one old chronicle, "he died a constant and philosophic death, when he was some months short of sixty." His *Essays* were first published in 1580; the edition of 1588 was the last to be published in the author's lifetime.]



easily satisfied, — with affections as tranquil as they were kindly, — with a curiosity ever wakeful, but never impetuous, — with competency, health, friends, books, and leisure, Montaigne had all the means of happiness which can be brought within the reach of those to whom life is not a self-denying existence, but a pleasant pastime. Yet, with him, it was the pastime of an active, enlightened, and amiable mind. The study of man as a member of society was his chosen pursuit, but he conducted it in a mode altogether his own. The individual man, Michel Montaigne, such as he would be in every imaginable relation and office of society, was the subject of his daily investigation. He became, of all egoists, the most pleasant, versatile, and comprehensive. He produced complete sketches of himself with an air of the most unreserved frankness, and in a tone frequently passing from quiet seriousness to graceful badinage. He describes his tastes, his humours, his opinions, his frailties, his pursuits, and his associates with the most exuberant fertility of invention, and has wrought out a general delineation of our common humanity from the profound knowledge of a single member of it. And, as the variety is boundless, so is the unity well sustained. His essays are a mirror in which every reader sees his own image reflected, but in which he also sees the image of Montaigne reflecting it. There he is, ever changing, and yet ever the same. He looks on the world with a calm indifference, which would be repulsive were it not corrected by his benevolent curiosity about its history and its prospects. He has not one malignant feeling about him, except it be towards the tiresome, and especially towards such of them as provoke his yawns and his resentment by misplaced and by commonplace wisdom. He has a quick relish for pleasure, but with a preference for such pleasures as are social, inoffensive, and easily procured. He has a love for virtue, but chiefly, if not exclusively, when she exacts no great effort, nor any considerable sacrifice. He loves his fellow-men, but does not much, or seriously, esteem them. He loves study and meditation, but stipulates that they shall expose him to no disagreeable fatigue. He cherishes every temper which makes life pass sociably and pleasantly. He takes things as he finds them in perfect good humour, makes the best of them all, and never burdens his mind with virtuous indignation, unattainable hopes, or fruitless regrets. In short, as exhibited in his own self-portraiture, he is an Epicurean, who knows how to make his better dispositions tributary to his comfort, and also knows how to prevent his evil tempers from troubling his repose.

The picture of himself, which Montaigne thus holds up to his readers as a representation of themselves, is not sublime, nor is it beautiful; but it is a striking and a masterly likeness. It is drawn with inimitable grace and freedom, and with the most transparent perspicuity; and they who are best entitled to pronounce such a judgment, admire in his language a richness and a curious felicity unknown to any preceding French writers. Even they to whom his tongue is not native, can perceive that his style is the easy, the luminous, and the flexible vehicle of his thoughts, and never degenerates into a mere apology for the want of thought; and that his imagination, without ever disfiguring his ideas, however abstract, and however subtle they may be, habitually clothes them with the noblest forms and the most appropriate colouring.

But our more immediate object is, to notice the relation in which Montaigne stands to the other great moral teachers of his native land, and to those habits of thought by which France is, and has so long been, characterised. The antagonist in everything of the spirit of his times, he seems to

have regarded with peculiar aversion the peremptory confidence by which the great controversy of his age was conducted, both by the adherents of Rome and by the founder of Calvinism. Because they would admit no doubt whatever, every form of doubt found harbour with him. Because they were dogmatists, he must be a sceptic.

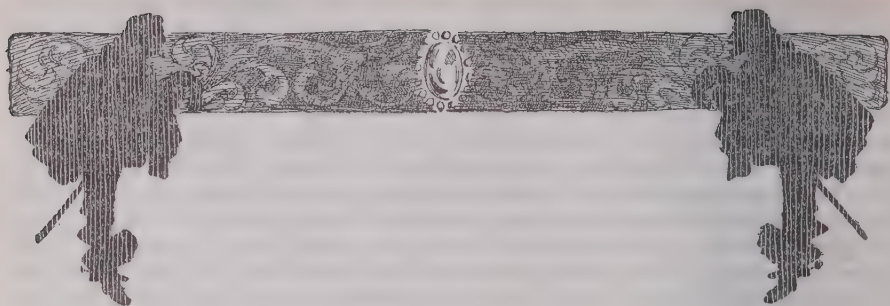
In M. Faurière's edition of Pascal's *Thoughts* will be found the famous dialogue on the scepticism of Montaigne, between Pascal and De Sacy, — a delineation so exquisite, that it seems mere folly to attempt any addition to it. The genius of Port Royal, however, exhibits there its severity, not less than its justice; and a few words may not be misplaced in the attempt to mitigate a little of the rigour of the condemnation. Montaigne was a sceptic (as very many are), because his sagacity and diligence were buoyant enough to raise his mind to the clouds which float over our heads, but were not buoyant enough to elevate him to the pure regions of light which lie beyond them. His learning was various rather than recondite. It was drawn chiefly from Latin authors, and from the Latin authors of a degenerating age; not from Cicero or Virgil, but from Seneca and Pliny. Of Greek he knew but little, though he was profoundly conversant with the translation of Plutarch, with which Amyot had lately rendered all French readers familiar. From such masters Montaigne did not learn, and could not have learned, the love of truth. They taught him rather to content himself with loose historical gossip, and with half-formed notions in philosophy. They taught him not how to resolve, but how to amuse himself with the great problems of human existence. They encouraged his characteristic want of seriousness and earnestness of purpose. From such studies, and from the events of his life and times, he learned to flutter over the surface of things, and to traverse the whole world of moral, religious, and political inquiry, without finding, and without seeking, a resting-place. His aimless curiosity and versatile caprice form at once the fascination and the vice of his writings, though not indeed their only vice, for the name of Montaigne belongs to that melancholy roll of the great French sceptical writers — Rabelais, Montesquieu, Bayle, Voltaire, and Diderot — who, not content to assault the principles of virtue, have so far debased themselves, as laboriously to stimulate the disorderly appetites of their readers.

Yet the scepticism of Montaigne was not altogether such as theirs is. He has none of their dissolute revelry in confounding the distinctions of truth and falsehood, of good and evil. He does not, like some of them, delight in the darkness with which he believes the mind of man to be hopelessly enveloped. He rather placidly and contentedly acquiesces in the conviction that truth is beyond his reach. He could amuse himself with doubt, and play with it. With few positive and no dearly cherished opinions, he had no ardour for any opinion, and had not the slightest desire to make proselytes to his own Pyrrhonism. He was, on the contrary, to the last degree, tolerant of dissent from his own judgment; and, in the lack of other opponents, was prompt, and even glad, to contradict himself. Of all human infirmities, dulness, and obscurity, and vehemence, are those from which he was most exempt. Of all human passions, the zeal which fires the bosom of a missionary is that from which he was the most remote. We associate with him as one of the most pleasant of all our illustrious companions, and quit him as one of the least impressive of all our eminent instructors.<sup>c</sup>

Montaigne's fame has passed through several very different phases. Among his own contemporaries it grew without overstepping a somewhat restricted circle of enlightened minds. After that, the main current of French

thought took a direction opposite to that of Montaigne's. Dogmatism returned and the seventeenth century in general adhered to it. Pascal launched anathemas at Montaigne. But the sumptuous edifice of the age of Louis XIV soon crumbled away, and Montaigne came forward again, hailed as a glorious ancestor by the entire age of Voltaire and Rousseau. To-day he has ceased to arouse any tempests, but he occupies his uncontested place in the national pantheon. He will live as a writer as long as French literature exists, for like the other great sixteenth century writers, men of strong individualities like Rabelais and Calvin, he had his own language as well as his own thought—a language sovereignly free, eternally young, inimitable, and above all a fertile source of rejuvenation for the whole language. He will live as a philosopher as long as men practise the axiom of the *Essays*, "Know thyself."<sup>d</sup>





## CHAPTER XVI

### THE EARLY YEARS OF LOUIS XIII AND THE RISE OF RICHELIEU

[1610-1628 A.D.]

#### THE REGENCY OF MARIE DE' MEDICI

THE terrible instability of the monarchical government is revealed upon the death of Henry IV, who left as his successor a child of eight years. What follows is the opposite of what he desired; France turned inside out like a glove.

The treasure that Sully had amassed and protected is squandered in a moment, the domain that he cleared of debt is remortgaged, the possessions of the state are sold. All the institutions of this reign are abandoned, buildings are interrupted, canals given up. The manufactories of silk and of glass, the Savonnerie and the Gobelins are closed and the workmen discharged. The Louvre, which was to be degraded by lodging great inventors — the Louvre is left to the courtiers. Adieu to the museum of trades and the Jardin des Plantes; these hobbies of the king, and a thousand others sleep on the charts of Sully. At the Tuileries, at the arsenal, Henry's favourite trees, his mulberries, are removed. But for fear of the people his monuments would be torn down. By an unexpected change the people discover that they loved Henry IV. The legend begins the day of his death; it will go on increasing by comparison of what is, with what was.

Paris at this moment was dominated by an extraordinary terror. The people believed themselves lost. Women tore their hair, less from grief than from fear. It was the same everywhere. The terror of the league returned to people's minds and caused them to tremble. Hence there was a surprising, or rather a striking calm. For this great wisdom stuck to one thing — that is, that France, having neither idea, nor passion, nor moral interest, should no longer have a feeling of life. It was entirely identified with the king, with a man who had been killed; and what remained? A boy of eight who on the 15th of May surrendered the kingdom to his mother and on the 29th got a flogging.<sup>b</sup>

The last dispositions of Henry, on his intended departure to head his army, had appointed his queen, Marie de' Medici, regent: this was strongly in her favour as dowager; and she now found little difficulty in assuming the same authority. The duke d'Épernon, her partisan, summoned the

[1610-1613 A.D.]

parliament, and procured their acquiescence, not, however, without having made some show of menace. This seemed unnecessary : of the princes of the blood, three in number, who could alone have pretended to the regency, Condé was absent in the Netherlands, his brother of Conti was imbecile, whilst their uncle, the count de Soissons, also absent, was at enmity with every influential personage.

It was to Sully that Henry's death came as the greatest blow. Sully was panic-struck ; he saw in the murder a Catholic plot, and dreaded a renewal of the massacres of St. Bartholomew's eve ; he accordingly shut himself up with his followers in the Bastille, which he hastily provisioned by carrying off all the bread from the bakers' shops around. By the morrow, however, his suspicions had subsided, and he appeared at the court of the regent. [He was cordially received ; a reconciliation was effected, and the queen got what she was after,—the treasure that Sully had stored up in the Bastille.]

Marie de' Medici was of a weak character ; she was simple womanhood, unenforced by either firmness or sagacity. She had come to France a stranger ; and wanting both charms and wit, she had never acquired any influence either with her husband or amongst the followers of his court. Marie, therefore, shrank back into her private circle, and made confidants and counsellors of her two Italian domestics, the woman, Leonora Galigai, and Concini, the husband of Leonora. These upstart personages, full of all the meanness and narrowness of their calling, had frequently fanned the petty jealousies of the queen against Henry ; and now it was to be feared their influence would be perniciously felt. Marie, however, was as yet too conscious of her weakness and inability. She had a vague idea of the justice of the late king's policy in keeping down the noblesse, that now pressed around her, and terrified her with their pretensions and their quarrels. She therefore had recourse to those best fitted to guide her—the ministers of the late monarch, Villeroi the secretary, Sillery the chancellor, the president Jeannin, and Sully, superintendent of finances : these, except Sully, had none of the pretensions and haughty bearing of the noblesse ; and Marie felt no loss of her will and authority in being guided by them.

It would prove a wearisome task either to narrate or to peruse an account of the cabals, quarrels, duels, and claims of the personages and princes amongst each other, and with or against the regent, during the three years which followed Henry's death. They formed a repetition of the conspiracies and alliances of the aristocracy against Catherine de' Medici half a century previous, except that at that time there were at least some noble characters and some serious aims. Whatever might be said of Châtillon or of Guise, they were animated by high views ; but the political puppets who occupied the scene during Marie de' Medici's regency, wanted not courage—indeed they were quite as ready as their predecessors to slay each other in duels—but purpose, at least other purpose than immediate greed, they had none. There were some examples of ferocity in Louis XIII's early days, which reminded one of Charles IX—the chevalier de Guise, meeting the baron de Luz and running him through the body, and being universally censured for the act until he redeemed the murder by slaying the young De Luz, son of the baron, in a fiercely-contested duel. This spirit, which showed itself in private broils, never rose into a public sentiment. One would have thought that in the army which Henry had formed, and amongst the officers whom he had honoured with his patronage and friendship, there might have been some who burned to distinguish themselves in prosecuting that war against the house of Austria which the monarch had planned. Not one noble opposed

the peace ; not one soldier of note raised his voice in behalf of the spirited policy of the late king ; scarcely even a Huguenot. For Bouillon was immersed in the intrigues of Concini, and Lesdiguières was tempted by the title of duke and peer, as he afterwards was by that of constable.

### *Disgrace of Sully*

As long, however, as the rigid Sully held the finances under his care, there was a check to spoliation, as well as a generous voice in the council to support the sage, the firm, and yet conciliating measures of the late monarch. He was at first retained, indeed, for the sake of the stern negative which he was wont to put on the demands of the greedy courtiers, as well as from fear or respect of his influence with the Huguenots. But his economical temper became soon a disagreeable restraint upon the queen herself ; and the duke de Bouillon, an indefatigable votary of intrigue, offering to effect more than even Sully in conciliating and quieting the Huguenots, this old and upright minister of the great Henry, was dismissed. Despite his probity, his able administration, and the esteem of Henry, a cloud would rest on the character of Sully but for the honest and simple exculpation contained in his own memoirs. His austere and rude manners made him many enemies. Most of his contemporaries unite in accusing him ; and, strange to say, the only family, beyond his own, whose friendship and good-will he preserved in his retreat, was that of Guise.

The disgrace of Sully left the treasure of the late king completely at the regent's disposal, who dissipated it by bribing prince and noble to remain quiet. The favour of Leonora Galigai and her husband Concini, now Marshal d'Ancre, became more apparent. The avarice of these foreigners knew no bounds : not content with the purchase of a marquise, and the dignity of marshal, Concini contrived to get some of the principal fortresses of the kingdom in his possession—Péronne amongst others, and the citadel of Amiens. Épernon, on his side, secured Metz ; whilst the count de Soissons and the prince of Condé, despite their pensions and their submission, by turns thwarted the court, and threw it into disorder by their private quarrels. Although the marshal d'Ancre and his wife were the chief favourites of the queen-regent, Villeroi was nevertheless the counsellor whose views, in matters of serious policy, she principally adopted. Villeroi, say the *Mémoires* attributed to Richelieu, bred in the civil wars, had imbibed their virulence, which he repressed during the life of Henry. Instead of now recommending that monarch's conciliating policy, which Sully upheld, Villeroi said that there were but two parties in the state, Catholic and Protestant, and that the government must necessarily embrace one or the other. He leaned to the Catholic side, and supported the project of strengthening it by marrying the young king to a daughter of Spain, rather than to a princess of Lorraine or Savoy, as had been the advice of Henry. The prince of Condé, however, urged by the duke de Bouillon, opposed the ministry in this, for no reason, apparently, except the sake of making opposition. And for the time, Louis XIII being as yet but nine years of age, the project was allowed to slumber.<sup>d</sup>

### *First Revolt of the Lords (1614 A.D.)*

The pretensions of the nobles grew with the weakness of the government. "The presents of the queen," said Richelieu, "stilled the great hunger of their avarice and ambition ; but it was by no means extinct. The



[1614 A.D.]

treasury and the coffers of the Bastille were exhausted; then they aspired to so great things that royal authority could not possibly give them the increase of power which they demanded." What they wanted in fact was governorships for themselves and their families, places of surety, and the dismemberment of France. Épernon was governor of Metz, but Henry, being afraid of that proud noble, had imposed a lieutenant upon him, who occupied the citadel and corresponded directly with the ministers. The very day of the king's death Épernon hastened an order to take possession of the lieutenant and the citadel. He had a strong place at that time only two steps from the Spaniards, which people called "his kingdom of Austrasia."



FRENCH COURTIER, TIME OF LOUIS XIII

Many lords at the news of the assassination had thus thrown themselves into the cities with which they had an understanding, and some did not wish to ever come out again or wished at any rate to return. "The time of kings is past," they said, "that of the nobles is come." The first refusal of the regent brought about a civil war. Condé took up arms and published a manifesto in which he accused the court of having debased the nobility, ruined the finances, and taxed the poor — singular reproaches in the mouth of a prince who with his friends had received the best part of this money of the poor. He concluded according to custom by demanding the convocation of the states-general to work at the reform of existing abuses.

Brought up in the Catholic faith, although born of a Protestant family, Condé hoped to rally both parties to his cause. A large number of lords came to take their places under his standard, at their head the dukes de Ven-

dôme, de Longueville, de Luxemburg, de Mayenne, de Nevers, de Retz, etc. The Calvinists refused to be associated in this rising in arms. "We have all the liberty for our consciences," said they, "which we could desire, and we do not wish to abandon our wives and our houses to satisfy the appetite of some factious persons." The Catholics did not take fire either. Since the estates of the league, popular passions had been greatly appeased. The party of tolerant politicians born with L'Hôpital, and come to power under Henry IV, now counted nearly all members of the cloth and bourgeoisie. The experience which had been so cruelly bought by the civil war was not lost. The nation compared the twelve years of prosperity it had enjoyed, with those thirty-eight years of massacres and pillaging, and held close to the throne; leaving the great lords to exercise their sterile ambition in space. "The people," wrote Malherbe at that moment, "remain obedient everywhere, and without them nothing can be done." Let a firm hand take the rudder and even the most turbulent will return to the quiet in which Henry IV had held them. Some of Henry IV's old ministers, Villeroy, Jeannin, counselled the queen to act with vigour. She preferred to make terms at Ste. Menchould (May 15th, 1614). The prince of Condé received 450,000 livres in cash; the duke of Mayenne 300,000 "to get married"; M. de Longueville 100,000 livres pension, etc. But the court, wanting to gain on one side what it had lost on the other, did not pay the stockholders of the Hôtel-de-Ville in that year. That was what was done for "the poor." And the court assented to the call of the states-general.

### *Last Assembly of the States-General*

The states-general, assembled at Paris in 1614, demands especial attention, not only as the last of these national assemblies previous to the Revolution (at the commencement of which it was continually referred to as affording precedent), but as a scene in which the political feelings and views of the age were completely developed. We have an ample account of the sittings and discussions of the commons or third order, written by Florimond Rapine, a member, one of the king's advocates. From this we learn that the majority of the lower chamber were lawyers, and a considerable portion nobles, almost all the king's lieutenant-generals being elected by their several governments. The most important consideration in the eyes of all was evidently the respective dignity of persons and classes. The first two months were consumed in disputes of precedence, in ceremonial, in mutual compliments between the orders at first, and afterwards in mutual abuse. Miron, provost of the merchants of the city of Paris, was elected president. The address of the commons to the king was spoken by this magistrate on his knees; the deputies were clothed in simple black, whilst priests and nobles shone in gold, and an attempt of the president to wear his city robes of red and blue in a procession was looked upon as a monstrous piece of ambition.

The grievance most odious to the nation was the enormity of pensions granted to the princes and chief officers. Against these the commons and the clergy joined in lifting up their voice. The next demand was to abolish the venality of the judicature, and the right of the *paulette*, a kind of annual fine, paid by the officers of parliament, in consideration of which their offices were considered hereditary. This demand the chamber of the commons could not in decency oppose; but being principally lawyers and provincial governors, it was their interest to preserve the *paulette*, and they therefore slurred over the question, and laid greater stress on the necessity

[1614-1615 A.D.]

of abating the *taille*, which pressed upon the people. Thus, the nobles insisting on abolishing the hereditary right to their offices held by the legists, the legists or commons retaliated by demanding the retrenchment of pensions; and a struggle ensued between them. Savaron, an orator of eloquence in the *tiers*, exclaimed against the mercenary spirit of the noblesse, which, he said, had forsaken the pursuit of honour for the worship of the goddess Pecune, and bartered even its fidelity for a price. The nobles were indignant at this, and demanded an apology. De Mesme, another member of the *tiers*, was deputed to explain, and he made matters infinitely worse. "France," said he, "had three children: The clergy, if not the eldest born, had at least, like Jacob, got the heritage and the blessing, and therefore were to be considered the eldest. Next came the noblesse, the second son — fiefs, counties, and commands, were its share. The youngest born was the commons, whose portion was the offices of the judicature. But," concluded the orator, "let not the noblesse presume too much over the *tiers*; since it often happens that the cadets of a great family restore to it that honour and illustration which has been thrown away by the elder brethren."

The difference of interest between the states rendered their meeting productive of no effect. The regent would willingly have reduced the pensions of the great, and destroyed the *paulette*, or hereditary right of the legists to their offices; but she feared to outrage the princes by the first, whilst uncertain of the support of the commons. Nothing accordingly was decided on. The *cahiers* or remonstrances of the states were presented, were smilingly received, and slept in the king's hands. The assembly was dissolved. The queen took her own inactivity and inability for prudence. It proved the contrary. The party of the princes leagued with that of the legists, the union being effected by the exertions and intrigues of the duke de Bouillon. As the assembly of the states had proved an empty ceremony, all its advice and remonstrance being disregarded, the legists of the parliament were urged to put themselves forward as the popular representatives, and finish the work that the states had vainly attempted. The chambers of parliament accordingly assembled, and began by summoning the great peers to join them, and form a court of peers for taking into consideration the affairs of the kingdom.

This bold act was the inspiration of Bouillon. The court was terrified, and with good cause; but the parliament itself was almost equally intimidated by its own boldness, and showed but hesitation when the queen put forth her authority. Nevertheless, the peers being forbidden to join the parliament, — an injunction that Condé had the weakness to obey, — the legists prepared their remonstrances; amongst which were not only all the demands of the states, but also a claim that no act of the king should have force unless freely registered by the parliament, and that the parliament should have the right of summoning a court of peers and great officers, when occasion required. These remonstrances they insisted on reading in public before the young king, who showed a favourable and benign countenance, whilst that of the regent was convulsed with anger. But this bold attempt to put a check on the royal authority utterly failed: an edict of the king reproved the audacity of the parliament; and the latter who had been urged on more by the intrigues of the princes than by any conscientious or firm love of liberty and the public good, yielded pusillanimously, when affairs began to assume the appearance of an open rupture. Condé acted pusillanimously, also, in not declaring himself, and taking his place in the parliament, to which his secret promises of support could not impart suffi-



cient confidence. It ended by the court obtaining the upper hand, and in the consequent revolt of Condé; the queen resolving, at the same time, to fulfil the project of the double marriage with Spain.

#### MAJORITY OF LOUIS XIII.; MARRIAGE WITH ANNE OF AUSTRIA

Marie de' Medici, with the young king, set out for Bordeaux, to meet his future spouse. It was a military enterprise rather than a nuptial procession, the court marching at the head of an army, whilst it was pursued by Condé with an equal force. Both sides avoided an action. The king arrived at Bordeaux, despatched his sister Elizabeth, who was to espouse the infant of Spain, to the Pyrenees, and received in return Anne of Austria, a young and not unlovely princess of fifteen. The marriage was celebrated at Bordeaux in November, 1615. Louis XIII was now of age; the possession of a wife gave him the consciousness of manhood, and he began accordingly to feel and to express a will of his own that disquieted and constrained the queen-mother, no longer regent.

One of the young monarch's most dominant tastes was falconry, and as he was not allowed to follow it in the fields, he kept a number of these birds of prey in his apartments. A young man, of the name of De Luynes, charged with the care of them, interested the king by his knowledge and conversation on such subjects. He soon became a favourite. And Marie de' Medici, who discovered the rising sun, made repeated offers to resign her authority, which Louis was not prepared to accept. She then sought to conciliate Luynes, but he, ambitious and desirous of full power, held aloof, and continued in the king's presence to criticise the feeble administration of Marie and the prodigal folly of Concini.

Feeling her influence undermined, and humouring the impatience of the young monarch and his queen, who longed to visit Paris, she concluded a new accommodation with Condé, greatly to the advantage of that prince. He was allowed to participate in the government, and to sign the decrees of the council. The queen objected to granting this power, but she was overruled by Villeroi, who observed that this would put the prince always in the king's power, by bringing him to the Louvre.

"There is no danger," said he, "in trusting the pen to a hand, the arm of which you hold." The duke de Longueville superseded the marshal D'Ancre in the government of Picardy. The Huguenots, who had armed for Condé, had also their recompense. The court and royal authority was in fact, at the feet of this young chief of the noblesse.

#### RICHELIEU APPEARS

The queen-dowager saw the condition to which her weakness had reduced her. The marshal D'Ancre was her only friend, and, from the general odium borne to him, he proved more a weight than a support. Another counsellor indeed she had, a man attached both to her and D'Ancre, and who was well capacitated to counsel her in this extremity. This was Armand du Plessis Richelieu, bishop of Luçon, who had somewhat distinguished himself in the states-general of 1614.<sup>d</sup>

A painter who was remarkably faithful and conscientious in art and in life—the Fleming, Philip de Champagne—has left us a true representation of the fine, strong, and spare figure of the cardinal De Richelieu. This Jansenist painter would have disdained to relieve or enrich the gray imag-

[1616 A.D.]

with a ray of light, as Rubens or Murillo would have done. That would have been changing the nature of the grave, unpromising subject. The eye would have been pleased and art better satisfied, but it would not have been true to history. It must be remembered that this was the epoch of the monochrome, when plain glass was replacing the stained glass of the sixteenth century. In France especially the taste for colour was dead.

Gray everywhere. Literary gray in Malherbe. Religious gray in Berulle and the Oratory. The new-born Port-Royal aims at dullness, one might almost say at mediocrity. Pascal will appear in thirty years. The colour is very good here; but moderate in very truth, neither too much nor too little. A learned master among masters, the good Philip nevertheless stuck so closely to nature and went so deeply into it that he satisfies both the conceptions of history and the popular impression. History recognises in this gray-bearded phantom with its lustreless gray eye and its fine spare hands the grandson of the prevost of Henry III who assassinated Guise. He comes towards you, and you do not feel reassured. That personage has indeed the appearance of life, but is it truly a man, a soul? Yes, an intellect certainly, strong, clear, and shall we say luminous, or dark and sinister? If he would take a few steps further we should be face to face. He does not inspire anxiety, but one fears that this strong head has nothing in its breast, neither heart nor vitals. In trials of witchcraft there have been too many of these evil spirits that will not remain in the lower regions, but return and disturb the world.

What contrasts in him—so hard, so yielding; so complete, so broken! By how many tortures he must have been moulded, formed, and unformed, let us say rather disarticulated, to have become that eminently artificial thing which goes without going, advances without appearing, and noiselessly, as though gliding over a deadened carpet—then, having arrived, overthrows everything. He looks at you from the depths of his mystery, this red-robed sphinx; one dare not say from the depths of his craftiness. For, in contrast with the ancient sphinx, which dies if one divines it, this one seems to say: "Whoever divines me shall die." If one should be densely and profoundly ignorant of Richelieu,<sup>e</sup> one must read his *Mémoires*. All the people of this race, Sulla, Tiberius, and others, have written memoirs or caused them to be written, in order to render history difficult, to baffle men, to disconcert the public, and above all to connect the beginning of their lives with the end and to disguise somewhat the terrible contradictions of their different periods.

His ill-fortune forced him to have merit early. He was the youngest of three brothers. His family was not rich, and had intermarried with plebeians. The eldest brother, who was at court, spent everything. The second, who held the bishopric of Luçon, became a Carthusian; and as this bishopric did not leave the family, the third, our Richelieu, had to become a churchman, in spite of his military taste. The eldest brother was killed in a duel, too late for his cadet, who would have taken his place and would never have become a priest. He perhaps was not born ill-natured, but he became so. The contradiction between his character and his robe gave him that rich fund of ill humour to which is due his great strength—"the bitterness of blood, which alone makes him win battles." His battles as priest could only be theological. He promptly transmitted his theses with great ostentation to the Sorbonne, dedicating them to Henry IV, and offering himself to the king for important services. Then he went to Rome to be consecrated, to offer himself to the pope. Neither the king nor the pope responded to the impatience of the ardent young politician.

Then he sadly fell back upon his bishopric of Luçon, which was poor enough and in a country of disputes, near to La Rochelle and the Huguenots. This nearness caused him annoyance; in spite of violent headaches, he wrote against them. He is not without talent. His pen is a sword, short and keen, well-fitted for disputation. He does not dwell dully upon the absurd. If he writes nonsense he does not do it like a fool. He has a happy insolence and bold turns of thought; and retreats haughtily, and by this means he makes a very good showing.

For all that, he would have remained in his obscurity at Luçon if he had had nothing but his controversy. But he was a handsome fellow, a fine porcelain creature. Concini was of faience.

The handsome Bellegarde, a beau since the time of Henry III, was getting worn out. These considerations influenced the queen-mother, and she took him as her almoner.<sup>b</sup>

It was the 30th of November, 1616, that Richelieu entered the ministry for the first time. The Spanish ambassador, the duke of Monteleone, showed keen satisfaction at his accession and wrote to Madrid that there was "no better than he in France for the service of God, of the crown of Spain, and of the public good"—of the public good as the heirs of Philip II understood it! This diplomat had not the gift of divination!

The majestic drama of the ministry of the great Richelieu thus opens as a comedy of intrigue. It is by no means probable that he began his career by deceiving the pope in order to obtain his bishop's bull, but it seems certain that he got into power by deceiving Spain and preparing to deceive and supplant Concini. He was determined to gain power at any price; he felt himself necessary;

an irresistible force was driving him forward! In this feverish need of action by which he is devoured he passes over all obstacles, perhaps even over those of conscience and personal dignity as over others. He flatters those who despise him, caresses those who hate him, and lowers to vain mediocrity that brow which was made for empire. He hides at the bottom of his soul all his nobler and better feelings, as one would conceal criminal tendencies. Unfortunate novitiate of political greatness! There will always be very different opinions of Richelieu according to whether one studies the end or the means, the public man or the private man. Richelieu never was false to the duties of the statesman toward his country's greatness, but he was unfortunately less faithful to the laws of morality and of humanity.<sup>b</sup>

Marie was not aware of the merit of this personage; yet it may have been by his bold counsel that she ventured a stroke of policy, of boldness unusual to her, in arresting Condé in the Louvre, and sending him to the Bastille. The noblesse, his partisans, instantly fled to raise their followers. The



COSTUME OF THE TIME OF LOUIS XIII



[1616-1617 A.D.]

Parisian mob collected, and showed its humour by pillaging the hôtel of the marshal D'Ancre; there, however, its fury subsided. The queen was victorious, and the fugitive partisans of Condé were reduced to impotent exclamation of vengeance and rage. Their cause, however, was not lost. The young king had joined his mother in the project for getting rid of Condé; but in delivering himself from one master, Louis was mortified to find that he had given himself another. The marshal D'Ancre now ruled uncontrolled at court and in council; and the pride of Louis was even more hurt by the ascendancy of the upstart Concini than by that of Condé. Luynes, his favourite, and the young nobles who composed his court, flattered the monarch's pride, and fanned his resentment. Marie de' Medici deemed this knot of striplings to be occupied in pleasure, whilst they meditated a plot. The arrest of Condé was a precedent and example.<sup>d</sup>

## ASSASSINATION OF MARSHAL D'ANCRE

It was well to have arrested the prince de Condé, said Richelieu; one might have done as much for Concini. Strange forgetfulness of circumstances; the king had no one, and his man Vitry, captain of the guards, did not have the guards with him. Concini on the contrary never went anywhere unless surrounded by thirty gentlemen. Vitry collected fifteen with great difficulty, hid them, and armed them with pistols under their coats.

They chose the moment when Concini came to make his usual morning visit to the queen. He was on the Louvre bridge with his large escort. Vitry was so frightened that he passed without seeing him, having him before his eyes. When told, he returned. "I arrest you!" "*A mi!*" ("to my aid!") cried Concini. He had not finished when three or four pistol shots went off and blew his brains out. "It is by order of the king," said Vitry. Only one of Concini's men had put his hand to his sword (April 24th, 1617).

The Corsican Ornano took the king, raised him in his arms, and showed him at the window. The people did not understand. It was first said that Concini had wounded the king. But when it was known it was he on the contrary who had been killed, there was an explosion of joy throughout the whole city. The queen-mother was very much frightened. Her one cry was "*Poveretta di me!*" However, what had she to fear? Whatever antipathy her son might feel for her he could not dream of bringing her to judgment. He was satisfied with removing her guards. The doors of her apartments were walled up, save one. She showed no pity for Concini or his widow. When someone said to her: "Madame, your majesty alone can inform her of the death of her husband" — "Ah, I have many other things to do! If you can't tell it to her, sing it to her; cry in her ears: *L'Hanno ammazzato.*" Terrible word; it was the very same that Concini had used to the queen the day of Henry IV's death, when he told her the news that she knew only too well. Leonora tremblingly sought refuge with her. She refused it. Then that woman to whom the queen had confided her crown diamonds (as a resource in case of misfortune) undressed and went to bed, hiding her diamonds under her. She was pulled from her bed; everything was ransacked; the room was pillaged. She was taken to the Conciergerie. Paris was in a state of celebration. The crowd hunted and disinterred her husband's body, which was solemnly burned in front of Henry IV's statue in token of expiation. It was said that a madman had bitten out the heart and eaten a piece of it.

The life of the queen-mother hung by a thread. Among the murderers, several would have liked to kill her, thinking that she might arise later and avenge the death of her lover. But Luynes would have dared neither to counsel the royal child to do such a thing nor to do it without orders. He saved her by surrounding her with the king's guards. The Capuchin Travail, Père Hilaire, who had formerly intrigued against the marriage of Marie de' Medici, and who was actor and executor in the murder of her favourite, thought that nothing was accomplished unless she perished. He applied to a man of her party who had access to her at will, her equerry Bressieux, trying to get him to kill her. The equerry refused. "Never mind," said Travail, "I will bring it about that the king goes to Vincennes ;

and then I will have her torn in pieces by the people." Luynes, who had promised the Capuchin the archbishopric of Bourges if he aided in killing Concini, did not wish to keep his word when the deed had been done. Instead he profited by some sanguinary words which this chatterer had uttered, out of folly and bravado, to have him judged and broken on the wheel.

The king had caused parliament to be informed that he had ordered the arrest of Concini, who, having resisted, had been killed. He spoke of his mother only with respect, saying that he had prayed his lady and mother to approve of his taking the rudder of state. Parliament came to congratulate him. The action which could so easily be brought

against Concini and his wife was skilfully stifled and turned from the true issue. A case of sorcery was made out of it. That was, moreover, the custom of the century. The libidinous tyrannies practised by priests in women's convents, when by chance they came to light, were changed into sorcery, and the devil was charged with everything. Leonora herself thought the devil was in her body and had herself exorcised in the church of the Augustines by priests who had come from Italy at her request. As she suffered terribly in her head, Montalte, her Jewish physician, killed a cock, and applied it to her head still warm, which was interpreted as a sacrifice to hades. An astrological document was also found in her rooms, the nativity of the queen and her children. It is not at all improbable that when losing her influence she tried to keep her hold on the queen by magic. It was the general folly of the age. Luynes believed in it also. Richelieu says that



ALFRED DE LUYNES

[1617 A.D.]

he had two Piedmontese magicians come to find him powders which he might put in the king's garments, and herbs for his shoes.

However much of truth there may have been in Leonora's sorcery, it did not deserve death, and her thefts even, her brazen-faced sales of places and orders, would have merited only the whip. Court tradition, which was very favourable to such people, as enemies of Henry IV, has not failed to invent, to place in the mouth of Leonora proud and insolently daring words—for example: "My charm was that of a mind set on folly." She was beheaded at the Grève and then burned.<sup>b</sup>

## THE MINISTRY OF LUYNES (1617-1621 A.D.)

The position of the queen-mother was mortifying and distressing. She had been deceived by the boy-king; stripped of her power; her dearest friends had perished. Of the band of courtiers who so lately hung upon her smile, Richelieu alone evinced a determination to adhere to the fortunes of his mistress. Marie de' Medici besought an interview with her son. This favour was long denied. Luynes feared a mother's influence over a being so young and so weak as Louis. Marie was allowed to retire to Blois, whither Richelieu accompanied her.

The wealth as well as the influence of Concini fell to the share of Luynes, who was, however, neither a foreigner nor so rash and avaricious as his predecessor. Louis XIII, from his very first moment of grasping power, showed the same incapacity of wielding it that ever distinguished him. The love of the chase was the only active quality the young monarch seemed to have inherited from his father Henry. Luynes became hence sole master of the state. He found two parties aspiring to influence—that of the



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prince of Condé, and that of the queen-mother. One was in prison, and the other exiled; so that Luynes found no difficulty in flattering and giving hopes alternately to both, whilst he permitted neither the liberation of the prince nor the return of Marie de' Medici. The body of the noblesse, who had flown to arms upon Condé's arrest, and who had returned on learning Concini's fall, thought it a more serious step to rebel against the king than against his mother and her favourite. The young court, too, had charms; and the prince of Condé was now but ill supported by that aristocratic band that had shared his envy and hatred towards the family of Ancre.

Marie de' Medici bore her disgrace with impatience. For some time she lulled herself with the hope that Luynes was sincere in his promises of allowing her to return. She expected in vain; and at length resolved to work her deliverance by leaguings with the prince of Condé and her former enemies.



These intrigues coming to light, Richelieu, who was considered to be the source of them, was ordered to quit Blois, where the queen resided, and retire to his bishopric. But Marie had already profited by the advice of this able counsellor. She kept up an active correspondence with the duke d'Épernon, who was master of Metz, and through him with such of the nobility as were envious of Luynes. Having by these means formed a party, Marie escaped by night from the château of Blois; was met by Épernon at the head of an armed body of gentlemen; and, retreating south, soon found herself at the head of a party strong enough to defy her enemies. There cannot be a stronger example of the overgrown power of the nobles, and of the manner in which they absorbed the whole force of the crown, than the authority wielded by Épernon at this time against his sovereign. The duke had no less than five governments, *viz.*, the provinces of Saintonge, Auxerrois, the Limousin, the Bourbonnais, and the Three Bishoprics. Add to these Metz, the bulwark of the kingdom adjoining Lorraine; Loches, the strongest fortress of Touraine, which he held, together with the command of all the French infantry, as colonel-general; and it can be no longer a wonder that the defection of such a grandee should have immediately reduced Louis and his favourite to treat with the queen-mother.

Richelieu was recalled from his diocese, and employed to effect an accommodation, which took place. Marie de' Medici was the principal gainer: she obtained the government of Anjou, and the towns of Angers, Chinon, and Pont-de-Cé, as fortresses of surety. The king promised to restore Marie de' Medici to his confidence, and to her place at court. But this was postponed for the time. An interview took place betwixt Louis and his mother. A light remark on one side, answered by a cold compliment on the other, is all that is recorded of the meeting. "How your majesty has grown!" exclaimed Marie. "Grown for your service, madame," was the young monarch's reply. The queen-mother remained at Angers, whilst the court returned to Paris. Épernon received a written pardon for his rebellion, from which he had derived no advantage; a circumstance that caused him to be taxed with folly by his contemporaries. Disinterestedness was inconceivable to the age.

The first step of Luynes, in order to counteract the revived party of the queen-mother, was to liberate Condé from Vincennes. But his long captivity had secluded this prince from his ancient followers; and Richelieu, who saw the object of Luynes, was able to succeed in not only drawing over the whole body of the noblesse to the queen-mother, but even in exciting the Huguenots to stir in her favour. These measures of Richelieu, who was at the same time amusing Luynes by feigned friendship and communications, became ripe in 1620, when, upon a fresh refusal to admit Marie de' Medici to court, all the great nobles, who had most of them formerly conspired against her, now espoused her cause, and quitted the court. Almost all France was in array against Louis and Luynes. Épernon armed his five governments and his many towns. Marie herself was in Anjou. The duke de Longueville held Normandy; the duke de Vendôme, Brittany; the count of Soissons, Perche and Maine; the marshal De Bois-dauphin had Poitou; De Retz, La Trémouille, Mayenne, Rouen, and Nemours held the southern provinces betwixt them, except Languedoc, where Montmorency remained neutral. The Huguenots were also against the court, as was the duke de Rohan, their principal leader, and La Rochelle, their chief town. This was owing to a decree, issued by Luynes, that the church lands of Béarn, where Henry IV had established Protestantism, should be restored to the

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Catholic priesthood. Thus Richelieu enlisted under the banners of his mistress these two great malcontent and independent powers in the monarchy, the aristocracy, and the reformers, which it was afterwards the great aim and achievement of his policy to crush. In thus wielding them successfully against the monarch, Richelieu became acquainted with their danger, their strength, and their secret springs.

Condé, however, inspired Luynes this time with additional vigour. The prince himself was excited to avenge his long confinement upon the queen-mother, who had caused it; and the king, therefore, was induced to march with an army, headed by Condé, to reduce the rebels. He was successful in Normandy; the insurgents retired everywhere before the royal army, which turned southward, and drove the queen from even Angers, her principal fortress. Luynes, contented with these advantages, showed himself willing to treat, as did Richelieu, who was somewhat disgusted by the want of alacrity and resolution evinced by the noblesse, his partisans. Condé, however, pushed on the war; and although a treaty was on the eve of being concluded, he attacked the forces of Marie's adherents, and put them to the rout at Pont-de-Cé.

This success, instead of breaking off negotiations, accelerated them; for Luynes became instantly jealous of Condé, and feared his predominance, if the queen-mother should be completely crushed. A treaty was therefore concluded on similar terms to the preceding one, with the important addition that the king should become really reconciled to his mother, and that she should reside at court. Many doubts and accusations exist as to the good faith of Richelieu in these transactions. The loss of Angers, the defeat of Pont-de-Cé, were said to be arranged and allowed by him; and it is more than probable that, in disgust with the noblesse, who were at once domineering to their friends and feeble towards their enemies, Richelieu had conceived the project of reconciling Louis and the queen-mother, as well as their respective favourites, Luynes and himself; thus uniting the scattered elements of the government, and enabling it to set its turbulent enemies at defiance. Richelieu, by this plan, hoped to secure to himself a place in the council, where he felt confident he would soon rule such weak spirits as Louis, the queen-mother, and Luynes. But the latter had the sagacity to dread Richelieu's superiority. Although the bishop sedulously sought the favourite's friendship, and although an alliance took place betwixt their families, nevertheless Luynes persevered in his jealousy; prevented, by his intrigues, the cardinal's hat stipulated for Richelieu in the late treaty, and kept the doors of the council chamber inexorably closed against him.

*The Huguenot Uprising; The Siege of Montauban (1621 A.D.)*

Although Luynes had risen to power as a mere favourite, he still held it with a firmer hand than Concini; nor was he without the views or the sagacity of a statesman. Even previous to his having at court so able a prompter as Richelieu, he had anticipated the future policy of that minister in endeavouring to crush the Huguenots. Luynes was determined upon restoring to the Catholic priesthood the church lands of Béarn, which had been in the hands of the Protestants since the days of Jeanne d'Albret. Louis was equally bent on rescuing from heresy the native province of his family. After the Treaty of Pont-de-Cé, the king marched into Béarn, and reduced not only the church lands to his will, but the little province itself, the privileges of which he annulled. The Huguenots were of course indignant and

alarmed. This was not the only infraction of the agreements made with them. Favas, their deputy at court, declared that the government intended to reduce them altogether. They accordingly summoned a general assembly of reform at La Rochelle, despite the prohibition of the king; and their consistory published a bold decree, dividing the Protestant regions of France into circles, after the manner of Germany, uniting again those circles in a general government, and establishing the rules by which this government was to raise troops and taxes, to levy war and exercise independent jurisdiction. The scheme was a direct imitation of the United Provinces of Holland. It manifested fully the republican ideas and leanings of the Huguenots, and roused the court, and above all Richelieu, to crush them.

An army was raised by Luynes,<sup>d</sup> and Louis XIII left Paris accompanied by the good wishes of all zealous Catholics and those who were desirous of peace. He had re-established the tax paid by judges, magistrates, and financiers on their offices, to secure them to their sons in case of death, contracted a loan, and obtained from the clergy an extraordinary tax. On the 19th of May, 1621, he occupied Saumur, which he was able to leave to Duplessis-Mornay in spite of his neutral attitude. It was necessary to prevent all communication between the Protestants, both north and south of the Loire. He afterwards received the submission of the towns in Touraine and Poitou, with the exception of La Rochelle, and St. Jean d'Angély. This latter place belonged to the duke de Rohan, who placed a garrison there under the command of Soubise, whilst he himself went to take command in Guienne.

Lesdiguières undertook the siege of it, which lasted twenty-five days, from the 30th of May to the 25th of June, and was very murderous. Soubise, seeing the royal troops continually increase, ended by capitulating; he obtained for the garrison the honours of war, on condition of his promising always to serve the king. The fortifications of St. Jean were demolished, the trenches filled in, and its privileges suppressed. Deliberations took place as to the besieging of La Rochelle, or the advance on Guienne, where Rohan and La Force were raising arms on all sides. The taking of La Rochelle would have ended the contest; but it offered great difficulties, especially on the side next the sea, where the royal fleet would scarcely hold its own against the numerous and well-disciplined ships of the Calvinists.

Luynes wished to obtain peace by the quickest means; he believed it would be much more rapidly accomplished by dividing the enemy and gaining over the leaders. Therefore he sent Épernon with four or five thousand men to blockade La Rochelle by land, whilst he himself took the Guienne route with the king and the bulk of the army. Mayenne,<sup>1</sup> who commanded the first division, carried Nérac by storm on the 9th of July; the little towns hastened to throw open their gates. One of the principal Calvinist *seigneurs* of Guienne, De Boisse de Pardailan, had made his submission the moment the royal troops had arrived, so as not to obey La Force. They received favourable intelligence on every side. In the north and in the centre the Protestants allowed their arms to be taken from them and the walls of their towns pulled down, without striking a blow. Condé occupied and demolished without resistance the fortress of Sancerre, in his government of Berri. They met with resistance only at Clérac, a little town upon the Lot. It took the royal army twelve days to gain possession of it; it then entered, August 5th, and inflicted the most severe punishment. The chancellor Duvair, who accompanied the king, died during this siege;

[<sup>1</sup> Henry, duke of Mayenne, son of that duke who was at one time the head of the League.]



[1621 A.D.]

Luynes did not hurry to appoint a successor, and appropriated the seals meantime. This method of monopolising all the power, all the military and civil honours, put the finishing touch to the irritation caused by his favours, and furnished an inexhaustible subject for the raillery of his enemies.

La Force was shut up at Montauban, where the minister Chamier, one of the most fanatical Calvinists, and the mayor Dupuy, who showed an equal devotion to the cause, co-operated with him most energetically. All the future of the party lay in the defence of this place. Rohan scoured Languedoc and the Cévennes to raise men, and to form a relieving army. The king had the choice of pursuing Rohan, or of besieging Montauban: He decided upon this last step, in the hopes of striking a decisive blow, and after some useless parleying, with which Sully was intrusted, the works were commenced without delay. Unfortunately they had not taken part in any other siege for a long time, except that of St. Jean d'Angély; they had fallen out of the way of taking part in real warfare, and they were even obliged to employ Italian engineers. The royal army found itself hardly sufficient for a siege of such importance. They believed in vain that they might find some partisans in the place. They attempted to surprise it, but were unsuccessful. Mayenne, who had opened the trenches August 18th, wished to rush the attack, before the works were finished. He lost many of his men, and imprudently exposing himself, paid for his temerity with his life.

The news of Mayenne's death caused a stir in Paris, as his name had acted as a spell on the populace, amongst whom the war against the Protestants had awakened all the ancient passions of the league. The following day, the 18th, they attempted with no better result to make a breach by aid of the cannon. On the 28th, Rohan came to the assistance of the place in spite of the vigilance of the dukes of Angoulême and Montmorency. He cut himself a passage through at the point of the sword, although losing many men, and gave to the besieged garrison the means for prolonging their resistance. The king called together all the most experienced marshals and military men. They recognised the fact that it was impossible to carry Montauban before the winter. Luynes, who had become constable without knowing how to command an army or direct a siege, incurred the responsibility of this failure, but it did not disturb him. He wished to make peace, contrary to the desires of the military men and of the earnest Catholics. He asked for an interview with Rohan, and tried to bribe him. Rohan refused to desert his party, all the more because he was unable to do so, being under the direction of ministers



A FRENCH NOBLEMAN, TIME OF LOUIS XIII

whose impassioned ideas allowed him very little personal freedom. The Calvinists hoped that, thanks to the resistance of Montauban, they would weary the king of his policy. They were not mistaken. A final attack, attempted the 21st of October, failed like all the previous ones. The royal army, weakened by fatigue and sickness, and decimated by little battles, rapidly diminished. They had fired uselessly twenty thousand cannon shots, an enormous total for the times. On the 2nd of November Luynes decided to raise the siege, subject to a renewal in the spring.

The king, on retiring, made his entry into Toulouse, the most Catholic of the towns of the south, where he was received with general acclamation. He decided to limit himself during the winter to the keeping open of the communications between Toulouse and Bordeaux. Accordingly he ordered the marshal De Rouquelaure and Bassompierre to besiege the little town of Monheur, which the Calvinists occupied near Tonneins. The camp and the court were full of divisions, as always happens after great reverses. They threw on one another the responsibility for the errors that had been committed. Luynes was naturally the one whom they attacked the most. The most ardent Catholics reproached him with having desired peace too much; the military men with having attempted the siege of Montauban with insufficient forces, through avarice, some said. Father Arnoux, the king's confessor, and Puisieux, secretary of state, began to rise up against him and tried to destroy his credit. On the 11th of December Monheur capitulated.

#### *Death of Luynes (1621 A.D.)*

Their lives were granted to the garrison, but the town was pillaged and burned for having given itself to the Huguenots. Three days after, on the 14th, Luynes died suddenly of fever. He was just at the pinnacle of his success. Nevertheless, Louis XIII, in spite of his caution and his ordinary dissimulation, had begun to complain of his yoke, and to lend an ear to the accusations of his adversaries. Luynes had had few friends, and his enemies, whose numbers were increasing, were already attacking him with extreme vigour. His ambition and his avidity, equally unrestrained, had turned everyone against him. The greater number of the authors who were contemporary with him, animated against him by prejudice and the strongest personal feelings, had treated him unfairly, and attributed all sorts of extravagances to him, as, for instance, wishing to see himself made prince of Avignon, or king of Austrasia. His political talents deserve more justice. Firm without illusion, and knowing how to ally moderation with energy, he had conducted the war briskly in the desire to arrive more quickly at a peace which he wished to make prompt and certain. This end he never ceased to pursue, and Richelieu, who gained it, only finished a work that had been begun.<sup>i</sup>

This check saved the Huguenots for the time, although it was counterbalanced by the ascendancy of Guise in Poitou. The treaty was concluded in the following year at Montpellier, by which it was stipulated that affairs should be replaced as they were before the war, new conquests restored, and new fortifications demolished. One point the king gained; this was that the Huguenots should no more have a lay assembly. A synod of ecclesiastics was alone allowed them; thus obviating the revival of that republican assembly at La Rochelle, which had roused all the suspicions and energy of king and court. Louis, returning to his capital, was welcomed as a hero. The two queens rivalled each other in the brilliancy of their fêtes. But neither applause nor pleasure could prevent the king from relapsing into

[1622-1624 A.D.]

that state of apathy which was natural to him. Louis XIII was as completely the *roi fainéant* as were the last of the race of Clovis and Charlemagne. But times were altered; the tree of royalty had taken root, and stood as erect, when withered and sapless, as when in spring and leaf.

## RICHELIEU'S RETURN TO THE MINISTRY

Louis XIII had been inspired by Luynes with an aversion for Richelieu. It was with great difficulty that Marie de' Medici obtained for him in 1622 the cardinal's hat stipulated in a former treaty; but all her efforts in procuring him admission to the council were resisted. The marquis de la Vieuville was favourite for the moment, and he strengthened the king's prejudice against the cardinal. Marie was persevering; and at length Louis yielded. He permitted Richelieu to take his seat at the council table, but on the express condition that he was to be without office, and that he should not consider himself a minister. The cardinal expressed himself perfectly contented with this arrangement: he took his seat; and the inefficacy of all the precautions taken against him soon appeared. They had bound the arms of a giant, who broke his bonds the instant that it pleased him to be free. From the first moment that Richelieu spoke, his genius dominated; and the monarch himself, as well as La Vieuville, cowered beneath an ascendancy that they found it vain to dispute.

To secure this ascendancy over the monarch, Richelieu scorned to make use of the same means which sufficed La Vieuville and Luynes. Instead of flattering Louis, and directing him in the way of pleasure, the cardinal at first strove to awaken the young king to a sense of the country's debasement, to its true interests, and its possible glory. He pointed out the turbulent disobedience of the great, the sedition of the Huguenot assemblies, the weakness of ministers, and the disorder of the finances—the consequent poverty and misery of the kingdom, as well as the decay of its influence and dignity in its relations with foreign potentates. He pointed to the house of Austria, daily increasing its strength and extending its territories, at that very moment triumphant from the conquest of the Palatinate, and threatening to crush those Protestant states of Germany which had defied the might of Charles V. Louis listened, and was excited, not indeed to take vigorous counsels himself, but to confide in a minister who had shown himself able to conceive and execute them.<sup>1</sup>

The chief object then coveted by the house of Austria was the possession of the Valtelline, a strip of Alpine territory which might serve to connect the dominions of that family in Germany and in Italy. It had been in subjection to the Grisons, a Protestant race; and Spain seized this pretext to conquer it in the name of the pope. France had opposed this with the usual feebleness of her diplomacy. The first act of Richelieu was to cut short the negotiation, to defy both the pope and Spain, and to send an army under the marshal D'Estrées into the Valtelline, which expelled the Spaniards, and restored the region to its ancient masters.

Richelieu dared to show the same bold front to the Huguenots at the same time. Determined on completely reducing them, his first endeavour

[<sup>1</sup> In Richelieu's *Mémoires*, which he intended to serve as historical material for his biography, it is stated that Richelieu in a single interview dramatically placed this gigantic scheme before the young king, and that Louis from this time was obedient to the minister. This, however, is hardly in agreement with the facts. Richelieu seems hardly to have found his policy at first; and he was not sure of Louis' constancy until after his success at La Rochelle.]



was to drive them from Poitou and La Rochelle, where they could at all times receive succours from England, and to circumscribe their influence to the provinces of the southeast. He refused to evacuate Montpellier; and the Huguenots were thus provoked to rebel. The cardinal at the same time deprived them of the aid of the English monarch, with whom he was negotiating the marriage of Henrietta of France, sister of Louis. Rohan, and a great number of the Protestants, thought it on this account imprudent to recommence war; but his impetuous brother, Soubise, made an attack on the port of Blavet, seized some ships that were fitting out there, and sailing thence made a descent upon the island of Ré. He was defeated, the Huguenots being neither decided nor prepared for a general insurrection. The consequence of the rash attempt of Soubise was that in the accommodation that ensued the royalists kept Fort Louis, merely promising not to annoy from it the inhabitants or shipping of La Rochelle.

#### CONSPIRACY OF THE COURT AGAINST RICHELIEU

Richelieu here postponed his design of completely reducing the Huguenots. The conquest of La Rochelle could alone do this effectually, and that required a large naval force, as well as such preparations of every kind as would ensure success. Besides, for the present, the cardinal was aware that he would soon have to encounter a court intrigue, a triumph over which was more requisite to establish his power than even the subjugation of La Rochelle. The marriage of the princess Henrietta with Charles of England, which had been desired by Richelieu, as securing the previous neutrality of the latter country in a war against the Huguenots, had proved a source of difference rather than of alliance. The gallant Buckingham, who had come to demand and escort back the princess, had excited the jealousy of the cardinal. He had shown at the French court the sample of such a minister as the age esteemed—gay, liberal, handsome, looking as well as wielding command. He had admired the young queen, and had boldly expressed his admiration. His friend, Lord Holland, had paid court to the duchess de Chevreuse, the companion of the queen, and the most lovely woman of the time. Richelieu admired Madame de Chevreuse, nay, by some, is said to have pretended to the queen herself. Whatever was the truth, Richelieu and Buckingham conceived for each other a mutual hatred, which afterwards produced a rupture between their respective sovereigns. And a strong pique at the same time arose between the cardinal and the queen.

Another personage at court, now grown into importance, was Gaston, duke of Orleans, brother of the king. Louis was extremely jealous of him. A tutor, under whom the young duke improved and began to give promise of good conduct and manly virtue, was superseded by a mere courtier, calculated to give lessons in vice and dissipation. Ornano, who succeeded this man, found the prince absorbed in pleasure, and debased. He endeavoured to rouse Gaston, by explaining to him his rank, his hopes; and he did succeed in awakening his ambition. The young duke of Orleans demanded to enter the council. Richelieu, then in the commencement of his influence, replied by banishing Ornano for a time. Gaston relapsed into dissipation, and seemed little inclined to give umbrage or uneasiness to the government.

The worst part of feudal tyranny was that it interfered with the private affections of all men. Richelieu, wielding the power of Louis XIII, was not content with commanding the loyal submission of the first prince of the

[1626 A.D.]

blood. He thought proper to impose a wife upon him, nay, to choose one. The lady selected was Mademoiselle de Montpensier, rich, lovely, allied to the crown, and heiress of the house of Guise. There could be no objection to such a bride, except the compulsion that gave her. Gaston rebelled. The projected marriage convulsed the entire court, and wellnigh the kingdom also.

Richelieu's object was to provide an heir to the crown, which Louis seemed not destined long to wear. Anne of Austria, the little queen, as she was called, to distinguish her from the queen-mother, was on the other hand averse to Gaston's marriage; and she joined the friends of the latter in endeavouring to thwart the cardinal's plan. Ornano had resumed his influence and station in the prince's household; and he it was who chiefly urged Gaston to resist. Ornano was arrested. This increased the rage of the duke of Orleans; and at length a plot was entered into and approved by him, to get rid of the domineering Richelieu in the same manner that Ancre had been removed. The cardinal then inhabited a country house at Fleury. Gaston's servants were to betake themselves thither, under pretence that their master was to honour Richelieu on that day with his company to dinner, and the murder was to have taken place. Richelieu received warning. The count de Chalais, who was to have been the chief perpetrator, ventured to sound a friend, who expressed at once a lively abhorrence of the attempt, and threatened to denounce it. Chalais became alarmed, and, resolving to anticipate the informer, went himself to the cardinal, and made a disclosure. Gaston was astonished, in consequence, by the appearance of the cardinal in his apartment, on the morning appointed for the deed. "I am sorry," said Richelieu, smiling, "your highness did not give me warning of your intention to make use of my residence.

I should have been prepared. As it is, I abandon it to your service." Having so said, Richelieu handed his shirt to Gaston (one of the ceremonials of etiquette observed at a prince's levée) and then retired.

The cardinal, not content with thus confounding his enemies, was resolved to punish them and intimidate others by their example. By probing Chalais and his family, it was discovered that the nobles upon whose aid Gaston reckoned were the duke de Vendôme and his brother the grand prior, illegitimate sons of Henry IV. The former was governor of Brittany. Richelieu, dissembling his suspicions, enticed them to repair to the court at Blois, where both were instantly arrested. The imprisonment of all his friends, and the danger of some, would have roused to serious resistance a prince of more energy than Gaston. The young duke was not wanting in indignation; but Richelieu had prepossessed the monarch's mind, and had



A FRENCH GENTLEMAN, TIME OF  
LOUIS XIII

taught Louis to believe that his royal life had been aimed at as well as his minister's; that the young queen, Anne of Austria, was privy to the plot; and that she was to have married the duke of Orleans on his accession to the throne. These accusations hardened and enraged the mind of Louis XIII. Gaston, in the power of the court, was forced to espouse Mademoiselle de Montpensier; the count de Chalais perished on the scaffold; the queen was publicly reproached by her husband with having sought a second marriage, to which she indignantly replied that there was not so much to be gained by the change. Her friend, Madame de Chevreuse, was banished from court. Thus Richelieu, triumphant over his foes, amongst whom the queen and the king's brother were numbered, showed how fatal it was to provoke his enmity, how fruitless to resist his power.<sup>a</sup>

The Treaty of Montpellier in 1626 granted a hollow peace to the Huguenots; and a few months later, that is to say in May, peace was signed with Spain. Years before, Richelieu, then young and obscure, had often discussed with his friend Father Joseph how best to subdue the neighbouring town of La Rochelle, the stronghold of the Huguenots; and time had not softened his views on the subject. The English people, chafing under the influence of their French and Catholic queen, Henrietta Maria, longed to assert their Protestantism; Buckingham, opposed to her anti-Protestant policy, longed to provoke the French court. What then would better serve their ends than adoption of the Huguenot cause? So war was begun with France. Richelieu brought his forces up under the walls of La Rochelle, and drew a cordon of forts around the unhappy town, cutting off all approaches. To shut the city off from English aid, Richelieu constructed a wonderful mole across the mouth of the harbour. This was built of solid masonry, extending about seven yards from one shore and four hundred yards from the other, the intervening space of six hundred yards being partially blocked with sunken ships and further guarded by a half-circle of ships lashed together with their prows outward. Inside the boom a royal fleet watched against sallies, and outside another fleet watched for the English.<sup>a</sup>

#### THE SIEGE OF LA ROCHELLE DESCRIBED BY SEIGNOBOS

The work of construction at first went on slowly, and the besieged could do little to hinder it. They could only fire off a few guns or post a few ambuscades in the path of the staff officers as they went from one part of the army to the other; but it was winter time, and bad weather often interrupted the work of construction. The besieged had sent to ask the king of England to help them; and the latter pledged himself "to the mayor, aldermen, peers, and citizens of La Rochelle, to help them by land and sea according to his royal power until a firm peace had been established." As a result he promised to send an expedition to help them in the spring, and to furnish them with provisions; in the meantime he allowed a collection to be made for their benefit in his kingdom.

The inhabitants of La Rochelle, on their part, engaged themselves to provide pilots for the English, to prepare magazines and shelters on their coasts, and to equip vessels to help in the expedition. And if the king of France should attack the territories of the king of England, they would do all they could to create a diversion. It was agreed that neither the besieged nor the king of England should make any treaty without consulting the other. The king of England had wished to impose two other conditions; he asked the besieged to send him the children of their principal families



[1627-1628 A.D.]

as hostages, and to receive an English garrison within their walls. They only consented to receive English ships into their harbour. They accepted the king of England as an ally to help them to defend their independence, but they did not wish to have him for a master.

The royal army encamped before La Rochelle did not suffer very much from the winter. A tax had been levied in the principal towns in France which had made it possible to provide the soldiers with good clothing. The construction of the dike provided occupation for the men, and the boats were manned by volunteers from picked regiments. Meanwhile Louis XIII was wearying of this long siege with no fighting. He declared that his health would suffer if he did not go to Paris for a time. Richelieu, fearing lest the king's departure might have a bad effect on the troops, tried to afford him some distraction by giving false alarms; several times a sortie was announced, and the king remained on horseback all night waiting for it, but the besieged did not make any movement. At last Richelieu felt he could no longer keep the king with the army, so he wrote to him saying that he could now absent himself for a time "without any injury to his cause."

The king immediately announced his departure. In his absence the cardinal was to be commander-in-chief, he was called "lieutenant-general of the king in the army before La Rochelle." He had full power over all the troops, cavalry and infantry, and also over the artillery for continuing the siege, and was even empowered to receive the submission of the inhabitants and take possession of the town. The king admonished all the generals and officers to "obey him as implicitly as they would their king."

On the 10th of February, 1628, Richelieu accompanied the king two leagues from the camp; there they separated, embracing each other at parting. Louis warned the cardinal to take good care of his health; but Richelieu, out of respect for etiquette, had not dared to take his umbrella when accompanying the king, and was very much upset by the winter sun and had five attacks of intermittent fever. After being absent two months and a half, Louis returned to the camp, where he was saluted by salvos from the forts, the batteries, and the dike. He found his army stronger and the military works considerably advanced. He had left his army reduced by illness to eighteen thousand men; but owing to the recruits who had joined from the neighbouring provinces, he now found a force twenty-five thousand strong.

The whole line of circumvallation which was to cut off La Rochelle on the land side was completed and furnished with redoubts. The shore on both sides of the harbour was provided with batteries. The dike was almost finished and was defended by a sort of floating palisade formed of ships linked together. An attempt to surprise the town had failed, owing to bad generalship. But the besieged had been unable to make any sorties or to obtain any provisions; and hunger was beginning to make itself felt in their ranks. The day after his return, on the 24th of April, Louis XIII sent an envoy to call upon the besieged citizens to surrender. According to the custom of the time the summons had to be made by a herald-at-arms, but there was not one with the army and they could not even find the insignia of the office. A tabard had therefore to be prepared in a hurry, a clerk of finance put it on and went forth to play the part of a herald. The besieged refused to receive the summons. A sort of revolution had taken place in La Rochelle. The rich citizens who had hitherto governed the town were anxious to bring the siege to an end, for it was ruining their commerce and exposing them to the wrath of their king. The sailors, who were on the side of resistance, seized the power and elected one of themselves, a captain Guiton,

as mayor. Guiton was a bold corsair, of small stature, but brave and energetic. He had a splendidly furnished house, full of flags which he had taken from the ships of his enemies; he was fond of showing them and of saying from what kings and in what seas he had captured them. He was not anxious to be made mayor, but when he took possession of his office, he placed his dagger on the table in the town hall and said to his companions: "You do not know what you have done in choosing me; you had better think well about it, for it will be useless to talk to me about surrendering. If anyone mentions it I will kill him."

Another English fleet set out to relieve the blockade of La Rochelle, or at any rate to revictual the town. This fleet consisted of thirty vessels and twenty boats laden with provisions and ammunition. It was signalled on the 11th of May by three shots fired from the forts on the island of Ré. The fleet took up its station near the point of the island, opposite to La Rochelle. The besieged fired salvos as a sign of rejoicing, and very soon their ramparts were fluttering with red, white, and blue flags. The royal fleet of thirty-eight ships was divided into four squadrons which were stationed in front of the dike; behind, on the La Rochelle side, the dike was guarded by twenty-six galleys. A light English ship succeeded in passing these batteries and in reaching the harbour; she carried a captain, a native of La Rochelle on board, and he was commissioned to ask his compatriots to open a passage before their harbour, so that the ships laden with provisions might come in. The English fleet, he said, had not come to fight. The inhabitants of La Rochelle and the Protestant refugees on board the English ships begged the admiral to force the passage; he replied that he only had orders to cross to facilitate the entrance of the convoy with provisions, and that he must spare his fleet. On the 18th of May, the English ships set sail, drew close to the harbour, fired a salute, and sailed away to the open sea. The besieged, deserted by their allies, found themselves in a very critical position. One of them proposed to sacrifice himself and save the town by assassinating Richelieu. That was the way in which Orleans had formerly escaped from the duke of Guise. But he would not commit this deed unless he was certain it was not a sin. He consulted Guiton, who replied: "In such matters as this I never give advice." He asked the pastors what they thought; and they answered: "If God is going to save us it will not be by means of a crime." So he gave up the idea.

The besieged were suffering much from starvation. The rich still had provisions which they kept concealed, but others were dying of hunger. On the 26th of May they decided to drive out of the town all who were unable to fight—women, children, old men, and all who were infirm. These poor creatures made for the French camp; the soldiers, by the king's order, received them with a shower of bullets and forced them to go back to the town. The royal troops also destroyed the crops of beans which the besieged had sown at the bottom of the other side of the escarpment.

On the 1st of June some of the citizens who were anxious for peace succeeded in opening communications with Bassompierre, proposing a capitulation; but on the 10th a letter reached La Rochelle from the king of England, promising that he would see his whole fleet destroyed rather than fail to extricate the besieged from the peril they were in. They therefore broke off the negotiations and began firing again. For three months they waited for the promised help, while Richelieu continued his dike. Towards the open sea he had had long beams bound together and fixed in the ground at the bottom of the water to prevent access to the dike, and on the harbour side

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he had placed a line of ships anchored and chained together. Every day visitors came to the royal camp, and were entertained; and sometimes, to amuse them, a skirmish was got up at which they looked on. The king went out hunting and kept his court just as if he had been in Paris.

Within La Rochelle the famine was becoming terrible. The rich were eating horses, donkeys, dogs, and cats; and even for these they had to pay well, the price of a cat being 45 livres. The poor were no longer able to go and look for dead shellfish cast up by the tide and stranded in the mud, for the guns of the besiegers made this dangerous. They had eaten up all the green stuff and were reduced to boiling pieces of leather with fat and moist sugar. Many left the town and would have given themselves up at the outposts of the royal army; but they were sent back, so that the town might not be enabled to hold out longer by having fewer mouths to feed. The soldiers would take away their clothes and then drive them back to the town with sticks or leather thongs. A great number of the inhabitants had died from illness or privation. Even those who were defending the town were so weak with hunger that they could only walk with sticks; they could hardly drag themselves along and were quite unable to bear arms. Often in the mornings sentinels were found dead of starvation at their posts. Guiton still refused to surrender. He had some of those who wished to capitulate imprisoned, and on the 22nd of July he had three or four beheaded as traitors, and their heads placed on the gates of the town. On the 9th of August the president of the presidial, an inferior court of judicature, was imprisoned in his turn. The councillors were so alarmed that two of them took refuge in the royal camp.

Louis XIII, hearing what great distress prevailed in La Rochelle, on the 16th of August sent a herald-at-arms to call upon the town to surrender. This time it was a real herald in a tabard, cap on head, sceptre in hand. Before him rode two trumpeters bearing waving pennants. They presented themselves at one of the gates and asked to see the mayor. They were kept waiting a long time; then, instead of the mayor, appeared a troop of citizens and soldiers, whose leader told the herald with an oath to go away at once, and pointed to his men's guns ready cocked for firing. The herald withdrew, placing on the ground two proclamations that he had brought with him. The English fleet, on the point of sailing, had been delayed by the murder of the duke of Buckingham. The longer the siege went on the stronger became the temptation to fly to the royal camp; and the chance of being killed seemed preferable to the certainty of being starved to death. To rid themselves of these obtrusive fugitives the besiegers adopted a cruel plan. They placed gibbets on the line of circumvallation surrounding the town and every time a group of fugitives arrived to give themselves up, they made them draw lots, and the one on whom the lot fell was hanged while the rest were sent back to the town.

On the 29th of August Guiton read the citizens a letter from the king of England saying that help was at hand. It was madness, he said, to hope for mercy from the king of France; if the town surrendered it would be sacked and the men massacred. They must stand firm as long as anyone remained alive to shut the gates. "As for me," he added, "if I am left with only one other, and without food, I shall be quite willing to draw lots to decide which of us is to eat the other." On the 3rd of September, Guiton, while speaking to the people who had assembled to hear the Sunday sermon, was interrupted by a woman crying out that her child's nurse had not tasted food for a fortnight. Guiton to appease the crowd made a



pretence of negotiating. He sent two envoys to the king, who received them fairly. But a native of La Rochelle, just arrived from England, managed to make his way into the city in broad daylight and announced that the English fleet was just setting sail; so again the negotiations were broken off. A fortnight later, on the 28th of September, an English fleet of 140 sail carrying 6,000 soldiers arrived, and taking up a position before the harbour, tried to force the passage, which was guarded by the French fleet. The French refugees asked to be allowed to manage the fire-ships which were to be sent against their king. The English wished to work them themselves, but the fire-ships proved a failure, and would not act. They waited for a favourable wind, and on the 3rd of October began firing on the fleet and batteries of the besiegers. The fighting continued for two days without much loss of life, and on the evening of the 4th the English fleet withdrew to the isle of Aix. It remained inactive for some days owing to stormy weather, and, when the wind was once more favourable, the English, instead of making an attack, sent an envoy to Richelieu.

Those inside La Rochelle, seeing they were deserted, resigned themselves to the necessity of suing for peace. Richelieu received at the same time the envoys from the town and those from the French Protestants on board the English fleet. On the 29th of October the capitulation was signed, the inhabitants of La Rochelle acknowledged the great offence of which they had been guilty, "not only in resisting the just wishes of their king, but in joining with foreigners who had taken up arms against the state." They begged the king to pardon them for this crime, and they placed their town in his hands. The king, taking into consideration "their repentance and protestations of sorrow," promised them an amnesty, the free exercise of their religion, and the restoration of any of their property which had been confiscated. The officers and nobles might leave the town wearing their swords, and the soldiers carrying white sticks, and they would then be free. On the 30th of October the French army entered La Rochelle and the garrison came out; they were reduced to seventy-four Frenchmen and sixty-two English.<sup>j</sup>

Richelieu showed himself clement towards La Rochelle; there was no vengeance taken, no victims were sacrificed. The town lost its independence, which was, indeed, incompatible with the idea of sovereignty; but its worship and its religious opinions were left free, "the only avowed and open toleration," says Hume<sup>c</sup> "which at that time was granted in any European kingdom."<sup>d</sup>





## CHAPTER XVII

### THE DICTATORSHIP OF RICHELIEU

[1629-1643 A.D.]

Cardinal Richelieu is one of those men in whose favour the tide of affairs always turns at the critical moment, and who also have skill and courage to take it at the turn. Vigilant, cool, sagacious, and absolutely fearless, he never throughout his life missed a single point in the great game he played; and even with dramatic force knew how to snatch a triumph out of the very clutches of defeat. — KITCHIN.<sup>10</sup>

ARMAND JEAN DU PLESSIS, Cardinal Richelieu, grown now through the exercise of his own genius to be the mightiest man in all Europe, was born at the castle of Richelieu in Poitou, September 5th, 1585. He was therefore forty-three years old when the famous siege of La Rochelle, by which he broke the power of the Huguenots in France, was brought to a close. Chronic invalid though he was, he was destined to live fifteen years longer, and during that period to control the fortunes of France, and to exercise a dominating influence in European politics at large; to be recognised everywhere as the greatest statesman of his age. We have already seen enough of him to know that he is a man of the largest ideas, the most indomitable courage, and that he is a born master of men; we must understand also that he is the williest of intriguers, the shrewdest judge of human motives; that he has a taste for art and for literature; and that with it all he is not restrained from the successes of practical politics by any undue niceties of conscience. He is perhaps more similar in his mental equipment to Augustus than to any other great man of history; or let us say rather to Augustus with a certain share added of the genius of Julius Cæsar, further modified by some traits of Louis XI.

But why attempt to characterise? We shall see the great cardinal in the full exercise of these powers in the coming years. We shall see him carry war into Italy, acting as his own lieutenant-general. We shall see him take

a hand in the Thirty Years' War, and accomplish by diplomacy the overthrow of the great Wallenstein. We shall see him put down uprisings at home, triumphing over Marie de' Medici and his other enemies; holding King Louis XIII as a child in leading strings. We shall see him dominating church and state alike, and exercising a permanent influence on the literature of his land through the foundation of the French Academy. And all the while we must remember that this myriad-minded statesman is the most hated of Frenchmen at the same time that he is the most feared. Even those he has benefited do not love him. "Let the world speak well or ill of the famous cardinal," says Corneille, "neither in my prose nor in my verse will I mention his name; he has done me too much kindness to speak ill of him, and too much injury to speak well." There is none to speak well of this strange man; but all speak of him with bated breath; all contemplate him with something of apprehension. A weird, incomprehensible figure, he stalks across the scene, lonely, hated, feared,—but always masterful. Let us follow out the details of his life story.<sup>a</sup>

#### RICHELIEU AND THE KING

The history of Richelieu is obscure as to the essential point, his resources, the ways and means. On what did he live and how? This is not to be seen either in his memoirs or his documents. All that we have of Richelieu's accounts includes only four years (1636-1640) and in a very confused way gives the ordinary receipts, up to eighty millions. Not a word of anything extraordinary.

In 1636, when France was invaded, a tax on persons in comfortable circumstances (*des gens aisés*) was created, or rather regulated, and the agents placed everywhere in 1637, with the triple power of justice, police, and finance, collected it with great rigour. But one cannot doubt that something similar existed even before, especially in the passages of armies through certain provinces. Otherwise it is impossible to understand how, with such a deficit under ordinary circumstances, extraordinary and unforeseen expenditures, for wars or subsidies to allies, could have been made every year.

Hence action was variable, intermittent, sometimes brilliant, with relapses due to exhaustion. It was not possible to have a really permanent army. That was evident in 1629, when Richelieu finished the war with the Huguenots, but that with Italy was still in a critical state. He disbanded thirty regiments to raise others six months later. The same way, in 1636, he disbanded seven regiments in January to make them up again in June—an economy of five months, necessary perhaps, but which nearly lost France. In July nothing had been reorganised, and the enemy came to within twenty leagues of Paris.

The suffering of the great man of affairs who directed this machine with its spasmodic movements must have been terrible. And one can easily understand that he was always ill. The insufficiency of his resources, the continual effort to invent impossible money, on the other hand the court intrigues, the pricks of no one knows how many invisible insects, were something to keep him in a terrible agitation. But even that was not enough; twenty other devils haunted this restless soul, like a great ruined mansion—the battle of women, tardy gallantries, moreover theology and the wild desire to write, to make verses, tragedies! What tragedy could be more gloomy than his very person. Macbeth is gay in comparison. And he had attacks



[1629-1630 A.D.]

of violence in which his inner fury would have strangled him, had he not like Hamlet massacred tapestries with the blows of his dagger. More often he swallowed his bitterness and fury, covered everything with the outward seeming of ecclesiastical decency. His powerlessness, his passion, turned within, worked themselves out on his body; the red iron burned his soul and he was near to death.

His greatest evil was still the king, who might escape him at any moment. Spain, the court, waited for the death of Louis XIII. His wife and his brother looked at his face every morning and hoped. Valetudinarian at the age of twenty-eight, feverish, subject to abscesses which nearly carried him off in 1630, it was in vain he claimed to be alive, to act at times and show courage; it was held that he was dead, at least that no one had need of him. It was a curious union of two invalids. The king would have thought his kingdom lost if Richelieu were wanting. Richelieu knew that, with the king dead, he had not two days to live. So well hated, especially by the king's brother, he had to plan to die with Louis XIII. Perhaps it was for that reason that he was so pleasing to the king, who was sad, suspicious, and malevolent and who never liked him, but who could always say to himself: "If I die, that man will be hanged."

This double chance of death, on which the enemies of Richelieu placed their hope, was precisely what made him strong and terrible. He had moments when he talked and acted as though in the presence of death; and then the sublime, which he had sought so laboriously elsewhere, came of itself. He touches it, in fact, in passages of allocution which he had with the king on the return from La Rochelle, in the presence of his enemies, the queen-mother and the king's confessor, the suave Jesuit Suffren. In this conversation he tells everything, his actual situation, what he has done, what received, what he owns, what he has refused. He has a patrimony of 25,000 livres rental and the king has given him six abbeys. He is obliged to make heavy expenditures, especially to pay for guards, being surrounded with daggers. He has refused 20,000 crowns pension, refused the appointments of the admiralty (40,000 francs), refused the right of admiral (100,000 crowns), refused a million which financiers had offered him in order not to be prosecuted.

He asks for his dismissal, not definitely but temporarily—he may be called back later if he is still alive and is needed. He explains clearly that he is in great danger and that he is obliged sometimes to conceal himself. Does he want to make himself necessary, declare himself indispensable, and so make sure of so much the more power? If that is his end, one must say that the method is very strange and daring. He speaks with the frankness of a man who has no end in view. He dares to give his master, perhaps as a last service, an enumeration of the faults of which the king ought to correct himself. And this was not one of those flattering satires, where one shows a slight fault, a shadow, as a successful method for showing the beauties of the portrait. No, it is a firm, hard judgment, like that of a La Bruyère, of a Saint-Simon, which would penetrate to the depths of a character after a hundred years, a judgment of the dead by a dead person. Quickness of mind and instability, suspicions and jealousy, no assiduity, no application to great things, impulsive aversions, forgetfulness of services, and ingratitude — not a trait is lacking.

The queen-mother must have trembled with indignation, with terror also, perhaps, feeling that the man who would venture such a thing would venture all — and that a man so composed, with death under his feet, would pay little

regard to the death of others. The Jesuit must have fallen backwards, plunged into silence and humility. The king felt all this and received it as the testamentary word of one invalid to another, of one dying man to another. Richelieu, being begged and entreated, remained in the ministry. It was difficult for him to retire with affairs at such a crisis. The war with the Huguenots still continued in Languedoc, and the war with Italy was commencing. Richelieu, called by the pope as well as by the duke of Mantua, had a good opportunity which might relieve him from his embarrassments. Victor at La Rochelle, if he saved Italy he might hope that the pope would appoint him legate for life as Wolsey and George d'Amboise<sup>1</sup> had been — real kings and more than kings, since they united the two powers, temporal and spiritual.<sup>b</sup>

#### RICHELIEU ENTERS THE EUROPEAN ARENA

France had submitted; six years of power had been sufficient for Richelieu to make himself her master; now he turned his incessant activity in the direction of Europe. "He feared the repose of peace," wrote Nani, the ambassador to Venice, "and believing himself more secure in the turmoil of arms, he was the author of many wars, and of long and weighty calamities. We may say that having reunited divided France, succoured Italy, upset the empire, harassed England, and weakened Spain, he was the instrument chosen by heaven to direct the great events of Europe."

The liberal, penetrating mind of the Venetian was not mistaken on this point; all over Europe the hand of Richelieu was felt. "Far and near, we must always negotiate," he said. He had succeeded with negotiations in France, and he carried his ideas further. Numerous treaties had already marked the first years of the cardinal's power; after 1630 his activity in external affairs was redoubled. From 1623 to 1640 seventy-four treaties were concluded by Richelieu; four with England, twelve with the United Provinces, fifteen with the German provinces, six with Sweden, twelve with Savoy, six with the Venetian Republic, three with the pope, three with the emperor, two with Spain, four with Lorraine, one with the Grison Leagues, one with Portugal, two with the rebels of Catalonia and Rousillon, one with Russia, and two with the emperor of Morocco; such was the network of diplomatic negotiation which the cardinal wove in nineteen years.

While the cardinal was holding La Rochelle in siege, the duke of Mantua died in Italy, and his natural heir, Carlo di Gonzaga, living in France as the duke de Nevers, hastened to take possession of his estates. Meanwhile the duke of Savoy claimed the marquise of Montferrat. The Spaniards upheld him, and entering the duke of Mantua's states, lay siege to Casale. When La Rochelle fell, Casale was still resisting; but the duke of Savoy had already seized the greater part of Montferrat, and the duke of Mantua asked help of the French king, whose subject he was. This furnished a new field of battle against Spain.<sup>c</sup>

Nobody could understand why the cardinal thought insignificant possessions at a distance from France, like Mantua and Montferrat, were of such great importance.<sup>2</sup> He was obliged to explain to the king that Casale and

[<sup>1</sup> Thomas Wolsey (1471-1530), the celebrated English cardinal, was prime minister of Henry VIII. Cardinal George d'Amboise (1460-1510) was the minister of Louis XII of France (see pp. 294 and 303).]

[<sup>2</sup> The war in North Italy cut off Spain from the Netherlands, now that England dominated the sea. Hence the great importance of Richelieu's plan.]

[1629-1630 A.D.]

Mantua were the citadels of Italy — the most valuable military stations in the basin of the Po; and then war was decided on. Richelieu left on the 29th of December with the title of "lieutenant-general representing the person of the king." He had doffed the cardinal's robe to assume the military uniform; under him were the cardinal De la Valette, marshals Montmorency, Schomberg, and Bassompierre, with Sourdis, now archbishop of Bordeaux, as administrative lieutenant. The duke of Savoy declared himself neutral and refused to revictual Casale, though he would allow the French free passage to go to its relief. The cardinal, determined in spite of this treacherous ally to gain possession of the passes into Italy, crossed the Alps at Susa and pretended he was about to march on Turin; he then rapidly marched back and besieged Pinerolo, which capitulated (1630). Spinola hastened to the defence of Piedmont, and owing to his superior forces checked the advance of the French.

Louis XIII then took the command of the army himself and conquered the whole of Savoy; but he fell ill and his place had to be taken by the duke de Montmorency, who defeated the Spaniards at Vegliana and took possession of the marquisate of Saluzzo on the 10th of July. However, Mantua had been taken and Casale was sorely pressed, the French army was reduced by sickness, reinforcements were expected from the army in Champagne and money from Paris. The latter, however, did not arrive, for the marshal De Marillac and his brother the chancellor, acting under the influence of the queen-mother, neglected to send it off. Richelieu, rendered uneasy by the intrigues of his enemies, effected a truce through the mediation of the abbé Mazarin,<sup>1</sup> who had been sent from the court of Rome. Mazarin, who was a man of supple and crafty temper, gained and retained the confidence of Richelieu and was destined subsequently to carry on the work which the latter had begun. At the expiration of this truce the serious events which were passing in Germany prevailed on Austria, as we shall see, to conclude a definite peace. This was the Peace of Ratisbon, concluded on the 25th of October, 1630.<sup>a</sup> The emperor agreed to invest the duke de Nevers and withdraw the imperial troops from his states on the Grison passes provided that France would withdraw hers from Pinerolo and Savoy.<sup>a</sup>



RICHELIEU

<sup>1</sup> Giulio Mazarini, born at Piscina, Italy, July 14th, 1602; died at Vincennes, France, March 9th, 1661. He was to be Richelieu's successor and scarcely his inferior in power.]



## ENMITY OF MARIE DE' MEDICI AGAINST RICHELIEU

The termination of war was the commencement of new perils for Richelieu. He foresaw the fresh efforts of his enemies, and on the return of the court to Paris, he used all the resources of his address to avert and conciliate the resentment of the queen-mother. She dissembled, and did not forgive. Leagued with the Marillacs, and favoured by many of the nobility, Marie laboured to overturn the minister, who defended himself with firmness and adroitness. Louis XIII was of a feeble mind, still more enfeebled by a weak temperament and languid constitution. Resolution was a state above his powers; it was to him an unnatural tension, menacing at each instant a relapse.

Despite of this, he was clear-sighted. He loved France, was alive to its glory and prosperity, and saw that it required the strong hand of Richelieu to govern and to guide. He did not love the minister, indeed; and it was thus the more to his credit that he upheld him from a sense of his talents and utility. When Marie poured into his ear complaints against the cardinal's insolence, against his tyranny and domineering ambition, Louis allowed that she was right. He acquiesced; and the queen-mother argued from this passive assent that the king shared her aversion and her views against the minister. She would hurry home to her palace of the Luxembourg after such interviews, and confidently assure her followers that her ascendancy was complete, that the fall of Richelieu was near. By that hour, however, Richelieu was closeted with the monarch, was unfolding to him his high and masterly views of policy, was exposing the selfish manœuvres of Marie de' Medici; and had at length gained in his turn such complete ascendancy that the feeble Louis would not only assent, but kindle up for the moment with warmth and friendship towards his minister, and then, in confidence, betray the very secrets of his mother's converse with him. Richelieu thus drew from a certain source the hopes, the plans, and the names of his enemies.

*The Day of Dupes*

In an interview with his mother, Louis, assenting to the justice of all her complaints against the cardinal, had proposed that his niece first, and then Richelieu himself, should come publicly and ask pardon of Marie at the Luxembourg. The king intended this as a measure of conciliation. The queen accepted it for the sake of seeing her enemy humbled. Accordingly, on the appointed day, Madame de Combalet, the cardinal's niece, entered, and flung herself at the feet of Marie, imploring her forgiveness. The latter, instead of preserving the disdain that suited her purpose, or of assuming the air of forgiveness that the king desired, was unable to contain her temper, and burst forth in invectives against the suppliant lady. Madame de Combalet retreated, terrified and in tears. The cardinal himself succeeded, equally suppliant, and was received by the same volley of coarse vituperation. Louis XIII, scrupulous in his ideas of dignity and delicacy, shocked at the conduct of his mother, took the part of his minister, and reproved her; but at the same time bade Richelieu, in the same tone of anger, to retire.<sup>e</sup>

Everyone was convinced of the cardinal's disgrace; it was already satirised on the Pont Neuf, and the little porter of the Samaritaine indulged in a thousand grimaces in imitation of his eminence. At the palace all minds were occupied with the approaching triumph of M. de Marillac, lord keeper of the

[1630 A.D.]

great seal and fairly popular with the parliament on account of his being known to be for the interests of the queen-mother and Gaston of Orleans.

Already presidents in caps, councillors in scarlet robes, deliberated amongst themselves whether it would be made a criminal action to prosecute his eminence as guilty of tyranny and peculation. The ambassadors, watching the smallest diplomatic step in Paris, announced the inevitable disgrace of Cardinal Richelieu to their courts, and the increasing authority of the queen-mother. The *Mémoires* relate that Charles I, so ardent a promoter of royal prerogative, replied to the despatch of his ambassador: "The king of France is making a great mistake in disgracing a minister of so great competency."

Louis XIII had set out for Versailles, that poverty-stricken palace he was too parsimonious to restore, and had there sequestered himself. A great concourse of people filled the apartments of Marie de' Medici; the crowd surrounded her and Gaston of Orleans; power was about to pass into their hands. The queen-mother, smiling graciously, affectionately held the hand of Anne of Austria, with whom she conversed amicably. They treated each other as mother and daughter, although Anne of Austria, intensely proud of her noble Spanish blood, considered herself superior to a member of the princely and mercantile house of Florence. The court wore a new aspect; it was thought that the days of the regency would be reproduced and Marshal de Marillac, then with the army of Italy, seemed a new Concini destined to enjoy the favours of Marie de' Medici. But the queen-mother was not sufficiently energetic. Naturally of an indolent disposition, she easily yielded to the Italian *far niente*, to that nerveless temperament which prevented her from prompt decision in decisive circumstances. She did not join her son at Versailles, but remained to be congratulated by the crowd of courtiers that surrounded her.

During this time the friends of Richelieu were becoming uneasy. Cardinal de la Valette, that devoted prelate, had gone with all speed to Versailles, and had had his arrival announced to the king. The cardinal had been informed by Saint-Simon, the diminutive equerry and favourite, that Louis XIII had spoken of his minister in terms that did not lead one to suppose he was out of favour. La Valette was immediately ushered into the king's presence and the king smilingly said to him, "Cousin, I think you are surprised at all that is taking place." "Sire, more than your majesty can imagine." "Well, cousin, return to Cardinal Richelieu and tell him that he is a good minister, and I desire him to come instantly." The minister's friend did not wait to be told a second time. Richelieu, who had retired to a small house in the village of Versailles, immediately hastened to the old palace. The interview took place in the presence of Saint-Simon, the first equerry, and the marquis de Mortemart, the first gentleman of the household. Richelieu, throwing himself on his knees, his customary attitude, thanked the king in humble and submissive terms for the favour he was conferring upon him. Louis showed himself kindly and affable. "Cousin, in you I possess the most faithful and loving servant it were possible to find. I consider myself the more obliged to protect you that I am cognisant of the respect and gratitude you bear the queen, my mother. I would have forsaken you, had you not shown these evidences of your generous nature. Be assured henceforth of my protection. I shall know how to disperse the cabal of your enemies; they abuse the credulity of the queen, my mother, who permits herself to be easily prejudiced. Continue to serve me faithfully, and I will uphold you against all those who have vowed your destruction." "Sire," replied

Richelieu, "solitude is a necessity to me, and I will never remain at your court against the desire of the queen-mother." "Cousin, it is not my mother that you need fear, but certain mischief-making spirits about her; I know them and I promise you they will do nothing."<sup>h</sup> Thus the great cardinal triumphed, while his enemies were rejoicing at his supposed overthrow. The day when the queen-mother and her coterie were thus deceived — the 11th of November, 1630 — has passed into history as the "Day of Dupes."<sup>a</sup>

### *Exile of Marie de' Medici*

The popular feeling was nevertheless against Richelieu and in favour of Marie de' Medici, whose munificence and fête-loving habits had won the good will of the Parisians. This had no small weight in detaining the king at St. Germain, where he held his court, and where the two queens appeared, although Louis scarcely spoke to them. Marie bore disgrace and contempt with impatience; but she could now find no one hardy enough to brave the cardinal and espouse her quarrel, except Gaston, her second son, the rash and weak duke of Orleans. The prince imagined a singular mode of vengeance. Accompanied by a body of young and armed companions, he entered the cardinal's palace, came rudely into his presence, and apostrophised him in a rough and menacing speech. After this bootless outrage, Gaston retired, left the capital, and proceeded to levy troops in the provinces. Louis, on learning this sally of his brother, whom he peculiarly disliked, took up the cause of his minister more warmly; and attributing, not unjustly, the turbulence of Gaston to their mother, he openly reproached her, and warned her to become reconciled to Richelieu. Marie would not abandon her hate; and monarch and minister were obliged to proceed to extremities.

It required much address to bring the king to this point; and Richelieu was only enabled to reconcile Louis to use harsh measures towards his parent by means of the confessors whom he himself had provided for his master. These smoothed away the difficulties presented by the king's conscience, or rather by his filial habits. Some months passed in vain attempts at accommodation; but the ultimate result was the flight of Gaston and of Marie de' Medici out of the kingdom. The latter retired to Brussels. Thus Richelieu came triumphant from the second struggle. Bassompierre was sent to the Bastille; the duke of Guise<sup>1</sup> was deprived of his office of admiral, and went on a pilgrimage to Rome. Even the proud and veteran Épernon was obliged to crave pardon. The parliament objected to an ordinance of the king declaring the partisans of Gaston guilty of high treason. They rightly argued that such a condemnation could not be issued without trial or by other than a judge. But even from this just position they were compelled to recede. They were summoned to the Louvre; their edict of objection was cancelled in the presence of Louis and his minister, and the obnoxious ordinance registered in its stead. Richelieu showed a still more culpable contempt for the forms of justice in the trial of the marshal De Marillac. He was brought before a commission, which sat in the cardinal's country-house at Ruel, accused of a long list of crimes, of all save his true fault of conspiring with Marie de' Medici. Being convicted, he was beheaded in the place de Grève.

Marillac was the second victim sacrificed to the supremacy of the minister. The desire of vengeance and of blood grows, like other criminal

[<sup>1</sup> Charles IV, duke of Guise. He died in exile in Italy in 1640.]



[1631-1632 A.D.]

tastes, upon those who indulge and gratify it; and Richelieu stained deeply his high reputation. Hitherto the nobility bore the tyrannic ascendancy of the cardinal with jealousy and impatience. They saw plainly that his designs were directed against their power and independence. Still, from want of union, and from the absence of a spirit amongst them capable of coping with their great enemy, they held back, in trembling though indignant submission, looked on while their chains were preparing, and even aided to forge them. Thus they had helped to put down the Huguenots, ever the mainstay of rebellion. They then, when too late, sought to intrigue with Marie de' Medici against the cardinal. The trial of Marillac, not by his peers but by a mock commission, and the execution of that marshal on no grounds save enmity to the minister, filled all the noblesse with fresh indignation and alarm. And one who, from birth and position, might well take the lead of the high-born of France in this its cause, declared himself unhesitatingly on this occasion.

#### THE REVOLT OF GASTON AND THE EXECUTION OF MONTMORENCY

The duke de Montmorency was governor of Provence. He had distinguished himself in the Italian war; had never been foremost to complain or to intrigue; but, like his family, had been remarked for moderate and independent principles; tolerant though orthodox in religion; a loyal subject though no fawning courtier. In the king's extreme illness, he had given his word to protect the minister, and Richelieu had other causes of gratitude.

But Montmorency was now indignant at the insult offered to his rank in the person of Marillac. He felt it equally a shame that the king's brother, the son of Henry IV, should be driven into exile by the enmity of an upstart minister. Gaston had fled to Lorraine, and there passed his time in the wooing and espousal of the duke's daughter. Richelieu advanced to Lorraine, and Gaston was obliged to fly. He applied to Montmorency for protection and support, and the duke was both imprudent and generous enough to grant it. This could be done with arms alone. The dukes of Orleans and Montmorency therefore raised a little army, cantoned themselves in Languedoc, and resolved to fight the royal forces, which under Schomberg advanced against them. It appears that the population of the south looked with disfavour on the enterprise of the dukes, either in dread of Richelieu's power and vengeance, or in dislike of the aristocratic cause. The issue of the rebellion was decided in a skirmish at Castelnaudary, where Montmorency, at the head of five hundred followers, charged the royalists, and was taken prisoner. The news of his capture dispersed his army, and left Gaston no resource but to join his mother at Brussels.



A FRENCH GALLANT, FIRST HALF OF SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

It was now in the power of Richelieu to give an example of his moderation. In pardoning Montmorency, he would have gained many hearts; nor would his power have been less formidable. Gaston even promised to submit, if his generous protector were spared: but Richelieu was inexorable; he knew what would be his own fate if overthrown. He recollected the fall of Ancre, of every favourite and minister whom the nobles had overthrown; and private reasons of vindictiveness concurred with the wish of making a striking example, and by the death of Montmorency giving the same salutary warning to his order as the execution of Biron had proved in the last reign. Richelieu had the power of communicating his own firmness to the king. Louis resisted the supplications of all the nobles of his court, of the princess of Condé, Montmorency's sister, and even the clamours of the mob, who cried under the windows of the Louvre for mercy. The marshal De Châtillon begged the king to show himself to the people, and to grant to their prayers the life of the first noble of the land. "Should I obey the suggestions of the rabble, I should not act as a king," replied Louis, displaying that extreme of monarchic arrogance which his posterity so deeply cherished and so dearly expiated. The kingdom's safety might have been an excuse for cruelty — the pride of the monarch was none.

Montmorency owned his crime, and promised to redeem the disloyalty of a moment by devoting his after life to the king; but he made no mean submissions. In passing to the place of execution, he regarded the statue of Henry IV. with emotion. He was the godson of that monarch, who knew how to unite clemency with firmness. But, shaking off thoughts of the past, he pointed onward to the scaffold, which he said was the surest road to heaven. In him perished the last of the lineal descendants of the great constable, the most illustrious of which were still said to be only the younger branch of that noble family.

#### FOREIGN AFFAIRS

As soon as Richelieu felt assured that the political dissensions of France herself would no longer obstruct his plans abroad, he marched with firm step to that weakening of Spain and upsetting of the empire of which Nani speaks. Henry IV. and Queen Elizabeth, in pursuit of the same ends, had sought and found the same allies. But Richelieu had better luck than they for the execution of his designs to run across the king of Sweden.<sup>1</sup>

Gustavus Adolphus was young, active, bellicose and surrounded by a military halo which permitted him to be looked upon as a future champion of Germany against the house of Austria. He had had several clashes with the emperor or his lieutenants over the Baltic towns, and the idea occurred to Richelieu to make use of his sword.<sup>2</sup>

Richelieu arranged a truce between the young king and the Poles with whom he was at war, in September, 1629; he then granted him by the Treaty of Berwald, in January, 1631, a subsidy of 1,200,000 francs, and threw him at Germany, pointing out, to excite his ardour, the immense booty to be seized, his co-religionists to be avenged, and the great rôle to be played on a brilliant stage.

The Thirty Years' War was then at its height.<sup>1</sup> This struggle, both religious and political, began in Bohemia in 1618, and had extended little by little over the empire. The elector-palatine and the king of Denmark

[<sup>1</sup> For the detailed history of the Thirty Years' War, see vol. XIII.]

[1630-1634 A.D.]

(Christian IV) had been, one after the other, vanquished and humiliated. The imperial army created and commanded by Wallenstein had penetrated as far as the Baltic, crushing under foot on its way, both Germany and her secular liberties. The oft-discussed problem of that country — that is, its partition among independent princes or its union under a single master, was on the point of being solved in favour of unity under the despotism of the house of Austria. Cardinal though he was, Richelieu acted like Francis I, like Henry II, and like Henry IV; he undertook the cause of the German princes without regard to their religion. His confidential agent, Father Joseph, managed the electors so well at the diet of Ratisbon in 1630, that they wrung from the emperor the recall of Wallenstein and the disbandment of his army, after which they refused to give the emperor's son the title of king of the Romans, which Ferdinand II regarded as the implied price of these concessions. "A miserable Capuchin," he cried in anger, "has been clever enough to put six electoral hats into his cowl."

Gustavus Adolphus fell upon the empire like a thunderbolt. He invented new tactics which disconcerted his adversaries. He defeated Tilly near Leipsic, killed him at the passage of the Lech, but was killed himself at Lützen (November 8th, 1632). "The world is for others," he cried, as he fell. Richelieu picked up the hope and the fortune of the young hero. He was now free from all domestic anxiety and could employ his attention and his strength abroad. He boldly substituted in the struggle against the Austrian house, for exhausted Denmark and for Sweden bereft of her king, France full of youth and ardour.<sup>4</sup>

Richelieu still upheld his alliance with Sweden and the Protestant powers; and thus keeping the force of Austria employed, he was enabled to effect his next ambitious project, which was the occupation of Lorraine.

That province was in its origin feudatory to the empire, and was totally independent of France, except that from vicinity and interest its dukes were far more French than German. The Guises had drawn these ties closer. And now that the duke of Lorraine had harboured the duke of Orleans, and, against the king's consent, had given him his daughter Margaret in marriage, the latter had reason or pretext for anger. Richelieu, as usual, caused an army, with the king at its head, to march to Lorraine. The duke was alarmed, and sought to parry the attack by offering to espouse Madame de Combalet, niece of the cardinal; but Richelieu refused to sacrifice the interests of the state to the aggrandisement of his family. Perhaps he saw in the offer a trap laid for him. Lorraine was invaded; and Nancy, its capital, besieged. The duchess of Orleans contrived to escape from it to Brussels; but Nancy fell into the power of the king. In vain did the duke negotiate, and make submissions; equally in vain did he resign his duchy in favour of his brother. The capital and fortresses were held in firm possession by Richelieu.

Here fell another noble, or rather an independent prince, from having espoused the quarrel of the duke of Orleans. Whilst the queen-mother gave signs of increased exasperation, by suborning an attempt to carry off the cardinal's niece, Gaston began to be weary of exile. His favourite, Puylaurens, who had chief influence with him, was still more anxious; and Richelieu offered great advantages to the latter, if he would induce the prince to submit. Gaston at length did so, quitted Brussels abruptly, and repaired to Paris, where he was graciously and splendidly received. Puylaurens received the hand of the cardinal's niece, and was created duke d'Aiguillon for his services. But Richelieu was a dangerous friend, except to an all-devoted servant. He sought to break Gaston's marriage; and Gaston was obstinate in resisting.



The cardinal laid the blame on the new duke d'Aiguillon, and without further pretext arrested and shut him up in the Bastille, where he soon after perished. Gaston was, as usual, enraged; and, as usual, allowed his rage to evaporate in vain menaces, and in vainer enterprises.

### *Wars with Austria*

The nobles checked, the Huguenot power destroyed, it remained to abase still lower the house of Austria, and to extend the territories of France at its expense. To make the Rhine the limit of the empire was the darling aim of Richelieu, as of Henry IV. Gustavus Adolphus and the Protestant princes of Germany had hitherto been instruments in Richelieu's hand to effect or further this; but, since the death of the king of Sweden, the emperor had recovered his superiority, had defeated the Swedes, and reduced his enemies. It behooved France no longer to confine her efforts to negotiation; but to draw the sword, if she wished to preserve her ascendancy or to prosecute her political schemes. She demanded certain advantages for thus declaring herself; and neither Sweden nor the malcontent Germans were backward in paying the price. Oxenstierna, the Swedish chancellor, ceded the fortress of Philippsburg to France. The league of Protestants put the whole of Alsace and its important fortresses under her protection. Lorraine was already occupied; and now Richelieu pushed northwards, and garrisoned Treves, forming, at the same time, a defensive alliance with Holland. Spain, informed of this treaty, sent an expedition to surprise the town of Treves; and war was in consequence declared by France against the emperor and the king of Spain, in the commencement of 1635. A herald was sent to Brussels to announce it; the last time that this species of feudal etiquette was observed.

Richelieu, the destroyer of the Huguenots, was thus leagued with the Protestant powers of Europe against its Catholic princes—a clear proof that his principles were politic, not bigoted. This war, which lasted thirteen years against the emperor and twenty-five against Spain, produced little glory to the minister, at least from its victories, and has brought as little interest to history.<sup>1</sup> It is marked by as much want of spirit as of talent. Yet the Thirty Years' War in Germany, then drawing to its close, was marked with both. But religious differences had given ferocity to this war, which was carried on in the heart of Germany, and which put daily at stake the fate of kingdoms, capitals, and creeds. On the other hand, the war which we enter on was merely an extended line of frontier skirmishes, idle sieges, and fitful expeditions, in which Richelieu had the advantage, not from military but ministerial superiority. His vigorous administration enabled France to bear the expense and weight of the war, whilst the house of Austria, from the bad husbandry of more immense resources, became exhausted, and towards the close of it was in a tottering state. As to the lack of able generals, it may be observed that great military talent must necessarily be wanting at the commencement of a war, and that it requires half a score of years' campaigning for the age and the nation to form its military system anew—the old never sufficing—and to find for that system a head and an arm capable of directing it. Turenne was a young officer at this epoch. It was not till the following reign that he and Condé were able to assert the superiority of French generalship.

[<sup>1</sup> As regards what was done by French armies. But of course the allies entered constantly into Richelieu's plans.]

[1635-1636 A.D.]

France entered on the campaign with four armies — one in the Low Countries, one on the Rhine, the others in Italy, and the Valtelline. The first exploit was one of promise and éclat. The marshal De Brézé was marching to join the Dutch through the country of Liège. Prince Thomas of Savoy, at the head of the Spanish, sought to prevent the junction. He was defeated by Brézé at Avein, and lost all his cannon and colours. Tirllemont was given up to the pillage of the victors. Louvain was besieged, and Brussels threatened. The unfortunate Marie de' Medici was obliged to fly from the latter town, with the duchess of Orleans, pursued by the good fortune of her enemy Richelieu. Chance, however, may give a victory; talents can alone make the most of it. The French were obliged to retire behind the Maas. They and the Dutch, most ill-assorted allies, laid the blame of tardiness upon each other.

In the following year the imperialists had all the advantage. They penetrated into Picardy, passed the Somme, and took Corbie. Paris was in alarm, and her citizens began to retire southward. It was a critical moment for Richelieu. His ascendancy over the king consisted solely in the monarch's opinion of his sagacity and good fortune as minister. This opinion was greatly shaken; yet Richelieu kept a good countenance, and did all that the emergency required. He made the king show himself to the people; he despatched reinforcements to the count de Soissons, who commanded in Picardy. The Spanish knew as little as the French how to push an advantage. Instead of advancing upon the capital, they passed the time in pillaging, and were soon obliged to retreat. The court advanced to Amiens, whilst the army besieged and endeavoured to retake Corbie.

## ATTEMPT TO ASSASSINATE THE CARDINAL

Here Richelieu's good fortune saved him from new peril. The count de Soissons, son of that prince of the blood whose turbulence made him conspicuous in the first year of the regency of Marie de' Medici, had stepped from the obscurity in which he had been kept, on the unexpected invasion of his government by the enemy. He had valiantly resisted; but the cardinal, who dreaded the renown of a prince of the blood, avoided placing any large force at his disposal, and at length brought the king himself to command and eclipse Soissons. The count vowed vengeance; he leagued with Gaston, ever ready to commence a plot; and they agreed to assassinate the cardinal at Amiens. Two gentlemen, named Saint-Ibal and Montrésor, were charged with the execution, but were to wait for the signal to be given by the duke of Orleans. An opportunity offered. Richelieu was alone at the foot of his staircase, which he had descended to his carriage, and in the midst of the conspirators. The agents had their hands on pistols, eagerly watching the countenances of both the count de Soissons and the duke of Orleans for the signal. Neither had the courage to give it, and Richelieu walked on; for the moment he was unsuspecting of the danger that he had escaped.

On reflection, the princes saw that the danger lay in having meditated the deed, rather than in having executed it. They tried other means, leagued with the Spaniards, and endeavoured to rouse the nobility to rebel. Épernon, to whom they chiefly applied, bade them, in answer, recollect the fate of Marillac and Montmorency. They did so, and fled from court; the count de Soissons to Sedan, and Gaston to Blois. But the latter was soon brought back by fair words.

## CHARACTER OF LOUIS

In the midst of these intrigues, this warfare, these struggles betwixt nations and parties, Louis XIII was perhaps the personage who felt the least interested. "He led," says Madame de Motteville,<sup>i</sup> "the most wretched and sad life; without court, or friends, or power; spending his time in catching birds, whilst his armies were taking towns." He was plaintive, melancholy, retiring; not wanting either in good sense or in any other manly quality, perhaps, but cursed with a diffidence that neutralised them all. Thus he despaired of ever finding another minister like Richelieu; and, in fear of offending the cardinal, whom he might have controlled as well as employed, he resigned all authority into his hands. Another idea of his, proceeding



A FRENCH GENTLEMAN, TIME OF  
LOUIS XIII

from the same diffidence, and a great cause of discontent and sadness with him, was that he despaired to render himself agreeable to the fair sex. He was cursed with a bashfulness and a backwardness that he blushed to avow, and that he concealed under the colour of apathy and suspicion. This kept Louis XIII for a number of years a stranger to his young and not unlovely queen; as the same defect produced, in after years, a similar result with his descendant, Louis XVI. Anne of Austria, piqued by this coldness of her spouse, avenged herself by ridicule and sarcasm. The king's indifference or distance thus became hatred; and Richelieu, who had cause to dread the young queen, fanned the latter sentiment. Louis nevertheless felt attracted towards female society, and he paid a kind of distant and formal court to Mademoiselle de Hautefort. This young lady as little understood his bashful and susceptible temper as did the queen, and Louis soon accused them both of leaguings together to mock him. The attentions of the king were then turned towards a new object, Mademoiselle de la Fayette, with whom the novel of *De Genlis* has perhaps rendered the reader familiar. She, of tenderer feelings and more penetration, knew how to appreciate the timid affections of the monarch. She cherished and returned them;

never, however, overstepping the bounds of modesty. Louis, whose reserve, or "wisdom," to use the words of Madame de Motteville,<sup>i</sup> "equalled that of the most modest dame," at length ventured to propose an apartment at Versailles to Mademoiselle de la Fayette, who replied, after some hesitation, some intrigue, and certain interference, by retiring to a convent. The king wept, and was in despair; but his scruples would not permit him, like Louis XIV, to tear a beauty from the altar. He did not cease, however, to visit Mademoiselle de la Fayette at her convent; and long conversations were wont to pass between them through the *grille* or iron railing of the parlour.



[1630-1638 A.D.]

The monarch felt the influence of this virtuous young woman; her counsels, to which her piety now gave weight and her secure position boldness, prompted him to mistrust Richelieu, whom she represented as supporting heresy against Catholicism, and to give peace to Europe.

Another voice, of equal weight with the king, was pouring the same sentiments into his ear. This was his confessor, the father Caussin, whom Richelieu had placed in that station, but who betrayed his confidence. To resist at once a mistress and a confessor was difficult, and the influence of the minister began to totter. One urgent counsel given to Louis by Mademoiselle de la Fayette and Caussin was that he should become reconciled to his queen; they showed, and even proved to him, that his suspicions against her were unjust. Richelieu, who observed the changed sentiments of the king towards Anne of Austria, was alarmed, and tried to prevent the reconciliation that he feared. Suspecting that the queen held a correspondence with Spain, he caused the police to visit and search her apartments at the Val de Grace. But his enemies were too adroit: no discovery was made, and the insult served but to display the unfounded rancour of the cardinal. After this the pious and generous voice of Mademoiselle de la Fayette had more influence; and, obedient to it, Louis XIII became reconciled for the time to his queen. The happy and unexpected consequence was the birth of a prince (afterwards Louis XIV) on the 5th of September following (1638). To this, however, the result was limited. Richelieu regained his ascendancy over the king; the confessor was banished; Mademoiselle de la Fayette forgotten; and the queen, though no longer banished from the king's presence, had as little share as before of his influence or friendship.

The fresh hold which Richelieu here took of the monarch's confidence was owing, in a great measure, to the success of the war. In the beginning of the campaign two actions were fought at Rheinfelden, in the first of which the gallant duke de Rohan perished; in the second, the duke of Saxe Weimar defeated the imperials, and took their two generals, one of whom, the famous Johann von Werth, was sent to Paris. The principal consequence of this victory was the conquest of Breisach, the chief fortress of Alsace. The name of the town reminds us again of the celebrated Father Joseph, a Capuchin friar, the follower and confidant of Richelieu. We can scarcely imagine a statesman and an ambassador clothed in a monk's frock and sandals: yet such was Father Joseph, a name more or less mingled in all the intrigues of the French court, and its negotiations with others. His influence was known, and he was dreaded by the court as a kind of evil spirit, in fact the demon of Richelieu. Although the latter never procured for his monkish friend the cardinal's hat which he demanded, still the people called Father Joseph his "gray eminence," at once to distinguish him from and assimilate him to his "red eminence" the cardinal. They had been friends from youth; congenial spirits in ambition, depth, and talent: the monk, however, sacrificed his personal elevation to that of the cardinal. Richelieu was much indebted to him: it was Joseph that roused and encouraged him, when stupefied and intimidated by the invasion of Picardy; and it has been claimed that after his death Richelieu showed neither the same firmness nor sagacity.<sup>1</sup>

[<sup>1</sup> Kitchin's *est* estimate of Father Joseph seems a just one. He says: "It is impossible to say with the Italians, that Richelieu owed everything to him; that Father Joseph not only strengthened him in all the crises of his fortune and gave him wise advice, but that he even invented his policy for him, and supplied him with ideas; yet we must admit that Richelieu owed more to him than to any other person, and that he was thrice happy in such an agent and friend. Yet the difference between them is great: Father Joseph lives in history as an able intriguer; Richelieu as a king among men."]

When Father Joseph was on his death-bed, Richelieu stood by it: it was a scene such as a novelist might love to paint. The conversation of the two ecclesiastics was still of this world; and the cardinal's last exhortation to the expiring monk was, "Courage, Father Joseph, Breisach is ours!" a form of consolation characteristic of both.

#### REVOLT OF THE COUNT DE SOISSONS (1641 A.D.)

The count de Soissons, on the failure of his scheme against the cardinal, had taken refuge with the duke de Bouillon in Sedan. All the enemies of the latter, especially the exiles, looked towards this prince of the blood as the rallying-point, the support of their cause. Richelieu employed every art to pacify the count, remove his distrust, and entice him to court. All efforts proved vain; and Richelieu was even obliged to purchase the tranquillity of Soissons, and tolerate his independent posture. It was dangerous, however, to let such an example of disobedience subsist; and the cardinal at length sent an army, under the marshal De Châtillon, to reduce Sedan, and take or humble the count de Soissons. Châtillon was both valorous and skilful; but nothing could compensate for the ill humour and backwardness of the troops, who, with their officers, felt more inclined to a gallant prince of the blood than to the domineering cardinal. In an action that took place at La Marfée, near Sedan, the royal troops showed neither alacrity nor determination; and Châtillon, despite his efforts, was completely put to the rout. No obstacle seemed now to prevent the count de Soissons from marching to Paris, when the almost miraculous good fortune of Richelieu saved him from ruin. As Soissons rode over the field of battle, he pushed up his visor with his pistol; it was accidentally discharged, and the victor perished. Report did not fail to say that he was assassinated, and, of course, by the order of Richelieu; but there is no evidence to support such a rumour. Louis, who, on receiving tidings of the defeat, was preparing, with equanimity, to sacrifice the obnoxious minister, was now struck with his unvarying good fortune; and, with a superstitious feeling, bowed still lower to the cardinal's will. The court did not share the monarch's obsequiousness.<sup>e</sup>

#### CAILLET'S ESTIMATE OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF RICHELIEU

Having regarded the great minister of Louis XIII as the politician who, after having conquered Protestantism and the re-awakening of feudalism at home, continued abroad the work of Francis I and Henry IV, and finally subdued the power of Austria and laid the foundation of French ascendancy in Europe, we hope now to show that Richelieu was as great an administrator as he was a politician, and that the sources of national wealth, as well as what was essential for sound administration, were subjects to which he gave deep and serious attention. It will be seen that he did not suffer the work of regeneration, begun by Henry IV and so disastrously interrupted by the dagger of the assassin Ravallac, to fall to the ground. Undertaking in his boundless energy affairs of the most varied nature, this great genius gave a powerful impetus in every direction to the national activity, which, having been long restrained or wrongly directed, was ripe for producing great results.

Richelieu really laid the foundations on which Colbert and Louvois afterwards built under the eye of Louis XIV. To him is due the final triumph of pure monarchy, of that form of government which alone was legitimate at

[1624-1642 A.D.]

that time, because it alone could bring about and maintain unity in France. The kingship, elevated into a living symbol of the national welfare and of the best interests of the country, became a sort of rampart behind which Louis XIII's minister, with indomitable energy, and with that breadth of mind which characterises a great man, carried on for eighteen years the work of monarchical centralisation. What he accomplished during this immortal dictatorship, in the midst of constantly recurring difficulties, is almost incredible. By destroying Protestantism as a political power, Richelieu made a distinct advance towards unity in the state. He gave a very essential bond of union to the higher administration by establishing the council of state, which remained practically unaltered till 1789. He rendered the triumph of monarchical authority over the new feudalism a certainty by lessening the excessive authority which the provincial governors had arrogated to themselves, by establishing resident overseers, who were energetic and obedient servants of the king, in various parts of the country to see that the law was properly administered, that the police were properly organised, and that the interests of the state in financial matters were not neglected; by commanding fortified places to be destroyed; and finally by his treatment of the most important members of the aristocracy as well as of the royal family, whom he punished or even banished when necessary, thus showing that the sword of the law was long enough to reach any head, however highly placed.

He obliged the parliament to keep strictly within the limits of its own judicial functions, and forbade its taking any part whatever in the management of public affairs. He maintained a perpetual struggle against provincial institutions, whose resistance, usually self-interested and unjust, tended continually to fetter the action of the central power. But though he abolished the power of all enemies of the royal prerogative, Richelieu himself was capable of holding very wide and liberal views. If he destroyed Protestantism as a political party, he rose above the religious prejudices of his time by adhering strictly to the terms of the treaties which had been concluded with the Protestants, and by fearlessly bestowing his favours and his confidence on many of them. If he compelled the nobility to renounce their claims to independence, he opened up to them new paths to fortune and power, he enabled them to engage in maritime commerce without any loss of dignity, he admitted them to the royal councils, and he founded schools for them. In short, he wished them to take the lead in the country by superiority of culture as well as of wealth. If he failed to assemble the states-general, he nevertheless did not claim to be independent of public opinion; he frequently summoned assemblies of important people and explained to them, in patriotic language, his great projects for the good of the country; he more than once took for his text the resolutions presented to the states of 1640 by the commons. Lastly, he created one of the most powerful engines of modern civilisation, the periodical press, by authorising the publication, under his patronage, of Renaudot's *Gazette*.

Absorbed as he was by all these plans and preoccupations, Richelieu nevertheless found time to effect important improvements in all the public services. The statute of January, 1629, drawn up under the direction of Marillac, the keeper of the seals, summarises and completes the great statutes of the sixteenth century, and must be regarded as the most important attempt at codification previous to the time of Louis XIV. A stricter enforcement of police regulations increased the public security, whilst the numerous hospitals and benevolent institutions of all kinds founded at this time greatly ameliorated the condition of the labouring classes. Nor were manufactures, agricul-



ture, and internal commerce neglected. Richelieu encouraged the formation of many companies whose object was to turn to account all the riches of the soil; he had the canal of Briare, begun in the time of Henry IV, finished, and he made wise regulations respecting the taxation of the common people and the allowance of provisions to be given to the troops, which improved the condition of the rural population. He was the creator of military administration; he gave France a merchant navy and a military navy, he organised consulates, concluded commercial treaties with Russia, Persia, Morocco, etc., and did much to encourage early French colonial enterprise. Literature, science, and the arts were also in a flourishing condition during this period. The special patronage accorded by Richelieu to artists and men of letters, whom he extricated from the precarious and humiliating position they had previously occupied; the creation of the French Academy,<sup>1</sup> the re-organisation of the Sorbonne, the foundation of the royal botanical gardens, of the royal press, and of the mint, prove how large a share in the striking development of the national genius which took place during his time may justly be claimed by the great cardinal.

It is difficult to believe that one single man can have carried out successfully so many plans whilst at the same time laying the foundations of internal prosperity and of political ascendancy in Europe, and that amid such difficulties as no other statesman has ever succeeded in surmounting. And what makes all this the more wonderful was the frailty of the body which contained this invincible spirit, and which was liable to be prostrated by illness at any moment. Although Richelieu's health was extremely delicate, and he was constantly falling ill, this extraordinary man seemed able to make his body obey his mind. He usually went to bed at eleven o'clock, and would sleep for three or four consecutive hours; then he would do some writing himself or dictate to a secretary till about six o'clock, at which time he would go to sleep again till between seven and eight, when he rose. Avenel has clearly proved that Richelieu kept some confidential secretaries night and day about his person, but that he had no offices. The secretaries of state, who were nothing more than his head clerks, used to come for his orders, get the necessary work done in their own offices, bring it when required to the prime minister for his inspection, and then signed the documents themselves. Richelieu only signed what was written in his own study. Father Joseph himself does not seem to have been permitted, any more than were the secretaries, the privilege of supervising the minutes signed by the cardinal. The latter wished everything to be seen and done by himself. To our thinking, nothing more striking could be conceived than the picture of this statesman fighting against sleep and death for every moment of his existence, in order to consecrate it to the glory of France.

What is specially characteristic of Richelieu, and gives him a distinct position among the founders of unity in France, is the clearness and the grandeur of his projects. Without foreseeing all the results of his system, results which he would no doubt have been unwilling to accept, he inaugurated with power and splendour that last social phase which the modern world was to pass through, before the light of a new era should shine upon it. Raising the kingship above family ties, and above all the traditions of

[<sup>1</sup> Richelieu formally created the ever afterward famous *Académie Française* in the year 1635. Its membership was (and is) limited to forty, — the "forty immortals." Its object was to control the French language, and regulate the literary taste of the people. Its influence has been extraordinary; but the wisdom of attempting to dam up the stream of so limpid a medium as language may be questioned. Membership in the Academy continues to be the highest honour that can be offered a French man of letters. See below, chapter xxi.]

[1624-1642 A.D.]

precedent, he detached from it all foreign elements, and, isolating it within its own sphere, as a pure idea, he made it the living personification of the public welfare and the best interests of the nation. Thanks to this formidable weapon he broke away definitely from the traditions of the Middle Ages, and caused French society to enter once for all on the path of civil unity and equality. From the time of Louis the Fat to that of Louis XIV., the kingship had always pursued the mission which providence seemed to have laid upon it, to draw towards the shadow of the throne all the varied and inimical forces which divided the country between them; but there had been unfortunate intervals when it seemed almost as if the spirit of disaffection and anarchy would finally prevail, as happened after the reigns of Philip the Fair, Charles V., Louis XI., and after the death of Henry IV. From the time of Richelieu, the work of monarchical centralisation met with no further check. The kingship, having reached the height to which this great minister had raised it, was only to descend from that position in order to make way for a still wider and more productive form of government.

## THE CHURCH AND THE STATE UNDER RICHELIEU

Two great facts are of paramount importance in the history of the church of France during the first half of the seventeenth century. On the one hand a sort of intellectual and moral regeneration, a true religious renaissance, was taking place in her midst, a movement which might be compared to the literary renaissance which had taken place in lay society in the preceding century. On the other hand, the question so long debated between the temporal and the spiritual power was at last decided in favour of the former. Richelieu fought desperately against ultramontaniam and loudly proclaimed the absolute independence of the civil power, and the necessity of having a national clergy whose interests should be bound up with those of the state.

The religious wars had left the French clergy in a deplorable condition. The church of France was in such a lax state that she seemed in danger of losing the fruits of the victory she had gained, by the incapacity or the vices of her members. However, we may say at once that this state of religious decadence was not irremediable. It was necessary to take prompt measures for reform, but the machinery for the work was there, and in greater completeness than appeared at first sight. It was only awaiting the workmen who were to set it in motion. If the wars of the league were responsible for great crimes and terrible outrages, they had also produced great virtues and fine characters. Men's minds, somewhat enervated at the beginning of the sixteenth century by the introduction of a new morality, had regained their vigour in the struggle. Having erred temporarily they were nevertheless not weakened, and when the combat was over they felt an intense craving for action and for a living faith; two forces which, well directed, can accomplish wonders.

This condition of mind also explains the very practical tendency shown by the religious movement which then took place. Indeed one of the most remarkable features of this regeneration of French Catholicism was, as Henri Martin<sup>2</sup> observes, the predominance of the practical over the ascetic and contemplative element.

Richelieu did not intend to exclude either the nobility or the clergy from the administration of state affairs; on the contrary he treated the clergy just as he did the aristocracy. He sought to introduce members of the order

into the king's councils, but only on condition that they were sufficiently enlightened to be worthy of such a position. He acted in the same way with regard to the clergy. We see him giving most important positions, both military and naval, to ecclesiastics. What he insisted upon was that these two orders of the nobility and clergy should not subordinate the interests of the state to their own, as they had been too prone to do in former times. He wished the clergy to be part of the state and to belong to the state, and to contribute a fair proportion towards public expenses. In a word, he wished for a national clergy. Therefore in his struggles to maintain, in the civil power as well as in the religious order, the ascendancy of the patriotic principles of the true Gallican spirit, Richelieu found himself supported by his bitterest opponent, the parliament, and deserted by the majority of the clergy, who saw in this extension of the civil power the possible abolition of their own privileges. In 1625, the clergy, in order to defend themselves from the constant demands for money made on them by the government, had decided that in future no deputy could vote subsidies under any pretext without having expressly received full powers in the matter, and that the opposition of a single province should be sufficient to annul the resolutions of the assembly. Richelieu replied that he could not admit the principle in virtue of which the clergy were claiming absolute immunity from taxation; that the needs of the state were real, while those of the church were chimerical and arbitrary; that if the king's armies had not repulsed the enemy the clergy would have suffered much more.

The struggle about taxation between the civil power and the clergy attained still more formidable proportions in 1638. Richelieu seems to have made use of the brothers Dupuy to prepare the ground on which he intended openly to attack the immunities of the clergy in the matter of taxation. Pierre Dupuy in conjunction with his brother Jacques published anonymously, about the middle of 1638, his great work on the *Liberties of the Gallican Church*. He collected in the first volume some very daring tracts on the subject; then, following his usual method, he supported them by a second volume of official acts and significant precedents, systematically arranged under the title *Proofs of the Liberties*. In the tracts, published mostly during the troubles of the league, when the national orthodoxy of France was called in question, it was stated amongst other things that the pope had exercised no jurisdiction at all over the Gallican church during the first six centuries; that in the time of Clovis the sovereign head of the church after Jesus Christ was the king, not the pope; that the pope had no right to issue excommunications outside his own diocese; that there is no instance of either the popes or their legates presiding at any council held in Gaul before 742; that the said popes had not then any title which placed them above the other archbishops, and indeed did not possess any which was not common to them all. As for the proofs, "great care had been taken not to draw deductions from the acts; our kings, the assembled bishops of France, the parliament, and other sovereign bodies, the universities and some of the communities of the kingdom, were the authors of this work." This was an adroit way of assuming the consent of the whole nation during many centuries.

The clergy understood the significance of the attack, and protested strongly against doctrines which they thought would declare them independent of Rome only to make them the slaves of temporal power. On the 9th of February, 1639, eighteen bishops met at the house of Cardinal de la Rochefoucauld and drew up a letter denouncing "this work of the devil" to their colleagues in a most violent manner. The cardinal undertook to



[1639-1640 A.D.]

deliver this letter to Richelieu. How the minister replied is not known; but from that time edicts more violent than ever were issued against the clergy.

Amongst the bishops was one, the bishop of Chartres, who was entirely devoted to the cardinal, and who supported him strongly in his struggle with the church. He succeeded, it is said, in recovering a copy of all the edicts issued against the church in the most disturbed times and sent them to the superintendent Bullion. The latter made a report on them to the cardinal, and on the 16th of April, 1639, appeared an edict in which it was set forth that "ecclesiastics, communities, and other persons falling under the statute of mortmain are incapable of holding real property in France, that the king can compel them to pay dues on it within a year and a day of acquiring it, and in default of this the king may add the said property to his own domains; that the king is willing nevertheless to be satisfied with the payment of the indemnity for royal and feudal rights, which is due to him by his claims under mortmain; his majesty commands that these rights shall be sought out wherever they exist, in all sorts of livings, foundations, hospitals, confraternities, etc., excepting only the new communities, established thirty years ago, of the Jesuits and the Carmelites." The edict commanded that the research should extend as far back as 1520. This was, according to financiers, a matter of nearly eighty millions for the state. A short time after, an order appeared commanding the alienation of 200,000 livres a year on the Hôtel-de-Ville, guaranteed for five years only by the clergy, and imposing on the latter a perpetual responsibility for these 200,000 livres, and this without their own consent. The irritation of the clergy had reached a climax. They protested forcibly against this measure. Richelieu thought it would not be wise to push things to extremities. A declaration issued on the 7th of January, 1640, announced that the king would be satisfied with a levy of 3,600,000 livres as a compensation for his royal rights.

It was then that Dupuy, seeing that the king's authority was waning, published a violent discourse in defence of the king. Upon this an obscure priest named Hersent undertook in a Latin pamphlet, entitled *Optatus gallus*, to defend the rights of the church and denounce the machinations of those who were trying, he said, to foster schism in France. The parliament by a decision dated March 23rd, 1640, ordered the *Optatus gallus* to be torn up and burned "as casting doubt on the authority bestowed on sovereign princes by God." On the 28th of the same month, the archbishop of Paris, F. de Gondi, with Léonor d'Étampes bishop of Chartres, Nicolas bishop of Orleans, and Séguier bishop of Meaux, signed a declaration couched in almost the same terms, and having for its special object to repel most decidedly the accusation of schism made against the cardinal and a portion of the French clergy by the author of the *Optatus gallus*.

As for the government, it recommenced its attacks on the clergy and, no longer satisfied with the 3,600,000 livres at first demanded, it called upon all holders of livings to pay over the sixth part of their income for two years (6th of October, 1640). The edict was published under the seal, and a chamber was established at the Louvre composed of councillors of state, both ecclesiastic and lay, and magistrates, whose function it was to carry out the provisions of the edict and settle the law. Berland, the prior of St. Denis-de-la-Chartre, who, having entered the clerical agency and not being recognised as an agent, had not the keys of the archives at his disposal, had the audacity to break in the doors and carry off the old assessment rolls, amongst

them that of 1583, and to hand them over to the superintendent. When the new assessment was drawn up the agents of the clergy were desired to sign it. The abbé Saint-Vincent immediately formed an opposition party. This was suppressed by a decision of the 10th of November, which also forbade the agents "to hold any meeting either general or particular without the king's permission." The abbé Saint-Vincent then wrote to the dioceses telling them that all was lost. They decided to write to the cardinal and even the king, to appeal to his holiness, and to order public prayers to be offered up. In short, the clergy were in a state of indescribable tumult. The most violent accusations were hurled against this tyrant, this apostate, who was violating the privileges of the church, and trying to reduce her to a state of slavery which was quite unprecedented. Richelieu, however, who was at this time involved in a gigantic struggle against Austria and Spain, was anxious to be freed from all these entanglements at home. He appeared to give way and agreed to accept from an ecclesiastical assembly what he found it difficult to obtain by force. A general assembly was summoned at Mantes at the beginning of 1641. The government demanded 6,600,000 livres in all. The debate was long and stormy. The sieur d'Émeri was deputed by the king to signify to the archbishops of Sens and Toulouse and the bishops of Évreux, Maillezais, Bazas, and Toulon that they must leave the town, and each one retire to his own diocese without passing through Paris.

On the other hand the minority, who were devoted to Richelieu, made some very bold speeches. The affair finally ended according to Richelieu's desires. The government reduced its claims to five and a half millions, which were voted by the majority on the 27th of May.\*

#### THE CONSPIRACY OF CINQ-MARS (1641-1642 A.D.)

One more effort was made to shake off the trammels of the hated cardinal. A conspiracy was entered into to deliver the land by the old Roman method of putting the tyrant to death ; and the curious part of the design is that it was formed almost in the presence of the king.†

Louis XIII had at that time a favourite, Henry d'Effiat, son of the old marshal and marquis de Cinq-Mars. He was a young man of twenty-two years of age, with a handsome face, finished manners, magnificent and extravagant. The king, always gloomy, found the need of an agreeable person, capable of diverting his thoughts, and even of amusing him. Having formed an affection for Cinq-Mars, he gave him in succession the posts of keeper of the wardrobe and grand equerry. Richelieu, whose close observation extended even over the intimate friends of Louis XIII, did not take umbrage at the favour bestowed upon a young man of so frivolous a nature, son of a father who had been one of his most devoted servants, and step-brother of the marshal De Meilleraie ; on the contrary he felt that the equerry usurped the place in the king's confidence of one of his declared enemies, Mademoiselle de Hautefort.

But Cinq-Mars was a young madman and, as Monglat said, too presumptuous. Intoxicated by his success, thinking he could do in all things as he pleased, he began to show an inordinate ambition. He dreamed of the fortune of Luynes ; he wished to be a duke and a peer, and to command the armies. Richelieu treated him like a child. Louis XIII had enough strength of mind to resist these follies, but not sufficient to send him away from him. He quarrelled with him, became reconciled again, and treated him as if he were a spoiled child. They called the equerry "the king's plaything."

[1641-1642 A.D.]

Cinq-Mars — offended at the way in which the cardinal snubbed him, encouraged, moreover, by the society of the Marais in which he was considered a success, and which was not afraid to show political opposition, in words at least — thought that he could, thanks to the liberty which Louis XIII granted him, compass the downfall of Richelieu. Louis XIII, like everyone else, felt the burden of his powerful minister's rule. He allowed his favourite to talk; he even listened to him willingly, without taking him seriously. At heart he looked upon Richelieu as a necessary man and one whom he could not do without, as much from habit as from a conviction of the superiority of his genius. He told Cinq-Mars that he need never think of replacing him. Cinq-Mars then, with his daring and swift imagination, conceived the most incoherent ideas, such as killing the cardinal, waiting for his death, which the failing condition of his health made him think might be very soon, or bribing Gaston who would become regent if the king were to die. Each day he changed his plans, deciding upon no particular one. He had made vows, and probably more than vows, for the success of the count de Soissons. After the battle of La Marfée, he was advised to leave court, because of the suspicions that had arisen against him; he refused, hoping to refute them by his presence, and to think of some new plan by which he could compass the end he desired.



HENRI COIFFIER DE RUZÉ, MARQUIS DE CINQ-MARS  
(1620-1642)

Notwithstanding the risk, he formed a conspiracy. He tried to come to an understanding with the duke of Orleans, who might become regent, and also with the duke de Bouillon, whose fortress of Sedan was admirably situated to furnish him a refuge should he be obliged to fly from France. It was beginning over again the plot of the count de Soissons. Gaston answered vaguely, according to his custom, leaving others to act, and doing nothing himself. Bouillon showed himself more decided. Although he had accepted from the cardinal the command of the Italian army, he believed himself able, should the conspiracy prove unsuccessful, to withdraw to Sedan, and there await the death of the king. Francis Augustus de Thou, son of the historian, an inconsistent, restless, and nervous person, served as a go-between for the equerry, with the duke de Bouillon, and even with the queen. Bouillon simply observed that an army was necessary to protect Sedan. Cinq-Mars and Gaston then sent into Spain an agent, Fontrailles, with some blank signatures, to demand troops and a subsidy, and to propose a treaty. Olivares seized this opportunity to cause Richelieu trouble. Seriously or not, he accepted the proposals which Fontrailles made to him; he signed the treaty,



scarcely discussing the terms of it, and contented himself with exacting from the princes a promise to restore to peace all that France had wrested from Spain. Fontrailles returned to Narbonne, where he found the conspiracy half divulged, and the head equerry decided to undertake nothing until he knew how the cardinal's illness would end. The duke of Orleans, carried away by the passion and zeal of some of his followers, but always irresolute and full of contradictions, had not left Blois; Bouillon was in Italy at the head of the army, they could not even communicate with one another. Fontrailles took a great deal of trouble to establish a secret correspondence between them. It was not only the illness of the cardinal that induced them to wait, but also the striking failure of the king's health. Cinq-Mars only looked upon the treaty as a last resource which they could keep back for a time. Gaston demanded that it should be given to him; then when Cinq-Mars, after much resistance, decided to send it to him, he kept it without signing it, or addressing the ratification to the governors of the Spanish Netherlands, as they had agreed to. Fontrailles fled to England.

#### RECOVERY AND TRIUMPH OF RICHELIEU

For a whole month Richelieu hung between life and death. At last he recovered, not indeed his health, but that energy which even suffering could not keep under. Prostrated by infirmity and pain, he appeared to have scarcely a spark of life, but, notwithstanding, never has one seen a finer example of Bossuet's *mot*: "A courageous soul is master of the body it animates." Retiring to Tarascon, a healthful and lonely town, under the care of the count d'Alais, governor of Provence, the cardinal, in spite of illness and absence, did not cease to rule the king, the government, and the army. A rumour was circulated that his retirement was due to fear; his enemies made a last attempt to destroy his influence over Louis XIII, but he triumphed over them on this as on all former occasions. The king, wearied by the length of the siege of Perpignan, and ill himself, left the camp to establish himself at Narbonne. There he fell a prey to the most contrary anxieties. He saw himself beset and spied upon on one side by Cinq-Mars, on the other by Chavigny and the Noyers. But, apart from the fact that he was in no wise willing to sacrifice Richelieu, he could perceive that the principal leaders and officers of the army were partisans of the cardinal, that the vain boastings of the equerry were displeasing to the military men, and that the latter indulged the maddest schemes for making himself well thought of. He was already very weary of his favourite, when on the 10th of June, 1642, he received a copy of the Spanish treaty that Richelieu sent to him at Narbonne by the intervention of Chavigny. How did this copy get into the cardinal's hands? No one could tell; according to the most likely conjectures, he obtained it through one of his secret agents or by the treachery of the abbé De la Rivière, who sought his favour, or through a servant of the duke of Orleans. Louis XIII was most indignant, and no longer hesitated. On the 12th he ordered Cinq-Mars, De Thou, and two others, to be arrested. Cinq-Mars remained concealed all one day in a house in the town, but he was discovered, and imprisoned in the citadel of Montpellier. Bouillon was arrested in Italy by his brigadiers at the head of the very army that he commanded. Gaston only was not pursued. The abbé De la Rivière came in his name to acknowledge his fault and to beg for the royal pardon.

The king went to Tarascon to the cardinal to assure him that his sentiments had not changed, and that he wished to await with him the end of this

[1642 A.D.]

great trial. We are told how Richelieu was in bed; how Louis, himself ill, was obliged to have a bed made up for himself by the side of Richelieu, and how they discussed thus the measures they ought to take. They decided that Gaston should be questioned and then pardoned, but on the condition of his making a full confession, the only means of convicting the accused parties. Louis XIII was unable to return to the army; he went to Fontainebleau by easy stages, arriving there the 23rd of July. Whilst on the road he heard of the death of his mother; Marie de' Medici had left England, where her presence was looked upon as a public encumbrance. Not finding the inhabitants either of Spain or of Holland willing to receive her, she went to Cologne where, at the house of the archbishop elector, she terminated the anxieties of her wandering life. The chancellor and the members of parliament claimed that a prince could not be cross-examined like anyone else, and that it was necessary he should give his declaration in writing. This mode of procedure had been adopted towards the duke of Orleans. The judges received his declaration at Villefranche on their way to Lyons, where the commission would sit. This commission was composed of state counselors, of masters of requests, and of several members of the Grenoble parliament. Cinq-Mars had been transferred from the citadel of Montpellier to that of Pierre-Seize. De Thou had been taken to Lyons in a boat towed up the Rhone by that of the cardinal. Bouillon was brought there from his side. Richelieu had started by going up the Rhone slowly, for he could not bear the least fatigue. As this navigation was very laborious, he left the river at Valence and was placed in a great litter, or room, made expressly and carried upon the shoulders of his musketeers, who succeeded each other in relays. He was partially paralysed, incapable of moving or even of signing anything; nevertheless he never ceased working, having beside his bed in this portable room a chair and a table for a secretary. In this fashion he arrived at Lyons. He remained there only a few days, leaving before the end of the trial, and continuing his strange journey, partly by land, partly by the Loire and the recently finished canal of Briare.

Gaston's declarations left no doubt as to the reality of the plot. Cinq-Mars did not deny it; he owned to everything, and appeared before his judges with a bearing as noble as it was courageous. As for De Thou, he had played an absurd part, and one full of contradictions; "he was concerned in everything," said Fontrailles,<sup>k</sup> "and denied knowledge of anything. Priding himself upon a scrupulous loyalty and delicacy of conscience, he was made the confidant of all the conspirators and all the conspiracies invented against the cardinal and against the king. He had got it into his head that his name, his character, his title of former minister of state would assure him a high place in the government that should succeed to that of Richelieu. He was then mixed up with the enemies of the cardinal; he had even, which was far more serious, warned the queen of what was being prepared. Of his complicity there was no doubt. His guilt was not so certain.

The judges passed a sentence of death. Cinq-Mars was condemned unanimously; De Thou unanimously but for one voice. The execution took place at once upon a scaffold erected in the middle of the place des Terreaux (September 13th). The grand equerry and his friend died with as much dignity as resignation. De Thou, whose eager mind was filled with the deepest sentiments of religion, showed a martyr's enthusiasm. Neither of them protested against the blow which struck them, but their youth, the sensation they had caused, the candour of their answers at the trial, their noble bearing upon the scaffold deeply affected the town of Lyons. "M. de

Thou," wrote Marca, one of the judges, "died like a Christian and a brave man. M. le Grand also showed an equal firmness and met his death with an admirable confidence, composure, and Christian devotion." The sight of this execution awoke a very natural pity, seeing that the public knew little of the details of the plot. It was regarded as the last act of vengeance of a minister who felt his power ebbing with his life.<sup>1</sup>

#### THE LAST DAYS OF RICHELIEU

The tempestuous year of 1642 was drawing to a glorious close. Fortune, after long wavering, threw itself on the side of France. Austria was humiliated and France was in the ascendancy. Henry IV had won independence for her, Richelieu gave her supremacy; the work of Charles V and Philip II was undone forever. France resumed the position at the head of the nations which she had held when she led Europe in the Crusades of the Middle Ages. This grand symphony of victories resounded about a funeral pyre. All these conquered standards were lowered before a dying man. The epic poem that astonished the world for eighteen years was not to lack a majestic end; the hero was to be buried in the triumph which providence did not permit him to complete.

The victory over Cinq-Mars, and above all the general success of the French policy, had for a few months brought back the life that was ebbing away; but the slow dissolution of the worn-out organism had continued. On the evening of the 28th of November Richelieu, after returning from Ruel to the palais Cardinal, was taken with a violent fever, with pain in the side, and spitting of blood; four bleedings were insufficient to allay the fever. On the 2nd of December public prayers were offered for the sick man in all the churches of Paris, and the king came from St. Germain to see him. Richelieu talked to Louis like a man resigned to death, asked him to protect his family in memory of his services, recommended to him the ministers Noyers and Chavigny, and especially Mazarin whom he represented, it is said, as the person most capable of filling his own place; and finally submitted to the king a declaration which he had just had drafted against the duke of Orleans, to exclude that prince from all right to the regency and the administration of the kingdom in case of the death of the king. This was the last service that Richelieu rendered to France.

After the visit of the king the cardinal, feeling worse, asked the physicians how long he might still live. They, wishing to flatter the master to the very mouth of the tomb, replied that there was no need to despair—that God, seeing how necessary he was to the welfare of France, would intervene to save him. The cardinal shook his head and calling back one of the royal surgeons said, "Speak to me with open heart, not as a physician but as a friend." "Monseigneur," said the physician, "in twenty-four hours you will be dead or well." "That's the way to talk!" said Richelieu, "I like that." He sent for the curate of St. Eustace, his parish. "Here is my Judge," he said when the consecrated host was presented to him, "my Judge who is soon to pronounce my sentence. I pray him to condemn me if in my ministry I have followed any other end than the welfare of religion and of the state." "Do you forgive your enemies?" asked the curé. "I have never had any but the enemies of the state."

Most of those present contemplated the dying man with admiration, some with fear. "Here," said Cospéan, the bishop of Lisieux, "is an assurance that dismays me!" Doubtless Richelieu,<sup>m</sup> in order to fortify his con-



[1642 A.D.]

science, repeated the maxims of those two Latin testaments which contain his supreme thought; his official will in which he disposes of his dignities and his wealth concerns only his family; the other two are addressed to posterity. "I have been severe to some," he said, "in order to be good to all. I have loved justice and not vengeance." Was he very sure of it? "I have tried to give to Gaul the boundaries that nature intended for it, to identify Gaul with France, and to establish the new Gaul wherever the old one was."

On the afternoon of the 3rd of December the king came to see the cardinal for the last time. The physicians, having no more hope, had given up the sick man to empirics, who gave him a little relief. But his feebleness was increasing; on the morning of the 4th, feeling the approach of death, he made his niece, the duchess d'Aiguillon retire, as she was "the person whom he had most loved," according to his own words. This was the only moment, not of weakness, but of tenderness, that he had; his indomitable firmness had not given way during his long suffering. All present, ministers, generals, relatives, and servants, burst into tears; for this terrible man was, according to the testimony of his least favourable contemporaries, "the best master, relative, and friend that ever was known." Towards noon he heaved a deep sigh, then a feebler one, then his body collapsed and was still; his great soul was gone. He had lived fifty-seven years and three months, the same number of years as Henry IV.

Human judgments [continues Martin] have been and still are contradictory concerning this minister of salutary harshness, this strong-armed labourer who is accused of having pulled up from French soil the good grain along with the tares. The most opposite opinions are in league for and against his memory. Before 1789 lords and commons, after 1789 ultramontanes and a large part of the liberals heap abuse upon him. Retz claims that Cardinal Richelieu traded on all the evil intentions and all the ignorance of the last two centuries, in order to form in the most legitimate of monarchies the most scandalous and most dangerous tyranny." Montesquieu believes that "the most harmful citizens of France" were Richelieu and Louvois.

On the other hand the partisans of unity and of strong and vigorous power, whether monarchists or democrats, rise in favour of the great man, as do all those who put the love of country above all other social or political sentiments. The *Moniteur* of 1789, as the mouthpiece of this party, exclaims with the voice of the Revolution itself: "Let the aristocrats rage against the memory of this intrepid minister who overthrew their pride and avenged the people for the oppression of the great. By sacrificing great victims to the tranquillity of the state he became its pacifier. He was the first to apply true remedies to the root of the evil by degrading the intermediate powers that had enslaved the nation for nearly nine centuries. Nothing that can make a vast kingdom powerful and glorious escaped his indefatigable activity."

The popular instinct however has not decided the question as it has for Henry IV. The abstract and half veiled greatness of this invalid who from his bed overturned empires has not taken hold of the heart and the imagination of the unlettered masses and imprinted its pale mysterious figure in ineffaceable lines. The man who did most for the greatness of France is little known by the French people: is this the punishment for his severity towards the suffering masses and for his harsh maxims? "If the people were too much at ease, it would not be possible to hold them within the rules of their duty."

When the king heard of the death of his minister he coldly remarked: "A great statesman is dead." He survived him but six months. A few days before his death he named Anne of Austria regent and Gaston, his brother, lieutenant-general of the kingdom. Louis XIII felt great remorse for the assassination of Marshal d'Ancre and for his treatment of his mother, the queen. He died at the château St. Germain, at the age of forty-two years. One of his contemporaries says of him that he was so indifferent in his government that all the world awaited his death with impatience, even those who owed most to him.<sup>c</sup>

#### STEPHEN'S ESTIMATE OF LOUIS XIII AND OF RICHELIEU

Louis XIII [says Stephen] was a man of large and just capacity. His ideas of the duties of his station were princely and magnanimous. He lived in profound submission to the law of his conscience, in the fear of God, and in veneration for all men in whom he saw, or thought he saw, any image, however faint, of the divine beneficence and power. But he was of a feeble, indolent, and melancholy spirit. He was habitually wrapt in reveries, sometimes splendid, though more often gloomy; but he was always incapable of prompt or decisive action. Though a king, he never was and never could have been a free man. It was among the necessities of his existence to live under the government of a master. After selecting and rejecting many such, he at length submitted himself to the dominion of Richelieu, and thenceforward endured that bondage to the last. He endured it certainly, neither from attachment nor from fear, but because, as often as he struggled to regain his liberty, his efforts were baffled by his admiration of the genius of his great minister, and by his persuasion that no other man could so effectually promote the welfare of his state and people.

Richelieu, on the other hand, was one of the rulers of mankind, in virtue of an inherent and indefeasible birthright. His title to command rested on that sublime force of will, and decision of character, by which, in an age of great men, he was raised above them all. It is a gift which supposes and requires in him on whom it is conferred, convictions too firm to be shaken by the discovery of any unperceived or unheeded truths. It is, therefore, a gift, which, when bestowed on the governors of nations, also presupposes in them the patience to investigate, the capacity to comprehend, and the genius to combine, all those views of the national interest, under the guidance of which their inflexible policy is to be conducted to its destined consummation. For the stoutest hearted of men, if acting in ignorance, or under the impulse of haste or of error, must often pause, often hesitate, and not seldom recede. Richelieu was exposed to no such danger. He moved onwards to his predetermined ends with that unflinching step which attests, not merely a stern immutability of purpose, but a comprehensive survey of the path to be trodden, and a profound acquaintance with all its difficulties and all its resources. It was a path from which he could be turned aside neither by his bad nor by his good genius; neither by fear, lassitude, interest, or pleasure; nor by justice, pity, humanity, or conscience.

The idolatrous homage of mere mental power, without reference to the motives by which it is governed, or to the ends to which it is addressed,—that blind hero-worship, which would place Wallenstein and Gustavus Adolphus on the same level, and extol with equal warmth the triumphs of Cromwell and of Washington, though it be a modern fashion, has certainly

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not the charm of novelty. On the contrary it might, in the language of the Puritans, be described as one of the "old follies of the old Adam"; and, to the influence of that folly, the reputation of Richelieu is not a little indebted.

In his estimate, the absolute dominion of the French crown and the grandeur of France were convertible terms. They seemed to him but as two different aspects of the great consummation to which every hour of his political life was devoted. In approaching that ultimate goal, there were to be surmounted many obstacles which he distinctly perceived, and of which he has given a very clear summary in his *Testament Politique*. "When it pleased your majesty," he says, "to give me not only a place in your council, but a great share in the conduct of your affairs, the Huguenots divided the state with you. The great lords were acting not as your subjects, but as independent chieftains. The governors of your provinces were conducting themselves like so many sovereign princes. Foreign affairs and alliances were disregarded. The interest of the public was postponed to that of private men. In a word, your authority was, at that time, so torn to shreds, and so unlike what it ought to be, that, in the confusion, it was impossible to recognise the genuine traces of your royal power."

Before his death, Richelieu had triumphed over all these enemies, and had elevated the house of Bourbon upon their ruins. He is, perhaps, the only human being who ever conceived and executed, in the spirit of philosophy, the design of erecting a political despotism; not, indeed, a despotism like that of Constantinople or Teheran, but a power which, being restrained by religion, by learning, and by public spirit, was to be exempted from all other restraints; a dynasty, which like a kind of subordinate province, was to spread wide its arms for the guidance and shelter of the subject multitude; itself the while inhabiting a region too lofty to be ever darkened by the mists of human weakness, or of human corruption.

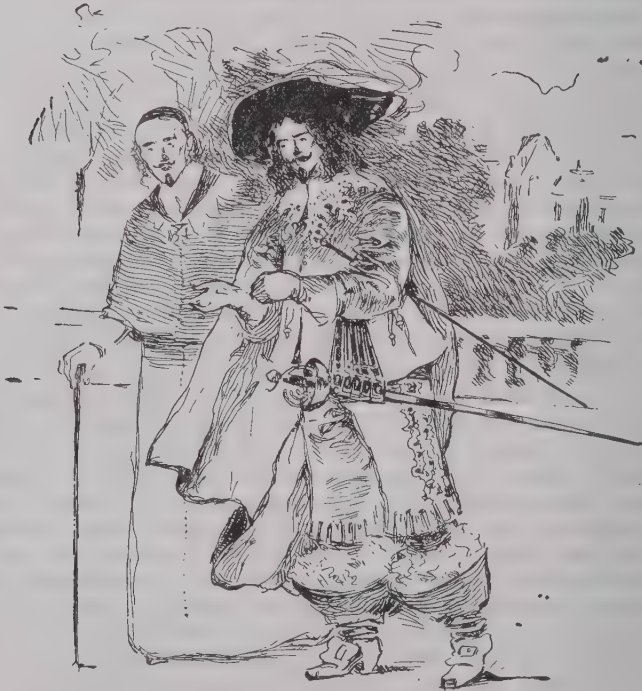
To devise schemes worthy of the academies of Laputa, and to pursue them with all the relentless perseverance of Cortes or of Clive, has been characteristic of many of the statesmen of France, both in remote and in recent times. Richelieu was but a more successful Mirabeau. He was not so much a minister as a dictator. He was rather the depository, than the agent, of the royal power. A king in all things but the name, he reigned with that exemption from hereditary and domestic influences, which has so often imparted to the papal monarchs a kind of preterhuman energy, and has as often taught the world to deprecate the celibacy of the throne.

Richelieu was the heir of the designs of Henry IV, and the ancestor of those of Louis XIV. But they courted, and were sustained by, the applause and the attachment of their subjects. He passed his life in one unintermitted struggle with each, in turn, of the powerful bodies over whom he ruled. By a long series of well-directed blows, he crushed forever the political and military strength of the Huguenots. By his strong hand, the sovereign courts were confined to their judicial duties, and their claims to participate in the government of the state were scattered to the winds. Trampling under foot all rules of judicial procedure and the clearest principles of justice, he brought to the scaffold one after another of the proudest nobles of France, by sentences dictated by himself, to extraordinary judges of his own selection; thus teaching the doctrine of social equality, by lessons too impressive to be misinterpreted or forgotten by any later generation. Both the privileges, in exchange for which the greater fiefs had surrendered their independence, and the franchises, for the conquest of



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which the cities, in earlier times, had successfully contended, were alike swept away by this remorseless innovator. He exiled the mother, oppressed the wife, degraded the brother, banished the confessor, and put to death the kinsman and favourites of the king, and compelled the king himself to be the instrument of these domestic severities. Though surrounded by enemies and by rivals, his power ended only with his life. Though beset by assassins, he died in the ordinary course of nature. Though he had waded to dominion through slaughter, cruelty, and wrong, he passed to his great account amidst the applause of the people, with the benedictions of the Church ; and, as far as any human eye could perceive, in hope, in tranquillity, and in peace.<sup>v</sup>



COSTUMES OF THE PERIOD OF LOUIS XIII



## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE SUPREMACY OF MAZARIN

[1643-1661 A.D.]

Any other nation, after its Mazarins, its Fouquets, its Louvois, so many wars, so many glories, so many heroes, so many rascals, would have stayed crushed and never arisen. Nevertheless, France still lives.

—MICHELET.<sup>b</sup>

LOUIS XIII had hastened to carry out all the provisions of Richelieu's will. His own did not meet with the same fate, for its most important dispositions were immediately modified. While regretfully appointing Anne of Austria regent he had put strong restrictions upon her authority and provided that the partisans of Richelieu, Mazarin and the prince of Condé, were to control the government. He knew the queen had not been unaware of the conspiracies of the court, not even of that of Cinq-Mars, and that she had always listened to Richelieu's enemies. Towards the end he had drawn nearer to her and his brother, but without granting them his confidence.

Scarcely had Louis closed his eyes when Mazarin resolved to give over the entire government to the queen. Unity and power seemed, to the cardinal, the most necessary thing: he came to an understanding with the bishop of Beauvais, almoner of the queen; he was able to persuade Gaston, Condé, and the other councillors, who withdrew opposition in consideration of the compensation offered them. Consequently, on the 18th of May, parliament met in extraordinary session; the peers were present. The queen attended with the young Louis XIV and held a bed of justice. On the express renunciation of the duke of Orleans and the prince of Condé the assembly unanimously set aside all the restrictions to the queen's power, and decided that the title of lieutenant-general held by the duke of Orleans would be simply honorary.<sup>c</sup>

The queen-mother was now in her forty-second year. She inspired almost universal sympathy, by her good looks, agreeable manner, and previous misfortunes which now counted for virtues. Age had made her more sedate and more devout; her devotion, however, was still mingled with gallantry, but it was the serious romantic gallantry of Spain which is not incompatible with external dignity and reserve. Facile and genial in ordinary intercourse, but altogether impulsive and insincere when her passions were aroused; going when necessary as far as perjury—though doubtless with the resource of mental reservation—to extricate herself from a wrong step; intrepid by temperament, in spite of more than one act of moral cowardice; of an unconquerable stubbornness in her prejudices and in certain of her attachments, although sensitive to ingratitude; at the same time absolute by her temperament and her principles, and unable through inactivity to exercise the absolute power, her queenly nature was invaluable to a minister capable of making a favourable impression on her head and her heart.

Mazarin made an attack on both of these at the same time, and soon occupied an unshakable position with her. Their correspondence leaves doubt neither as to the passion which this minister expressed and which he inspired in the queen, nor as to the constancy which Anne had at least the merit of preserving in this last passion, which the progress of age did not extinguish.<sup>1</sup>

Mazarin was of the same age as the queen. We may recall his brilliant début as a diplomat thirteen years before, when before Casale he prevented two armies from falling upon each other. Since then he had remained faithfully attached to the interests of France, which had raised him to the cardinalate without his having received holy orders—he never was a priest.<sup>2</sup> He gave himself out to be a Roman nobleman. His enemies denied this, and asserted that his father, a Sicilian merchant, had taken refuge in the states of the holy father, after having gone bankrupt at Palermo. A. Renée<sup>e</sup> has investigated every version of the cardinal's origin and concludes that his father, the son of a Sicilian artisan, came a fortune-seeker to Rome, where he became chamberlain to the constable Colonna. At all events the mind, the face, the complaisance, and the dexterity of the young Giulio Mazarini won him, at an early age, the patronage of some of the noble houses of Rome, and after having tried the sword, the young adventurer felt his vocation and assumed the soutane as a stepping-stone to diplomacy; at the age of twenty-eight he met Richelieu—we know the rest.

The character and the future of the fortunate Italian were still at this moment a problem for the court and for the public.<sup>d</sup> As yet he frightened no one. He was far from being believed as powerful and especially as much a master of the queen's mind as he already was. He often spoke of returning

[<sup>1</sup> Michelet<sup>3</sup> believes that the love affair of Mazarin and the queen began even earlier than their contemporaries think. He says: "It has been said that Louis XIV was the son of Mazarin—this is certainly wrong. He was of France, ballasted by Austria. But his brother, the second duke of Orleans (born September 22nd, 1640), like the first, Gaston, was thoroughly Italian in spirit and in manner. He was as much Mazarin as Gaston was Concini. I fully appreciate the difficulties. Their contemporaries believe that she did not give herself to him until later. There was at least one enthr<sup>l</sup>acte in her favour." To a court tradition, related, among others, by the Princess Palatine,<sup>n</sup> mother of the regent, is due a belief that Mazarin's continued hold over the queen-mother is explained by the fact that they had been secretly married. Kitchin<sup>o</sup> says "there is no reason to doubt that they were actually married." But Martin assures us that "there is not the slightest indication of this, either in their correspondence or in what we know of the *Car-nets*<sup>p</sup> of Mazarin."]   
 [<sup>2</sup> He was, however, a deacon, and so in lesser orders.]



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to Italy. What then was the astonishment when, on the very evening of the bed of justice, it developed that Anne of Austria had designated him to preside over the council.<sup>c</sup>

It would take a simple mind indeed to believe that an event as foreseen as the death of the king should have taken the queen unawares, that she should not have known which way to turn, and that she should have seriously offered the power to this one or to that. The whole affair was certainly settled beforehand; and for what reason? By reason of her indolence, which told her that a bed already made was better to lounge on, sleep in, than a new arrangement which would oblige her to will, to think. She knew that, ready to set out from London, from Brussels, from Madrid, there was a crowd of exiles, calling themselves martyrs to the queen's cause, who would demand the crown for their martyrdom. How to satisfy them? She was all ears to him who taught her the sweetness of ingratitude.

In this Mazarin was admirable. He often varied, but never on this point. His character offers the beauty of a well-sustained type which does not contradict itself. Ingrate towards Joseph and Chavigny, who made him in France, he got out of two scrapes during the Fronde by the same means—ingratitude towards Condé and then towards De Retz. Finally he crowned his life with what was worse than all—ingratitude towards the queen, his oldtime sweetheart.

The puppets of Richelieu, odious, detested, the Chavignys, the Bouthilliers, were impossible; Mazarin was a stranger, with no ties in France, and ready to depart as soon as he had put the queen *au courant*. He was packing up his things. A good excuse for remaining. The queen appeared very uncertain. She consulted much, hesitated much. Finally Condé came to tell Mazarin, "ready to depart," that the queen made him chief of the council, keeping also Chavigny and his father, the chancellor Séguier, the same who had conducted the inquiry against her in 1637.

A mortal blow for Beaufort and the Vendômes, the queen's friends. When they demanded an explanation she said that Mazarin would not let her forget her friends, that he was *au courant* of affairs, a stranger, consequently the less dangerous, that he was amusing, but above all disinterested. This disinterestedness was so extreme, and the poor man remained so poor, that after a few years, when he was driven out and wished to return, he was able to raise an army with his own money!<sup>b</sup>

#### BATTLE OF ROCROI (MAY 18TH-19TH, 1643 A.D.)

But before anything could happen, Paris was suddenly struck with a piece of good news which produced the very greatest effect. While under the last reign no great battle had been accomplished by the French armies, that of Louis XIV opened with the victory of Rocroi.

Francisco de Mello had advanced to the frontier of the Low Countries with 28,000 men, counting on profiting by the uncertainty into which the last illness and death of Louis XIII would plunge the French government. France had, on her side, an army in the field to observe him, and it was Louis XIII's will that this army be placed in command of the duke d'Enghien, son of Condé, a young prince of twenty-two years, the choice of whom must attach his house all the more closely to the future regency. Enghien had served hitherto only as a volunteer; but he had been instructed, exercised, and formed in the best of schools. He had already shown in war a vigour and intelligence which everyone applauded. He inspired confidence

both in his officers and his soldiers. They foresaw in him a great captain. As an adviser and to moderate his ardour he had been given an able lieutenant-general, Duhallier, become Marshal de l'Hôpital, and several excellent *maréchaux de camp*, Gassion, La Ferté-Senneterre, and Sirot.

The Spaniards entered Champagne, and besieged Rocroi. The place, important by its situation at the head of the Ardennes, was in no condition to resist. Enghien, having collected between St. Quentin and Guise 14,000 infantry and 6,000 horse, marched to its relief. On the way he learned of Louis XIII's death, but the news did not stop him. He resolved to give battle to relieve the tedium of methodic warfare—this was also the advice of Gassion and Sirot. On the 18th of May he arrived before the Spaniards, who, protected by woods through which the French had to pass, were not expecting to see them appear; and the time they took to range themselves for battle permitted the French prince to approach. The day was far advanced and he contented himself with a small amount of cannonading. The next day Enghien ordered the attack at daybreak, for he wished to forestall the arrival of a corps which General Beck was bringing to Francisco de Mello. He himself, with Gassion, charged at the head of the right wing and routed the enemy. The left wing, commanded by Marshal de l'Hôpital and La Ferté-Senneterre, had less success. It disputed its ground but was badly used. Enghien and Gassion, victorious on the right, did not neglect their advantages. They immediately fell upon the Spanish division which was in action with De l'Hôpital, the moment at which, thinking itself victorious, it began to break ranks and was running to pillage the tents of the French. Sirot, in command of the reserves, received the order to advance, and he waited to execute it until the very moment when Enghien and Gassion should have renewed the contest. Then he gave it, and the victory was decided. The two divisions of the enemy broken and put to flight, there yet remained the Spanish reserve infantry which formed a square battalion difficult to penetrate. It was composed of picked veterans and commanded by the old count de Fuentes, who had to be carried in a litter at the head of his soldiers. The victorious Enghien threw himself upon the square, dealt it several sharp attacks, and finally broke it by attacking its rear and flanks while his cannon thundered upon it.<sup>c</sup>

The massacre was appalling. Moved to pity, the duke d'Enghien threw himself between the two armies, commanding his men to spare the vanquished. "All the Spanish infantry," says La Moussaie, "crowded round him and his commanding officers, seeking shelter from the fury of the French, and more particularly of the Swiss, who could not bring themselves to make prisoners of any. After giving orders to the prisoners' guard, the prince collected his troops and prepared to receive Beck, should he have the courage to meet him on the plain. But Gassion shortly returned from his pursuit of the enemy and informed the duke that he had nothing to fear from the German general. Beck had not even passed beyond the edge of the wood, being content with rallying the fugitives, and at the approach of Gassion's cavalry he had fled precipitately towards Luxemburg.

Seeing his triumph thus complete, the duke d'Enghien, with the Christian piety that never forsook him even in battle, fell on his knees, in company with his whole army, and gave thanks to God for the victory. Thus ended one of the most bloody and most glorious days in the history of France. The battle had lasted four hours. The Spanish army left 8,000 dead upon the field, and 6,000 prisoners in the hands of the French. Among the slain was the brave count de Fuentes. Don Francisco de Mello had been made a prisoner

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for a few moments, but he managed to escape and took refuge at Mariembourg, then at Philippeville, where he collected the fragments of the Spanish army. Two hundred flags and sixty standards fell into the hands of the French. The Spanish baggage wagons were plundered and were found to contain all the money destined for the pay of the troops. The French lost about two thousand men.<sup>f</sup>

Enghien possessed the power of prompt decision and knew the value of time. He turned his victory to good account by marching immediately upon Thionville, the possession of which was of extreme importance to the Three Bishoprics and at the siege of which Feuquières had come to grief in 1639. Mazarin approved his plan and furnished all that was necessary for the siege. Instead of proceeding with that methodical regularity learned from the Dutch, Enghien pressed his attacks; they were very deadly, especially for the officers, but his plan was to reach his end the more quickly, to astonish the enemy, and to avoid sickness, which was more fatal than artillery in prolonged sieges. Thionville surrendered the 8th of August. The little town of Sierck, which commanded Luxemburg, capitulated a few days later.

Enghien was placed at a bound above all the captains employed by Richelieu. The French army, formed by eight successive years of campaigns, equal at least to those of neighbouring nations, leaving nothing to be desired in instruction, experience of its officers, discipline, good administration, or material organisation, had finally found a leader worthy of it. Enghien, with his eagle glance, great promptitude of execution, and an ardour which he knew how to moderate, disconcerted the rational and prudent tactics of the enemy's generals. The battle of Rocroi bore witness to the military progress of France, and dealt a serious blow to the prestige of the Spanish armies, when Spain had, for three years, been seeing her power shaken and her resources weakened.<sup>g</sup>

#### THE IMPORTANTS (1643 A.D.)

The return of Mazarin to power was received with surprise and mortification by the returned exiles, the enemies of Richelieu, those who had deemed themselves possessed of the heart and confidence of the queen. They were for the most part young men, such as the duke de Beaufort, and a host of noble striplings, who were all, nevertheless, profound statesmen in their own esteem.

With pretensions to govern, they found it necessary to alter or conceal their juvenile and frivolous habits; they affected to be grave and sententious, and some even thought it necessary to give time to study and reflection; a whim, the characteristic and beneficial consequences of which are seen in the *Mémoires* of De Retz and the *Maximes* of the duke de la Rochefoucauld. The latter was at this time one of the young friends of the queen. Despite the talents that some of these youths afterwards displayed, their present pretensions and demeanour were considered as absurd, and the party was ironically called *les Importants*, that of the "important." On the side opposed to them were drawn up Cardinal Mazarin, the old partisans of Richelieu, and, amongst the noblesse, the prince of Condé and his gallant son, the duke d'Enghien.

The queen-regent, as became her position, affected neutrality, but supported her newly chosen minister. The *importants*, however, hoped to regain the ascendancy through the means of Anne of Austria's old favourite, Madame de Chevreuse, who was now returning from her long exile. This lady had



once been all-powerful with the queen : her misfortunes, occasioned by that attachment, gave her, she thought, an increase of claim ; she totally put out of consideration how far the policy of a regent might interfere with the affections of a queen, and her party pretensions were as high as her resentments. She was warmly and cordially welcomed back by Anne ; Mazarin hastened to conciliate her, and commenced by placing 50,000 crowns before her, asking if he might count her amongst his friends. Madame de Chevreuse required the dismissal of Chavigny, and the cardinal instantly consented to sacrifice the secretary : then came the great demands of the party, *viz.*, that Sedan should be restored to the duke de Bouillon, the government of Brittany to the duke de Vendôme, and that of Guienne to young Épernon ; Le Havre, too, was required for the future duke de la Rochefoucauld.

These demands were no less than to re-constitute the power and independence of the *grandeess*, that Richelieu had spent his life and steeped his

memory in blood in order to reduce. Anne of Austria and Mazarin, now in the place of authority held by Richelieu, could not but see with his eyes : the adroit Mazarin, however, did not give to Madame de Chevreuse the flat and peremptory denial that would have come from Richelieu's mouth ; he looked complaisant and yielding, and drew on the negotiatrice of the *importants* to fresh pretensions. One of these was to supersede the chancellor Séguier by Châteauneuf. Now Châteauneuf had presided at the commission which condemned the duke de Montmorency, and to favour him would be to outrage the princess of Condé, sister of that duke. Mazarin pretended to stand out on this point, hesitatingly, no doubt ; Madame de Chevreuse insisted ; and the cardinal, determined to break with a party whose pretensions were exorbitant, and which sought to replace the aristocracy on its old footing of superiority to government and ministry, affected to break with them



MADAME DE MONTBAZON

rather than insult the family of Condé ; thus securing powerful support, and averting the suspicions of the young noblesse from the political jealousy which he bore them.

A rupture was declared ; and a lady's quarrel soon afterwards occurred to precipitate hostilities, and give the minister a pretext for acting. The duchess de Longueville, of the family of Condé, and one of the beauties of the court, was maligned by Madame de Montbazon, sister-in-law of Madame de Chevreuse. The latter found a *billet-doux* in the handwriting of the former, and addressed, she asserted, to the count de Coligny. This piece of scandal or calumny convulsed the entire circle of influential personages. The duke d'Enghien challenged the duke de Beaufort ; the duke of Guise

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and the count de Coligny fought in the Place Royal, Madame de Longueville being spectatress of the discomfiture of her chevalier, who died of his wounds. The queen in vain endeavoured to bring about an accommodation. The *importants* were too deeply mortified, and nothing short of the disgrace of the cardinal would satisfy them. The queen peremptorily refusing this, the duke de Beaufort entered into a scheme for making away with the cardinal by violence. Circumstances occurred to baffle and interrupt the design. Épernon was sounded in the meantime by one of the conspirators, and he instantly betrayed it. The duke de Beaufort was consequently arrested on the following day. Mesdames de Montbazon and Chevreuse were both exiled, as well as the duke and duchess of Vendôme, the dukes of Guise and Mercœur, and other less illustrious nobles. Here is the exculpation of Richelieu, and the excuse of his severity. No sooner is Anne of Austria, his rival and enemy, in the place of power, than she is obliged to adopt his policy and his strong measures, notwithstanding that such acts did violence to her private feelings. She wept on ordering the arrest of Beaufort; but, like the late monarch, she was compelled to sacrifice her feelings to her own interest and that of the state. The reign of the *importants* lasted three months and a half.

The four years which succeeded 1643 were years of tranquillity to the regent, triumph to Mazarin, and glory to France. The petulance of the noblesse was checked by the discomfiture of the *importants*. Mazarin, instead of imitating Richelieu and reigning by terror alone, sought to captivate by giving scope to pleasure, and creating a general taste for light and social amusements. He encouraged fêtes and gallantry. He was prodigal of favours, of money, of everything save authority. He bound the noblesse, and their more froward dames and mistresses, in golden and in flowery chains; and those who a year before were clamouring for independent governments, then limited their ambition to a duke's title. The sage La Rochefoucauld himself has recorded in his *Mémoires*<sup>m</sup> how he pleaded for this important distinction, in order, as he observes, that his wife might enjoy the privilege of a *tabouret* or stool at court.<sup>g</sup>

## THE EDUCATION OF THE YOUNG KING

Louis XIV, born September 5th, 1638, had now (1645) completed his seventh year; that being the age at which kings passed from the control of women to the control of men, it became necessary to provide him with a governor and a tutor. To Cardinal Mazarin the queen desired to hand over the supreme control of Louis' bringing up, and for that purpose created for him the post of superintendent of the king's education.

Several contemporary writers have reproached Mazarin with having directed the education of the young Louis carelessly. La Porte, a groom of the bed-chamber to the king, accused the cardinal of having no other dream than to obtain empire over the young prince's will by surrounding him with his own family and partisans. Madame de Motteville,<sup>k</sup> without being quite so prejudiced, claims that he thwarted the good intentions of the young prince's governor, the marquis de Villeroi. Nevertheless, an entry in the note-books proves that even as early as 1647 Mazarin exerted himself to remove from the prince such persons as he thought dangerous. In the case of François de Rochechouart, who enjoyed an old-established credit with the queen, Mazarin declared that a place must not be given him near the king; "for," he writes, "his incessant flatteries are extremely prejudicial to the

king, and prompt him to regard with great displeasure those who speak the truth to him." Yet one must recognise that during a long period the cardinal, absorbed in politics, paid little heed to the king's education. It was only during the later years of his life that, having reached the summit of power and glory, he helped by his counsels to inspire in the young Louis habits of order, of regular work, of strong and tenacious will, of supreme and authoritative government. Judging by results, this education was far from being sterile. The king's governor, intrusted to accompany him everywhere, to watch over his safety and direct his actions, was Nicolas de Neufville, first marquis, then duke and marshal, de Villeroy. This individual had gained a certain renown in war, but it was pre-eminently as a clever and pliant courtier that he shone. He was a willing tool in the hands of the minister. It seems that his rôle was limited to winning the young king's good graces, to teaching him the ways and manners of the court, in which he himself excelled, and to giving him for companion and favourite his own son, François de Neufville-Villeroy, who became in his turn Duke-Marshal de Villeroy.

The post of tutor was filled by Hardouin de Beaumont de Péréfixe, doctor of the Sorbonne, who ultimately became archbishop of Paris, and to whom we owe a *History of Henry IV* written for the instruction of Louis XIV. The classical education of the young king was meagre. Madame de Motteville<sup>k</sup> tells us "he was made to translate Cæsar's *Commentaries*; he learned to dance, to draw, and to ride, and he was very skilful in all bodily exercises." The Venetian ambassador, Nani, asserts that the tutor did neglect to teach the young king the principles of virtue.<sup>f</sup>

#### MILITARY GLORY (1644-1648 A.D.)

The year 1644 is marked by the brilliant manœuvres of the duke of Enghien and Turenne.<sup>g</sup> After the capture of Sierck, Enghien drove the Germans back across the Rhine, and crossed after them; he hastened to repair the losses and defeats which the French had met with on the frontier after the death of Marshal de Guébriant, which had occurred at the siege of Rottweil in Swabia (1643). [Guébriant's army, now badly led by several leaders, had allowed itself to be surprised by the imperials at Tuttlingen.] Enghien found Freiburg im Breisgau taken and the Bavarian general Mercy beneath its walls with an army greater than his own. Enghien had two marshals of France under him, of whom one was Grammont and the other Turenne, who had just been created marshal after having served brilliantly in Piedmont against the Spaniards. The duke and his two generals attacked Mercy's camp intrenched on two heights. The battle recommenced three times on three different days (August 3rd-5th, 1644). It is said that the duke of Enghien threw his commander's baton into the enemy's entrenchments and, sword in hand, went after it at the head of the Conti regiment.<sup>1</sup> The battle of Freiburg, more bloody than decisive, was the duke's second victory. Mercy decamped four days afterwards. Philippsburg, Worms, and Mainz were the proof and the fruit of the victory.

Enghien returned to Paris, received the acclamation of the people and demanded recompense of the court; leaving his army to the prince-marshal Turenne. But this general, skilful as he was, was beaten at Marienthal (May, 1645). Enghien hastened back to his troops, resumed the command,

[<sup>1</sup> This statement is not substantiated, and is not to be found in any contemporary writing. The first book that speaks of it bears the date 1694.]



[1644-1648 A.D.]

and joined to the glory of again commanding Turenne that of repairing his defeat. He attacked Mercy on the plains of Nördlingen, and won a great battle early in August. Marshal de Grammont was captured, but so was General Glen who commanded under Mercy, and the latter himself was among the slain. Mercy, who has been reckoned among the great captains of his time, was buried close to the battle-field, and on his tomb was graven, "*Sta Viator; Heroem Calcas*" (Halt traveller, thou treadest on a hero).

The name of the duke d'Enghien<sup>1</sup> now eclipsed all others. In October, 1646, he besieged Dunkirk in sight of the Spanish army, and was the first to give that place to the French. Such success and such service brought forth less reward than suspicion in the court, and made him as much feared by the ministry as by the enemy. Condé [as we must now call him] was therefore withdrawn from the scenes of this conquest and glory and sent into Catalonia with inefficient and ill-paid troops. He besieged Lerida, but was obliged to raise the siege (1647). A wavering state of affairs soon forced the court to recall the prince to Flanders. The archduke Leopold, brother of the emperor Ferdinand III, was besieging Lens in Artois. Condé, restored to the troops which had always been victorious under him, led them straight for the archduke. This was the third time he had given battle with disadvantage in numbers. He spoke to his soldiers these simple words: "Friends, remember Rocroi, Freiburg, and Nördlingen!"<sup>2</sup> (August 20th, 1648).

He himself relieved Marshal de Grammont, who was about to surrender with the left wing; he captured General Beck. The archduke saved himself with difficulty with the count of Fuensaldaña. The imperials and the Spaniards composing the army were scattered; they lost more than a hundred banners and thirty-eight pieces of cannon, which was a considerable number for that time. Five thousand prisoners were taken; three thousand men were killed; the rest deserted and the archduke was left without an army. Never since the foundation of the monarchy had the French won so many battles in succession, and ones so noted for military ability and courage.

While the prince of Condé was thus counting the years of his youth in victories, and the duke of Orleans, brother of Louis XIII, was upholding the reputation of a son of Henry IV and of France by the capture of Gravelines (July, 1644), Courtraï, and Mardyck (November, 1644), the viscount de Turenne had taken Landau, had driven the Spaniards from Treves, and re-established the elector. In November, 1647, with the help of the Swedes under Wrangel, Torstenson's successor, he won the battle of Lawingen, and that of Zusmarshausen (May, 1648). He compelled the elector of Bavaria to leave his states, at the age of almost eighty. The count d'Harcourt took Balaguer and beat the Spaniards. They lost Porto Longone in Italy (1646). Twenty vessels and twenty galleys of France, which composed almost the whole navy as re-established by Richelieu, defeated the Spanish fleet off the Italian coast.

[<sup>1</sup> The aged prince of Condé (Henry II de Bourbon) died December 26th, 1646, when the duke d'Enghien (Louis II de Bourbon) assumed his father's title. He came to be known as "The Great Condé," and we shall see much of him in the ensuing pages. He was born at Paris, September 8th, 1621; died, December 11th, 1686. The first prince of Condé (Louis I de Bourbon), whose death at the battle of Jarnac in 1569 will be recalled (see p. 363), was his great-grandfather. This first prince of Condé was the younger brother of Anthony, king of Navarre, the father of King Henry IV. So the Great Condé came honestly by his fighting propensities.]

[<sup>2</sup> Some historians refuse to credit Condé with these words. Indeed, Madame de Motteville reports a much less stirring harangue: "My friends, have good courage; we must of necessity fight to-day. It will be useless to back out. For I promise you that all the brave and the cowardly will fight; the ones of good will, the others through compulsion!" "This was perhaps," adds Duruy,<sup>h</sup> "the only kind of language to impress the soldiers at that time."]

This was not all. The French arms had again invaded Lorraine; and Duke Charles IV, a warrior prince, but an inconstant, rash, and unfortunate one, saw himself at the same time deprived of his state by France and kept prisoner by the Spaniards (May, 1644). The allies of France pressed the Austrian power on the north and south. The duke of Albuquerque, the Portuguese general, won the battle of Badajoz from Spain in March, 1645. Torstenson defeated the imperials near Tabor and obtained a complete victory. The prince of Orange, at the head of the Dutch, penetrated as far as Brabant.

The king of Spain, beaten on every side, saw Roussillon and Catalonia in the hands of the French. Naples in revolt against him had just given itself into the hands of the duke of Guise, the last prince of that branch of a house fruitful in illustrious and dangerous men. This one, who had passed only for a bold adventurer, because he did not succeed, had at least the glory of boarding single-handed a bark in the midst of the Spanish fleet and of defending Naples with no other resource than his own courage.

At the sight of so many misfortunes crushing the house of Austria, so many victories accumulated by the French, seconded by the success of their allies, one would have believed that Vienna and Madrid were only waiting to open their gates, and that the emperor and the king of Spain were almost without dominions. Nevertheless these five years of glory, crossed with only a few reverses, brought few real advantages and much spilled blood, but no revolution. If one was to be feared it was for France. She was on the verge of ruin in the midst of this apparent prosperity.<sup>2</sup>

#### TREATY OF WESTPHALIA (1648 A.D.)

Negotiations for peace had been going on for a long time. Proposed in 1641, conferences were opened April 10th, 1643, in two Westphalian cities — Münster and Osnabrück. The questions for consideration were the altering of the map of Europe after a thirty years' war; of providing the empire with a new constitution; and of regulating the civil and religious rights of the several Christian nations. France was represented at this congress by able negotiators, the count d'Avaux and Abel Servien; but her best diplomats were Condé and Turenne, whose swords had simplified the negotiations by rendering peace a necessity. At the last moment Spain withdrew, hoping to profit by the troubles of the Fronde, then commencing in France. The other countries, in haste to have finished, signed the peace (October 24th, 1648).

During the Thirty Years' War Austria had striven to stifle religious and political liberty in Germany. Austria being defeated, that against which she had fought remained and increased. The Protestants obtained full liberty of conscience, and imperial authority, but lately threatening, was annulled; the princes of the German states, confirmed in the exercise of complete authority over their territories, had the right of alliance with foreign powers so long as these alliances (so read a vain restriction) were "against neither the emperor nor the empire."

The two powers which had achieved the defeat of Austria had stipulated for themselves important indemnities. Sweden gained the island of Rügen, Wismar, western Pomerania with Stettin, the archbishopric of Bremen, and the bishopric of Verden — that is to say, the mouths of the three great German rivers, the Oder, the Elbe, and the Weser — with 5,000,000 crowns and three votes in the diet. France continued to occupy Lorraine, promising

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to restore it to its duke when he should have complied with her conditions. She obtained the empire's renunciation of all right over the Three Bishoprics — Metz, Toul, and Verdun, which she had possessed for a century; over the town of Pinerolo, ceded by the duke of Savoy in 1631; over Alsace, which was now — with the exception of Strasburg — given to France, carrying her boundaries beyond the Vosges as far as the Rhine. She also obtained Breisach, on the right bank of that river, and her right to garrison Philippsburg was recognised; the right of navigation on the Rhine was guaranteed her.

These were great advantages; because, by recovering Alsace, France covered Lorraine on the side of Germany and established herself to the north of Franche-Comté, which since Henry IV she had enveloped on the south; so that the return to France of these two provinces was only a question of time. Not only were her frontiers now better outlined for defence, but she was able to maintain an offensive position. By the acquisition of Pinerolo France planted a foot beyond the Alps in Italy; by Breisach and Philippsburg, beyond the Rhine in Germany. By opening the eyes of the German states to their right to contract foreign alliances France was always able to buy over one or another of their indigent princes, and by guaranteeing the execution of the treaty, she gave herself the right to interfere in German affairs. The empire — being now no more than a sort of confederation of 360 states, Lutheran and Catholic, monarchical and republican, laical and ecclesiastical — became of necessity the theatre for all sorts of intrigues, the battle-field of Europe, as Italy had been at the beginning of modern times, and for the same reasons — division and anarchy.

The Treaty of Westphalia, which was the foundation for all diplomatic conventions from the middle of the seventeenth century until the French Revolution, put an end to the supremacy of the house of Austria, and rescued the independence of the small states. If the Bourbons had not inherited the ambition of the Habsburgs, and roused against themselves the same coalitions, the Peace of Westphalia would have accomplished the supremacy of France and the political liberty of Europe.



A FRENCH OFFICER, MIDDLE OF SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

#### MAZARIN'S DOMESTIC POLICY

While Mazarin gloriously continued the policy of Richelieu, his power in France was being destroyed by factions.<sup>h</sup>

At first he used his power with moderation. He affected, at the beginning of his supremacy, as much of simplicity as Richelieu had displayed of arrogance. Far from employing guards, and keeping up royal splendour,



he had at first the most modest retinue. He was affable and even gentle where his predecessor had shown inflexible pride.

But with all this, taxation was necessary to maintain the war against the Spaniards and against the emperor. The finances of France were, since the death of Henry IV, as badly administered as those of Spain and Germany. The excise offices were in chaos, ignorance was extreme, thievery was paramount. The revenue of the state amounted during the first year of the regency to between fifteen and sixteen million livres. This was quite sufficient if there had been any economy in the ministry; but in 1646 and 1647 there were deficits. The superintendent of the finances was at times a Siennese peasant named Particelli Émery, whose soul was even baser than his birth, and whose extravagance and debauchery aroused the nation to indignation. This man invented burdensome and ridiculous expedients. He created and sold posts of inspectors of fagots, of licensed hay venders, of king's councillors, of wine hawkers; he sold letters of nobility. The debts on the Hôtel-de-Ville at Paris then amounted to only about eleven millions, but the fund-holders were deprived of several quarterly dividends; import duties were increased; several posts of masters of requests (to whom all petitions were intrusted) were created; about eighty thousand crowns of magistrates' salaries were held back.

It is easy to realise how far the minds of the people were aroused against two Italians, both come penniless to France, who had enriched themselves at the expense of the nation and who now had such a hold over them. The parliament of Paris, the masters of requests, the other courts, the fund-holders, rebelled. In vain did Mazarin remove his confidant Émery from office and relegate him to one of his estates — there was indignation that this man should have estates in France. The cardinal was held in abhorrence, although at this very moment he was consummating the great work of the Peace of Westphalia; for it must be noted that this famous treaty and the "day of barricades" are of the same year, 1648. The civil wars began at Paris as they had begun in England, over a little money. In 1647 the parliament of Paris, in verifying the tax edicts, showed itself spiritedly opposed to them. It acquired the confidence of the people by remonstrances which were very wearying to the ministry. But it did not revolt. Its spirit became embittered and hardened by degrees. The populace might rush to arms at once and choose a leader as they had done with Masaniello at Naples; but magistrates and statesmen proceed with more deliberation, and begin by observing the proprieties as far as party spirit will permit.

Cardinal Mazarin had thought that by skilfully dividing the magistracy he would prevent all troubles, but his cunning was met with inflexibility. He withdrew four years' salary from all the higher courts, at the same time remitting the *paulette*; that is to say, exempting the judges from paying the tax devised by Paulet under Henry IV for assuring the magistrates the permanency of their posts and permitting them to sell them. This retrenchment was not an injury, but he did not withdraw the four years' salary from parliament, thinking to disarm it by this favour. But parliament scorned this mark of grace which exposed it to the reproach of preferring its interests to those of the others; and it did not hesitate to issue an *arrêt d'union* with the other courts of justice. Mazarin, who was never able to pronounce French, having said that this *arrêt d'ognon* was an attacking measure, and having had it vetoed by the council, this single word *ognon* made him ridiculous, and as one never yields to one that is scorned, parliament became more active.

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It loudly demanded that all the intendants regarded by the people as extortioners should be recalled, and that the new kind of magistracy instituted under Louis XIII, without the procedure of ordinary forms, should be abolished. This was to please the nation as much as to irritate the court. It desired that, according to the ancient law, no citizen should be put in prison without his natural judges knowing of it within twenty-four hours.

Parliament did more ; it abolished the intendants by a decree with orders to the king's prosecutors in its jurisdiction to inform against them. Thus the hatred of the ministry, supported by the love of the public weal, threatened the court with a revolution. The queen yielded ; she abandoned the intendants and asked only that three be retained. In this she was refused. While these troubles were brewing the prince of Condé won the famous victory at Lens, which crowned his glory. The king, who was only ten years old, exclaimed, "Parliament will be very sorry !" These words make it sufficiently evident that the court looked upon the parliament of Paris as an assembly of rebels. Indeed, the cardinal and his courtiers gave it no other name. But the more the parliamentarians were treated as rebels the more resistance they made.<sup>i</sup>

This state of affairs between the ruling power and the parliament expressing the feelings of the people brings us to that remarkable revolt known as the Fronde, "the last echo of the civil wars of the sixteenth century."

"The origin of the name," says Martin,<sup>d</sup> "seems to have been the comparison made between the young and turbulent *conseillers aux enquêtes* and the urchins who gathered in the city ditches to indulge in mimic fights with slings (*frondes*). The malcontents adopted the name of *frondeurs*, and longed for the glory of 'slinging the court well' (*bien fronder la cour*). The first to adopt this title of *frondeur* was, it is said, the councillor Bachaumont, son of the president Le Coigneux." Kitchin<sup>g</sup> says that the name of the Fronde was first adopted by the coadjutor to the archbishop of Paris, Paul de Gondî, of whom we shall presently speak. "The young lords and dames," says Crowe,<sup>g</sup> "who afterwards embraced the party, willingly adopted a name which so well characterised their petulance, and sportive rather than serious rebellion." But the Fronde, sportive though it may have been to the nobles, was the cause of immense misery to the people. Famine and pest walked in its train and the country was enormously depopulated.<sup>a</sup>

#### FIRST INSURRECTION OF THE FRONDE (1648 A.D.)

The queen and the cardinal resolved to arrest three of the most stubborn magistrates of the parliament : Novion Blancmênil president of a court of justice, Charton president of a court of inquiry, and Broussel former councillor-clerk of the grand chamber. They were the tools of party leaders and not leaders themselves. Charton, a man of very limited abilities, was known by the nickname of "I say this," because he always opened and closed his remarks with those words. Broussel had nothing to recommend him but his white hairs, his hatred for the ministry, and a reputation for always raising his voice against the court no matter on what subject. His confrères paid little attention to him, but the populace idolised him.

Instead of arresting them without any hubbub in the silence of the night, the cardinal thought to impress the people by having them arrested in broad daylight, on August 26th, 1648, while the *Te Deum* was being sung at Notre Dame for the victory of Lens and the Swiss of the chamber were carrying into the church the seventy-three banners taken from the enemy. It was

precisely this plan that caused the ruin of the kingdom. Charton escaped, Blancménéil was taken without difficulty, but it was not the same with Broussel. An old servant, seeing her master thrown into a coach by Comminges, a lieutenant of the bodyguard, collected a mob. It surrounded the coach, which was smashed to pieces; but the French guards lent assistance to Comminges and got Broussel away from his friends. He was taken out on the road to Sedan. The arrest, far from intimidating the people, irritated and emboldened them. Shops were closed. The great iron chains which at that time were at the entrance to the principal streets were stretched across them; barricades were built, and four hundred thousand throats cried "Liberty and Broussel!"<sup>i</sup>

The marshal de la Meilleraie with two hundred guards tried to disperse them; he drove some back to the Pont Neuf, where his progress was impeded, and where he met Paul de Gondi, coadjutor of the archbishop of Paris, so famous later under the name of Cardinal de Retz, who had rushed out in his robes amongst the mob. After having harangued and momentarily tranquillised the populace, De Retz hurried with the marshal to the Palais Royal, to represent the alarming state of the city to the queen. Anne of Austria, who knew the coadjutor's character, suspected him as one more likely to throw oil than water on the flame. "It is rebellion itself to imagine that the people can rebel," said she; "you would have me deliver Broussel; I will first strangle him with these hands." This resentment, seconded by the jeers of the court, had the ill effect of converting De Retz into a dangerous enemy.<sup>g</sup>

*The Day of the Barricades (August 27th, 1648)*

It is difficult to reconcile all the details of what followed, related by Cardinal de Retz,<sup>j</sup> Madame de Motteville,<sup>k</sup> Advocate-General Talon, and many others; but all agree upon the principal points. During the night which followed the riot the queen had about two thousand troopers, quartered a few leagues from Paris, come into the city to protect the king's residence. The chancellor Séguier had already proceeded to the parliament accompanied by a lieutenant and several archers to quash all its decrees and even, it is said, to suspend that body.

But during that very night the factionists assembled at the house of De Retz, and everything was arranged to arm the city. The chancellor's coach was stopped and overturned. He escaped with difficulty, with his daughter the duchess de Sully, who in spite of him had insisted on accompanying him. He retired in disorder into the hôtel de Luynes, jostled and insulted by the populace. The civil lieutenant now took him into his coach, and escorted by two Swiss companies and a squadron of gendarmes attempted to bring him to the Palais Royal. The people fired on them; several were killed and the duchess de Sully was wounded in the arm.

Two hundred barricades were formed in an instant; they were pushed to within a hundred paces of the Palais Royal. The soldiers, after seeing several of their number fall, retreated and looked to see what the bourgeois were going to do. The parliament marched on foot in a body to the queen, across the barricades which were lowered before it, and demanded the liberation of its imprisoned members. The queen was obliged to set them free.<sup>i</sup>

The barricades were immediately levelled, and the people ceased their turbulence and clamour. "Never was disorder more orderly managed," says Madame de Motteville;<sup>k</sup> "the citizens who had taken up arms to prevent the ascendancy of the rabble and to check pillage were little more peaceable than



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the populace itself, and roared for the liberation of Broussel with equal violence." The court in yielding had but temporised, however; and it soon made its escape from the capital to St. Germain. Such was the first insurrection of the Fronde.<sup>9</sup>

Cardinal de Retz has boasted of having all by himself armed the whole of Paris on that day (August 27th, 1648), which has been called the "Day of the Barriades" and which was the second of its kind. This singular man is the first bishop of France to plan a civil war without religion for a pretext. He has described himself in his *Mémoires*,<sup>1</sup> written in a grandiose manner with the impetuosity of genius and an unevenness which are the mirror of his conduct. He was a man who, from the depths of debauchery and the infamous consequences which it brings, preached to the people and made them idolise him. He breathed faction and conspiracy; he had been at the age of twenty-three the soul of a conspiracy against the life of Richelieu; he was the author of the barricades; he precipitated parliament into cabals and the people into seditions. His extreme vanity made him undertake bold crimes in order that they might be talked about. It was this same vanity that made him repeat so often, "I am of a house of Florence as ancient as that of the greatest princes"<sup>1</sup>—he whose ancestors had been merchants like so many of his compatriots.<sup>2</sup>

The hopes of the queen were now in the young prince of Condé. But that young hero, though opposed to the party of the *importants*, was not yet prepared to martyrise his popularity for Mazarin. He proposed his mediation. Mazarin accepted it, well knowing how soon the hot prince would lose patience at the formal and democratic pleadings of the parliamentary statesmen. De Retz, now the leading man of the popular party, made every effort to gain Condé, who replied, "My name is Louis de Bourbon: I will not shake the throne." Through his means negotiations were entered into with the court; the elders of the parliament, and Molé, the president, at their head, being anxious to avoid a civil war, whilst the violent party, bestowing on the pacific chiefs the nickname of *barbons*, pushed matters to extremities. They had revived an old law, passed after the fall of the marshal D'Ancre, which prohibited the administration of the kingdom by foreigners, thus aiming at Mazarin. Still a second accommodation took place: a royal declaration, dated the 28th of October [the very day of the signing of the Peace of Westphalia], accepted the principal articles of the plan of reformation, and the court returned to the capital.



A FRENCH OFFICER, MIDDLE OF THE  
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

[<sup>1</sup> Cardinal de Retz was the descendant of a Florentine family that came to the court of France in the suite of Catherine de' Medici; it was his grand-uncle who figured so prominently in the massacre of St. Bartholomew. See above, pp. 369, 399.]

This proved but a hollow truce, entered into by both parties out of respect for Condé, whom both feared and both hoped to gain. The popular party was suspicious; De Retz continued his intrigues; whilst the queen urged Condé to make preparations for defending the royal authority by force. It has been the fate of all attempts to establish liberty in France to be frustrated, not by the opposition of the aristocracy, but by their affecting to abet and adopt its principles.

In the Fronde, the magistracy of Paris, supported by the citizens, endeavoured to supply the want of a national assembly. They framed a constitution; forced it on the court without effusion of blood; and might have succeeded in upholding and perhaps ameliorating it, when the young noblesse interfered, drove the citizens to insurrection first, then to submission, and for the sake of their selfish quarrels, which all their light-heartedness and valour cannot redeem, they sacrificed the last hope that the French had of even a degree of liberty; they pierced the last plank that shut out the overwhelming ocean of despotism. We certainly, of the present day, can look but with a small degree of hope or approbation on a judicial body which grasps at legislative power. But had the noblesse known its true interests, and acted its natural part of mediator, the states-general might have superseded the parliament in its political functions; the moderation of the provincial deputies would have tempered the ardour of the capital, and the ever consecutive extremes of insurrection and pusillanimous submission might both have been avoided.

The old party of the *importants* now roused itself. The duke de Beaufort escaped from prison. The duke de Bouillon, smarting under the loss of Sedan, joined counsels with him; and both intrigued with the violent men in the parliament to form an insurrection against the court. The duchess de Longueville brought her charms to support the same cause: these decided La Rochefoucauld, her lover, to adopt it. She used all her influence to the same effect with her brother Condé in vain. In default of him, the prince of Conti, his brother, was won over. No cause could subsist, in the opinion of these gentlemen, unless it could boast the name of a prince of the blood. The duchess de Chevreuse, though still in exile, corresponded with the party, and promised to it the accession of the princes of Lorraine. Madame de Montbazou was found united in the same cause with her rival, Madame de Longueville. The marshal D'Hocquincourt offered the strong and important fortress which he commanded, in homage to the charms of the former. "Péronne," wrote he to her, "is at the disposal of the fairest of the fair." A crowd of nobles gaily joined the conspiracy; and the court was once more obliged to make its escape from Paris, and retire to St. Germain, in January, 1649.<sup>1</sup>

Strong and extreme measures were at last resolved upon, although not prepared with that vigour and foresight that Richelieu would have displayed. Troops, under Condé and the duke of Orleans, prepared to invest Paris, and occupied on either side of the city the bridges of Charenton and St. Cloud; but with only 12,000 men, the utmost of the royalist force, it was impossible to invest the metropolis. A royal order, commanding the

[<sup>1</sup> According to Voltaire, *i* so low were the royal resources that almost the entire court had to sleep, while at St. Germain, on straw. They were obliged to leave the crown jewels as security with the usurers. The young king often lacked necessities. The pages of his chamber were dismissed because there were no means to keep them. At the same time Louis' aunt, Henrietta Maria of England, in refuge at Paris, was reduced to the extremes of poverty; her daughter, afterwards married to Louis' brother, had to stay in bed to keep warm.]

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parliament to retire to Montargis, was treated by them with contempt. A civic guard was raised, to the number of 12,000, the chief officers, it is remarkable, being lawyers and officers of parliament; the provost of the merchants, however, retained the supreme command. In addition to these, a stipendiary force of 20,000 men was raised in a few days, by means of a house tax, fixed at so much for every plain house-door, and double the sum for the gate which admitted a carriage. The noblesse did not forget their petty ambition, even in adopting the bourgeois cause. The duke d'Elbeuf had first seized on the chief command, and was reluctant to yield it to the prince of Conti. The duke de Beaufort, however, was the most popular chief, owing to his affable manners and handsome person. He was called the *roi des halles* (the king of the markets). The war, if it can be called such, commenced by the attack of the Bastille, at which the ladies of the party assisted. It surrendered gallantly to these fascinating adversaries. On his side, Condé began to press towards the walls; and some skirmishes took place, in which a few were slain, amongst others the duke de Châtillon.

Two circumstances soon after occurred that much altered the views and shook the resolutions of the court. One was the defection of Turenne, who, won over by his brother the duke de Bouillon, promised to march the army, which he commanded on the Rhine, to the support of the Fronde; the other was the connection of the *frondeur* nobles with Spain, and the public reception by the parliament of an envoy from that power. This savoured of the inveteracy of the league. The elder magistrates, and principally Molé the president, indignant at this alliance with the enemies of the country, began to exert themselves to frustrate the violent projects of the young noblesse, and to seek an accommodation with the court. The majority of the parliament, already disgusted with the froward, frivolous, and arrogant behaviour of the nobles, came so far into the same views, that Molé himself, with some of his brethren, was despatched to the queen at Ruel, to essay an accommodation. The court grasped at the opportunity, but still negotiated for advantages; whilst Bouillon stirred the populace of Paris against the moderation of the parliament, and urged the alliance with Spain. Molé, determined to disappoint the ambitious duke, signed a treaty with the court in haste, on the 11th of March, ere Turenne could arrive, or Spain despatch its aid.

Great was the indignation of the populace, and of the seditious leaders, at the news of this peace. All cried out treason. Bouillon was confounded, and De Retz perplexed. Molé knew that he risked his life by thus balking the seditious ardour of both the nobles and the mob; but the thought gave him courage, not hesitation. The critical moment was that of declaring the treaty to the assembled parliament. A ferocious crowd, crying "Treason! no peace! no Mazarin!" surrounded the Palais de Justice; and the throng within its walls was scarcely less hostile or less calm. Molé stood up and read the treaty; clamour instantly covered his voice. The prince of Conti exclaimed against a peace concluded without his knowledge, and that of the nobles his friends. "You, then, are the cause," retorted Molé: "whilst we were at Ruel, you were treating with the enemies of France; you were inviting the archduke, the Spaniard, and the foe to invade the kingdom." "It is not without the consent of several members of the parliament that we took this step," replied the prince, not denying the charge. "Name them," was Molé's instant retort; "name the traitors, that we may proceed to try and judge them."

The firmness of the president at once awed the nobles, and won over the majority of the assembled magistrates to support him. The only hope of



the favourers of sedition was in the rabble, which, incensed and tumultuous, had penetrated into the passages and corridors of the palace. Some, with poniards and arms, demanded the head of the president. "Give us up the *grande barbe*" (long beard); so they called the venerable magistrate. Others shouted the word "Republic." Molé heard them with unshaken courage. Those around besought him to make his escape by a postern. "Justice never skulks," replied Molé, "nor will I, its representative. I may perish, but will never commit an act of cowardice, which would give hardihood to the mob." Accordant to this magnanimous resolution, the chief magistrate walked boldly down the principal staircase through the mob, awing the most audacious by his firmness. Even De Retz was lost in admiration; and has recorded that he could perceive in the countenance of

Molé, then threatened by the fury of the multitude, not a motion that did not indicate imperturbable firmness, and at the same time a presence and elevation of mind greater than firmness, and every way supernatural. This is one of the noblest exhibitions of courage which history has recorded.

When the chiefs of sedition saw that they could not conquer, and that the treaty would pass in their despite, each hastened to make his private offers and demands of the court. Bouillon wanted Sedan; Turenne, Alsace; Elbeuf, the government of Picardy; Beaufort, to be admiral. They were not listened to. Angered and resolved to proceed to extremities, they wrote to Turenne to advance, and to the archduke to invade the north. But Turenne's treason was defeated by Erlach, commander of the Swiss — himself obliged to



FRENCH MAN-OF-WAR, TIME OF LOUIS XIV

fly; and the archduke, his support failing, retreated. Thus the moderate portion of the parliament, supported by the civic guard, succeeded in restoring peace with the court, despite the opposition of the nobles and the mob. The reader will not fail to remark how distinct these several classes kept from each other, even when in alliance and fighting the same battles; a state of society that has not ceased at the present day to characterise France: whilst in England, the blending of the lower ranks of the nobly born with the higher ranks of the industrious and unennobled, effected by the habits and institutions of the country, have rendered the pernicious line of demarcation betwixt castes and classes almost invisible to the historian.

[1649-1650 A.D.]

## SECOND ACT OF THE FRONDE; ARREST OF CONDÉ

The scene now shifts, and another act of the Fronde commences, displaying the chief actors in altogether new characters and dresses. No sooner was the peace declared than the prince of Condé, jealous of the cardinal, united with the nobles whom he so lately combated : he visited his sister, Madame de Longueville, became reconciled to her and to La Rochefoucauld ; the duke de Beaufort and the coadjutor being the only two that remained at the same time hostile to Mazarin and jealous of Condé. A few nobles, however, were not sufficient to give weight to the demands of the prince, and Mazarin resisted them. The prince, in consequence, saw the coadjutor, and planned, or pretended to form, an alliance with him and the violent members of the parliament. The court, terrified at the prospect of being so abandoned, and of seeing Condé at the head of the frondeurs, granted all the desires of the latter, who, ashamed to break with his new allies, yet left without a pretext to continue his quarrel with Mazarin, "changed his mind three hundred times in three days." The haughty prince, who hated the parliament and the rabble, at last decided to disappoint the coadjutor ; he became reconciled to Mazarin, and of course quarrelled with the frondeurs, whom he accused of an attempt to assassinate him. The same imprudence, the same haughtiness, petulance, and overbearing temper marked the prince to whichever side he leaned, and disgusted both. As a friend he was even more troublesome than as an enemy : Mazarin and the queen felt this ; they could no longer tolerate his insolence ; and the present moment, as he had left himself no friends in any party, seemed the best opportunity for being revenged on him.

To arrest and send the prince to prison was the old monarchic mode of treating the froward ; but one of the articles stipulated by the parliament, and secured to them in the last treaty, was that every prisoner should be interrogated in four-and-twenty hours, and delivered over to his lawful judges. To infringe upon this law might rouse the parliament, and re-excite the rebellion of the Parisians. To secure himself against such an event, Mazarin leagued with — whom ? The coadjutor himself, and the most violent of the frondeurs ! They, the populace sharing their sentiments, hated Condé for his ancient enmity and his late desertion. De Retz and Mazarin, accordingly, had interviews, the former entering the Palais Royal by night in disguise. The consequence of this secret understanding soon appeared. The prince of Condé, the prince of Conti, his brother, and the duke de Longueville were arrested at the door of the council-chamber, and sent to Vincennes in January, 1650. The dukes de Bouillon and de la Rochefoucauld, as well as the duchess de Longueville, succeeded in escaping ; the princesses of Condé were ordered to retire to Chantilly. Bonfires, illuminations, and every sign of joy on the part of the Parisians marked this extreme measure. The popular hatred of Condé and confidence in De Retz lulled for the moment their dislike of the cardinal Mazarin.

Two events which mark the spirit of the time, and which occurred previous to the prince's arrest, must not be passed over. The honour of a *tabouret*, or stool at court, was only granted to the ladies of princes of sovereign houses, or to the wives of dukes and peers. Exceptions, however, had been made in favour of the younger branches of the Rohans, the La Trémouilles, and the family of Bouillon. La Rochefoucauld pretended to the same distinction : the prince of Condé supported his claim. The noblesse instantly assembled to the number of eight hundred, and formed a protest

against such pretensions, which went, they said, to destroy the natural equality that existed amongst all gently born. The dispute led to a discussion of political rights and principles, then the dangerous mania of the age, and some voices clamoured for the states-general. The French noblesse are entitled certainly to the credit of having demanded these national assemblies at a time when the judicial body or parliament, in whom the favour and confidence of the people were then centred, deprecated any such proposition. It may be asked why the chiefs of the judicature, and such upright lovers of liberty as Molé, were opposed to the convocation of the states-general. The answer is that the example of England, then in the mouths and minds of many, terrified them, and made them prefer their own body as a constitutional check, to such a representative assembly as that which, in the neighbouring kingdom, had begun with civil war, and ended in regicide and despotism. It must be owned they had some cause for fear. A revolution is bad enough; but an imitative revolution, a parody of such a great event, is to be deprecated tenfold, as incurring all the evils and few of the advantages of the convulsion.

Already the people of Paris talked of republics and liberty: the monarchy, they said, was too old, and it was time it should expire. Nay, the duke de Bouillon himself, adopting the revolutionary phrase, proposed on one occasion to purge the parliament. The taste for assembling and debating was general. The annuities charged on the Hôtel-de-Ville were suspended by the troubles: three thousand of these fund-holders, chiefly citizens of Paris, met, drew up resolutions, petitioned, and clothed themselves in black, the uniform of the tiers or third estate. Molé instantly rebuked them, as attempting to form a *chambre de communes*, a house of commons. The citizens were indignant at the comparison: and this very reproach, that they were imitating the commons of England, had great effect in dissipating their assembly.

#### RESISTANCE OF BORDEAUX (1650 A.D.)

Principles, however, were soon forgotten in the general sympathy which the misfortunes of Condé excited. The haughtiness, the imprudences of the hero of Rocroi and Lens were now forgotten; and the nobility began to rally to his cause as their own. The court were at first successful in reducing Normandy, the government of the duke de Longueville; but in Languedoc and the provinces on the Gironde, the dukes de la Rochefoucauld and de Bouillon soon gathered an army of adherents, and were joined by the wife and infant son of the prince.

Clémence de Maillé, princess of Condé, had hitherto commanded little respect either from the world or from her husband, who, having married her merely as the niece of Cardinal Richelieu, was ashamed of her humble origin and his own condescension. She now however displayed a heroism and an attachment worthy of the spouse of the Great Condé. The princess escaped with her young son, the duke d'Enghien, from Chantilly, and after some delay in a fortified place, joined the dukes de la Rochefoucauld and de Bouillon in the south. But the noblesse was not then the predominant order in the state, and she was obliged to seek more powerful protection in the parliament of Bordeaux. This provincial court of justice was highly incensed against the duke d'Épernon, governor of Languedoc; and consequently ill-disposed towards the queen and the cardinal, who seconded him. They of course embraced with ardour the new laws established by the parliament of Paris, which gave to the courts of magistracy power to control



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the measures of government, and which forbade arrests without bringing the accused to speedy trial. They could little comprehend the manœuvres by which De Retz and his violent party induced the parliament of Paris to overlook the imprisonment of Condé. They were eager to take his part and to admit the princess within their walls; but at the same time had considerable distrust of the nobles who supported her, and who were negotiating with Spain. To satisfy these scruples, the princess entered Bordeaux alone; but the popular clamour drowning the voice of the magistrates, she soon had the city at her command, and the dukes de Bouillon and de la Rochefoucauld entered with their troops and took the command.

The queen and Mazarin led the young king and an army commanded by the marshal De la Meilleraie to reduce Bordeaux. Its first feat was to raze Verteuil, the famous château of the La Rochefoucauld family, a barbarous act, and inconceivable in Mazarin, who loved the arts. Bordeaux was then invested, and its suburb was carried after a valiant defence, in which La Rochefoucauld displayed remarkable gallantry. To gain footing in the town itself was soon found impossible, such was the obstinacy of the armed citizens. Whilst Mazarin and the court thus lay encamped before Bordeaux, Turenne had entered the north of France, and was marching without opposition towards the capital, intending to liberate the princes from Vincennes. Condé, confined in the donjon of that castle, whiled away his captivity by cultivating the few flowers that the terrace of his window could contain. "Who would have thought," exclaimed he, "in learning the resistance of Bordeaux, that my wife should be fighting whilst I was gardening!" The princes were removed from Vincennes to the safer retreat of Marcoussis, and Turenne, who, fearing to indispose the parliament of Paris by appearing at the head of foreign troops, retired again towards the frontier.



MAZARIN

## DISGRACE AND EXILE OF MAZARIN (1650-1651 A.D.)

The coadjutor and the violent frondeurs grew weary of their alliance with Mazarin, into which their fear and hatred of Condé had alone induced them to enter. They not only found Mazarin ungrateful and insincere, refusing even to De Retz the cardinal's hat that he demanded, but their popularity, which was their chief force, and their influence over the parliament, were rapidly diminishing from their union with the court. Mazarin, suspecting the intention of the frondeurs, and alarmed by the march of

Turenne, granted peace to Bordeaux, concluding more a truce than a treaty with the princess of Condé, La Rochefoucauld, and Bouillon.

The minister then returned to Paris, where he found the parliament no longer silent as to the arrest of Condé, but prepared to expostulate, and demand his release. Mazarin caused the princes to be instantly conveyed from Marcoussis to La Havre, where they were still more in his individual power. La Rochefoucauld and Bouillon also returned to Paris; and a series of intrigues took place; these partisans of Condé negotiating at the same time both with the coadjutor and with Mazarin for his release. An alliance with either would effect this, and La Rochefoucauld was in doubt. The coadjutor, in the habit of a cavalier, came by night to the rendezvous at the house of the princess palatine. La Rochefoucauld went in equal secrecy to the Palais Royal. The over-caution of the cardinal lost his cause. La Rochefoucauld pressed him at once to conclude the alliance, and give orders that Condé should be set at liberty. Mazarin hesitated. Unprincipled as he was himself, he could not believe it possible that the friends of Condé could unite with De Retz. La Rochefoucauld warned the cardinal in parting that the morrow would be too late. Mazarin smiled incredulity and irresolution; and the duke, hurrying to the other place of rendezvous, concluded the agreement with the coadjutor. The effects of this alliance were immediately manifest. The majority of the parliament clamoured for the release of Condé, and addressed the queen on the subject. It was necessary to yield; and Mazarin saw that, deserted by all parties, he would infallibly be the victim.

In his rage he anathematised the parliament before the whole court, called it an English house of commons, compared the coadjutor De Retz to Cromwell and himself to Strafford, and declared that, in sacrificing its minister to popular clamour, the crown would, as in the case of Strafford, sacrifice itself. This conversation, being reported to the parliament by De Retz, raised a storm indescribable, and terminated in an address to the queen, desiring that Mazarin should be banished from her councils, and that the prince should be liberated. Nought was left the cardinal but flight. He took his departure immediately. It was agreed that the queen and young king were to follow him, and that, possessed of La Havre and the persons of the princes, they would be able either by open war or negotiation to bring the parliament and the frondeurs to more reasonable terms. This project however failed, through the cunning and activity of the coadjutor, who, learning the queen's intention of departing, raised a mob round the palace, and made her virtually a prisoner there. Cardinal Mazarin alone found himself without authority. He could not even gain entrance into Havre unless unattended. He entered, nevertheless, saw the captive princes of Condé, Conti, and Longueville, endeavoured to cajole them, and set them at liberty, without receiving in return a single mark of gratitude or regard. Thus every way disappointed, Mazarin resigned himself to his disgrace, and left the kingdom.<sup>1</sup>

#### CONDÉ IN POWER (1651 A.D.)

The prince of Condé was now all-powerful — the parliament, the Fronde, the noblesse, the populace, had all rallied to him; the minister was in exile, the queen a prisoner. Many blamed him for not setting aside Anne of Austria, and assuming the regency; but he was totally without the qualities

[<sup>1</sup> He went first to Liège and afterwards to Cologne.]

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requisite for taking advantage of his position ; he was too lazy, too confident, too generous, too rash : and, making not a single exertion, the several parties that had united to compel at once his release and the exile of the minister were allowed again to fall asunder, and abandon to the court the recovery of its ancient influence. The noblesse at this period were animated with a strong desire to imitate the magistracy, and, by remaining united, to restore or re-establish the influence of the aristocracy, in opposition both to crown and judicature. They assembled in the convent of the Cordeliers (afterwards doomed to hold a club of a very different kind, that of Danton), and formed a house of peers, discussing state affairs, and fixing the privileges of the nobles. The parliament took fire at this, and forbade the assemblies. The noblesse looked to Condé to head them ; but he, without principle or aim, and deeming his interests, as prince of the blood, distinct from those of the aristocracy, held back at this crisis. The noblesse called the assembly of the church, then sitting, to their aid, who protested, and complained that the parliament had altered the ancient constitution of the kingdom, by adding themselves as a fourth and spurious estate to the three established ones of king, lords, and commons. Despite of this, the parliament had force and the popular feeling on its side. The noblesse were obliged to succumb, and dissolved their assembly ; not, however, before they had recourse to the queen and the royal authority, who issued a declaration, promising to convoke the states-general for the following September.

Here the queen recovered consideration and authority sufficient to enable her to aim at and grasp more, by allying with the prince of Condé. One of the stipulations betwixt them was that the marriage should be broken off betwixt the prince of Conti and Mademoiselle de Chevreuse. The coadjutor, connected by gallantry and friendship with the family of Chevreuse, was indignant at this, and a quarrel ensued betwixt Condé and the old party of the Fronde. Hence another scene in the drama, which represents Condé insulted by those very men who had been so instrumental in releasing him. De Retz and the prince nearly came to blows in the Palais de Justice ; and the former had almost fallen a victim to the passion of La Rochefoucauld, who jammed the coadjutor betwixt two folding doors till he was almost suffocated : the duke at the same time called to one of his friends to stab De Retz, an injunction that was not obeyed, and perhaps not intended to be obeyed. It is, nevertheless, startling to the modern reader to find the courtly author of the *Maximes* engaged personally in the office and using the language of the assassin.

The consequence of these dissensions was the recovery of her authority by Anne of Austria, who, in affecting to ally with Condé, was merely enticing him to disgust and desert the Fronde. This achieved, she flung off the mask, and Condé found himself as much detested by all parties as a few months back he was their favourite and their rallying word. The prince, thus deserted, endeavoured to make common cause with the noblesse, and clamoured for the states-general ; but it was too late : the parliament united with the court in opposing their convocation, and Condé in despair retired from Paris, obliged to seek support in civil war and an alliance with Spain.

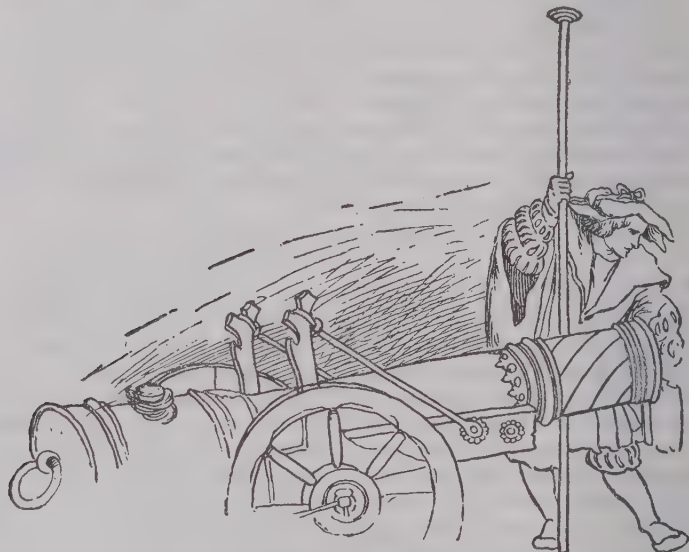
#### RETURN OF MAZARIN (1651 A.D.)

In September, 1651, Louis XIV, then approaching fourteen years of age, was declared to have completed his minority. The day was celebrated with great magnificence. The royal authority remained, however, as before, in the



hands of the queen: her only thought was the recall of Mazarin. The attachment borne by Anne to this prelate-minister is inexplicable. She might have reigned supreme, and been the arbiter betwixt contending parties, could she have consented to leave Mazarin in exile. De Retz endeavoured to impress this necessity upon her; but power appeared to her worthless without the cardinal; and no sooner had Condé broken with the parliament, and burst into war against the court, than the minister prepared to return. He levied an army, made an attempt on Brissac, and soon after joined the court at Poitiers, taking as usual the chief seat in the council.

At the first news of his return, Gaston of Orleans, brother of Louis XIII, who had demanded the removal of the cardinal, levied troops in Paris without knowing for what they would be employed. Parliament renewed its decrees; it proscribed Mazarin and put a price on his head. This proscription tempted



CANNON OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

no one to earn the 50,000 crowns, which, after all, would never have been paid. With another nation and in another age, such a decree would have found executors; but here it served simply to incite fresh pleasantries. The Blots and the Marignys, wits, who carried gaiety into the tumult of these troubles, caused to be placarded all over Paris a distribution of the 50,000 crowns—so much for whoever should cut off the cardinal's nose, and so much for an ear, so much for an eye, so much to make him a eunuch. This ridicule was all the effect of the proscription against the minister's person, but his furniture and library were sold by a second decree. This money was destined for the assassin's pay, but it was dissipated by the depositaries, like all funds that had been raised hitherto. The cardinal on his side used against his enemies neither poison nor steel and, in spite of the bitterness and madness of so much partisanship and hatred, no great crimes were committed. The party leaders were less cruel and the people less furious than in the days of the league—this was not a war of religion.

The spirit of madness which reigned at this time so possessed the whole body of the parliament that, after having solemnly ordered an assassination

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which everyone ridiculed, it passed a decree by which several councillors should betake themselves to the frontier for information against the army of Cardinal Mazarin : that is to say, the royal army. Meanwhile the king interdicted the parliament of Paris and transferred it to Pontoise. Fourteen members attached to the court obeyed ; the others resisted. There were now two parliaments, which, to cap the confusion, thundered against each other with reciprocating decrees, as in the days of Henry IV and Charles VI.

It was precisely at the time when this company was going to extremities with the king's minister that it declared the prince of Condé, who had only armed himself against this minister, guilty of *lèse majesté* ; and by a turn of mind which its preceding steps could alone make credible, it ordered the new troops of Gaston, duke of Orleans, to march against Mazarin and forbade at the same time any money from the public receipts to be used in maintaining them. We can expect nought else from a company of magistrates, thrown out of their proper sphere, knowing not their rights, their real power, political affairs, or war, assembling and deciding amid tumult, making decisions of which they had no thought the day before, and at which they themselves were afterwards astonished. The parliament of Bordeaux was then serving the prince of Condé, but it kept to a little more rational conduct, because being further removed from the court it was less agitated by opposing factions. More important matters were interesting the whole of France.

## THE LAST PHASE OF THE FRONDE

Condé, leagued with the Spaniards, was on a campaign against the king ; and Turenne, having quitted these same Spaniards, with whom he had been beaten at Rethel, had just made his peace with the court and was in command of the royal army. The exhausted finances did not permit either of the two parties to maintain great armies, but small ones did not the less decide the fate of the state. Louis XIV, brought up in adversity, went with his mother, his brother, and Cardinal Mazarin from province to province, without having as many troops about his person, by a great deal, as he had afterwards for a single guard in times of peace. Five to six thousand men, some sent from Spain, others raised by the prince of Condé's partisans, pursued him into the very heart of his kingdom.

Meanwhile the prince of Condé hastened from Bordeaux to Montauban, taking towns and everywhere increasing his party. All the hope of the court lay in Marshal Turenne. The royal army found itself near Gien on the Loire. The opposing force of Condé was some leagues away, under the orders of the dukes de Nemours and de Beaufort. The duke de Beaufort was incapable of commanding anything. The duke de Nemours was braver and more amiable than he was skilful. Both together had demoralised their army. The soldiers of Condé knew that their leader was a hundred leagues away and believed themselves lost, when, in the middle of the night, a courier presented himself at the outposts in the forest of Orleans. The sentinels recognised in this courier the prince of Condé himself, who had come all the way across France from Agen, with many adventures and always in disguise, to place himself at the head of his army.

His presence did much and his unexpected arrival still more. The royal army was divided into two corps. April 7th, 1652, Condé fell upon that which was at Bléneau, commanded by Marshal d'Hocquincourt, and his corps was dissipated as quickly as it had been attacked. Turenne could not even be warned. The terrified Mazarin hastened to Gien in the middle of

the night to awaken the sleeping king and himself tell him the news. The little court was in consternation; they proposed to save the king by flight and to conduct him secretly to Bourges. The victorious Condé drew near to Gien; the desolation and the fear increased. Turenne reassured their spirits by his firmness and saved the court by his skill. With the few troops that remained to him he made such fortunate movements that he prevented Condé from following up his advantage. It is difficult to decide which won the more honours, the victorious Condé or Turenne who had robbed him of the fruits of victory.<sup>1</sup> It is true that in this fight at Bléneau not four hundred men were killed; but the prince of Condé was none the less on the point of making himself master of the entire royal family, and of having in his hands his enemy Cardinal Mazarin. It would be hard to find in history any smaller battle with greater interest and more pressing danger.

Condé, who did not flatter himself that he could surprise Turenne, as he had done Hocquincourt, marched his army towards Paris. He hastened to that city to enjoy his glory and the favourable disposition of a blind populace. The admiration they had for his last fight, — all of whose details had exaggerated the hate that was borne for Mazarin, — the name and the presence of the Great Condé, seemed at first to make him absolute master of the capital; but at the bottom all minds were divided. The coadjutor — now become Cardinal de Retz, reconciled in appearance with the court which feared him and which he defied — was no longer the master of the people and no longer played the principal rôle. He ruled the duke of Orleans and was opposed by Condé. Parliament wavered between the court, the duke of Orleans, and the prince. Although all were in accord in crying down Mazarin, each one was nursing his own particular interests in secret: the people were a stormy sea whose waves were driven at chance by many contrary winds.<sup>2</sup>

Condé hoped to find the parliament his ally against Mazarin: but the stern magistrates, though firm in their abhorrence of that minister, were not more favourable to Condé, and openly reproached him with his Spanish alliance. From the parliament he did not scruple to appeal to the people, whose lowest class rose in tumult, and threatened the magistrates. The very courts proved no refuge: councillors and judges were insulted and even beaten as "Mazarins."

Condé, thus disappointed in the support of the parliament, and of the respectable citizens, could not cope unaided with the royal army. The Parisian rabble, very forward in a riot, could not be made to stand the fire of regular troops. The prince had recourse to the Spaniards, who, themselves busied in the sieges of Gravelines and Dunkirk, induced the duke of Lorraine to march into France and support Condé. The skilful strategy of Turenne, however, compelled this new auxiliary to retreat; and the prince, after a fresh attempt to raise sedition in the capital and control the parliament, was reduced to fight Turenne with far inferior forces. The latter drove him from St. Cloud, and Condé marched to take post at Clarenton,

[<sup>1</sup> In comparing these great rivals, Kitchin? says: "It has been well said of these two masters in war, that as Condé grew older he lost his early fire and military insight, without becoming wiser or more prudent, while each campaign made Turenne more daring as well as more skilful. The careers of the two great soldiers form a striking contrast: it is genius without industry pitted against high talent combined with infinite painstaking, and a belief in the scientific treatment of the art of war. The more brilliant Condé was sure to fail when pitted against Turenne." Vicomte de Turenne (Henri de la Tour d'Auvergne) was a grandson of William the Silent. He was born in 1611 (September 11th, at Sedan), and was therefore now just over forty. Condé was ten years younger (born September 8th, 1621). The span of life of each of the great generals was destined to compass almost exactly the same period; Turenne being just under sixty-four, Condé just over sixty-five, at death.]



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when, his rival pressing him closely, as he defiled round the walls of Paris, the prince was obliged to throw himself into the faubourg St. Antoine, behind the entrenchments formerly raised for their defence by the inhabitants.

*Battle of St. Antoine (July 2nd, 1652)*

The gate of Paris called St. Antoine was then immediately under the Bastille, the cannon of which swept the three roads diverging from it. Condé, denied entrance into the city, was still secure from attack on this side; and, posted in the central position of the gate St. Antoine, he determined to make head against the royalists, who approached to attack him by the three roads. Mazarin and Louis XIV were on the heights, now covered with the cemetery of Père Lachaise, spectators of the ensuing action, the young monarch being most anxious to witness the destruction of this rebellious prince.

The triple attack commenced: that on the prince's left, commanded by three sworn and personal enemies to him, was defeated by his valour, the chiefs all perishing. The hero then rushed to defend the central street: he met Turenne in person, and there the conflict was more doubtful. "Did you see Condé during the action?" asked someone of Turenne when the affair was over. "I must have seen a dozen Condés," was the reply: "he multiplied himself." On the right the action was most bloody: the nobles of the prince's party were almost all slain or wounded there, amongst the rest La Rochefoucauld, who, struck on the head, was carried off by his wounded son. Turenne was the most powerful; and no chance appeared of Condé's saving himself and the relics of his army, when the gate of St. Antoine unexpectedly opened to receive him, the cannon of the Bastille at the same time sending their fire up the three attacked streets, and thus effectually checking the progress of the royalists.

This well-timed succour came from Mademoiselle de Montpensier, daughter of the duke of Orleans, whose sympathy for the heroic Condé, now in distress, was aided by the clamours of the populace, enraged at beholding a rash and imprudent but still generous prince sacrificed to the detested Mazarin. She wrung from the municipal officers the orders for opening the gates; herself directed the firing of the guns of the Bastille; nay, her hand is said to have applied the match. Mademoiselle had aspired to the hand of Condé, to that of the king, and might hope at least to espouse a sovereign prince. But Mazarin observed, on seeing the fire of the Bastille, and knowing who commanded it, "That shot has killed the husband of Mademoiselle."<sup>g</sup>

SECOND EXILE OF MAZARIN

After this bloody and useless combat of St. Antoine the king could not return to Paris; and the prince did not remain there long. Popular feeling and the murder of several citizens, for which he was believed to be responsible, made him odious to the people. [He fled from Paris and joined the Spanish army, October, 1652.] However, he still had his faction in the parliament. This body, now intimidated by a wandering court, and driven after a fashion from the capital to Pontoise, pressed by the cabals of the duke of Orleans and the prince, declared, by a decree, the duke of Orleans lieutenant-general of the realm, although the king was an adult. The two parliaments of Paris and Pontoise, contesting the authority one with the other and issuing contradictory decrees, agreed in demanding

the expulsion of Mazarin — so much did the hatred of this minister seem the essential duty of every Frenchman. The court saw itself obliged once more to sacrifice Mazarin whom everyone believed the author of the troubles, but who was but their pretext. For a second time he left the country, and to increase his shame the king must needs make a public declaration dismissing his minister, the while praising his services and deploring his exile.

Charles I, king of England, who had just lost his head on the scaffold, had in the beginning of his troubles abandoned the blood of Strafford,

his friend, to his parliament. Louis XIV on the contrary became the peaceful master of his realm by permitting his minister's exile. Thus the same weakness bore different results. The king of England, in abandoning his favourite, emboldened a people that breathed war and hated kings; and Louis XIV, or rather the queen-mother, by dismissing the cardinal, removed all pretext for revolt from a people tired of war and who loved royalty.

While the state was thus torn at home it had been attacked and weakened abroad; all the benefits of the battles of Rocroi, Lens, and Nördlingen were lost; the important place of Dunkirk was retaken by the Spaniards (September, 1652); they drove the French from Barcelona, they retook Casale in Italy (October, 1652).

Scarcely had the cardinal left for Bouillon, place of his new retreat, when the citizens of Paris, of their own accord, sent to the king and



LOUIS XIV AS A YOUNG MAN

asked him to return to his capital. Louis entered Paris October 21st, 1652, and all was so peaceful that it would have been difficult to imagine that a few days before all was in confusion. Gaston of Orleans, unfortunate in his undertakings, which he never knew how to carry out, was relegated to Blois, where he passed the rest of his life in repentance; and he was the second son of Henry the Great to die without much glory. Cardinal de Retz, as imprudent as he was audacious, was arrested in the Louvre, and after having been sent from prison to prison long led a wandering life which he finished in retreat, where he acquired virtues which his great courage had not known in the agitations of his fortune.

Several councillors who had most abused their ministry paid for their actions with exile; the others withdrew into the limits of the magistracy and others attached themselves the closer to their duties with an annual gratuity of five hundred crowns which Fouquet, attorney-general and superintendent of the finances, gave them surreptitiously. The prince of Condé meanwhile, abandoned in France by nearly all his partisans, and badly assisted by the Spaniards, continued a disastrous war on the frontiers of Champagne. There still remained factions in Bordeaux, but they were soon pacified.<sup>i</sup>

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Thus ended the Fronde. Voltaire dismisses it in a few pages, satisfied with recording its *bon mots*. He seems to have looked upon this civil war as merely a pastime, entered into by a few froward youths and their mistresses. He did not see in it the serious, the sanguinary and unhappy struggle of a nation for its liberty. Even later writers, more profound than Voltaire, have designated the Fronde as "the last campaign of the noblesse." It was indeed so. But the noblesse formed not the prominent body. It was the parliament, the magistracy, that put itself forward to represent the commons, of which they claimed and established the privileges for themselves. This was, no doubt, an audacious and hopeless enterprise. The states-general, the ancient representative assembly of the nation, was the form to which they should have rallied. But the extravagance of the English parliament deterred them; and they fixed upon their own body, as a less democratic and dangerous assembly, to participate in legislative power. The scheme was new: it was conceived with boldness, and supported with courage; and if the legists failed in arriving at settled liberty by its means, they may plead that representative assemblies have frequently failed in the same endeavour.<sup>g</sup>

## MAZARIN AGAIN IN POWER (1653 A.D.)

The calm in the kingdom was the result of Cardinal Mazarin's banishment; however, scarcely had he been driven away by the general cry of the French people and the king's decree, when the king made him come back. He was astonished to see himself re-enter Paris all powerful. Louis XIV received him like a father and the people like a master. He held a great reception at the Hôtel-de-Ville amid the acclamations of the citizens; he threw money to the populace, but it is said that in his joy for so happy a change he showed his scorn for the inconstancy or rather the folly of the Parisians. The officers of parliament, after having placed a price on his head like a public robber, sued, almost all of them, for the honour of asking his protection; and this same parliament a short time after condemned by contumacy the prince of Condé to lose his life. They saw the cardinal, who urged this condemnation of Condé, marry to the prince of Conti his brother, one of his own nieces — a proof that the power of the minister was going to be boundless.

The king reunited the parliaments of Paris and of Pontoise; he forbade the assembling of the chambers. Parliament wished to remonstrate, one councillor was sent to prison; several others were exiled: parliament kept quiet; the change had already come.<sup>i</sup>

The events of Louis XIV's youth were such as to inspire him not only with high ideas of his kingly rights, but to prove to him the necessity of absolute power in the monarch.<sup>1</sup> In the great English rebellion, and in the Fronde, he had seen freedom under its most hideous aspect, and followed by the vainest of results. We can scarcely then blame him personally for his despotic propensities, which, moreover, his manly and ambitious character tended to increase. The young king and his brother Philip, then called the duke of Anjou, were educated in the privacy of the palace. The nieces of the cardinal were their playmates; and Louis formed successive attachments

[<sup>1</sup> "Joan of Arc made France a nation against the English; Louis XIV made France a state against all Europe. The Fronde had none of these creative ideas — whence its incertitude and its weakness. Louis XIV had the idea of state — whence his firmness, his decision, and that famous phrase, '*L'État, c'est moi*,' which has been taken for an expression of pride but was an expression of policy." — SAINT-MARC GIRARDIN.]



for two of these young ladies, especially for Maria Mancini, afterwards the wife of the constable Colonna. So intimate was the connection betwixt Mazarin and Anne of Austria that many were persuaded of their marriage.<sup>1</sup> Certainly her attachment to him was personal and tender. Louis XIV always preserved for the cardinal a sort of filial reverence: he may be said to have learned in the school of implicit obedience how to be himself despotic.

At intervals, however, the imperious temper of the young monarch burst forth, and betrayed itself. In 1655, the parliament, after registering certain fiscal edicts, thought proper to re-examine them, to complain, and show symptoms of their ancient independence. Louis was at Vincennes, engaged in the chase, when he heard of their conduct. Instantly, without consulting the cardinal, or even tarrying to change his dress, the young monarch galloped to Paris, entered the Palais de Justice and the Hall of Parliament in his hunting habit, booted, and with whip in hand. "Gentlemen," said Louis to the astonished legists, "everyone is acquainted with the ill consequences of your former assemblies. Their recurrence must be prevented. I command you instantly to cease busying yourself with my edicts. And you, Mr. President, I forbid either to call or suffer such assemblies." This bold assertion of the royal will from the mouth of a stripling proved sufficient to crush the reviving spirit of the magistracy. It was silent, and obeyed.<sup>g</sup>

#### WAR WITH SPAIN CONTINUES

Condé, who had become general in the Spanish armies, was unable to revive what he had himself weakened at Rocroi and Lens. He was fighting with raw troops against the veteran French regiments that had learned to conquer under him, and that were now commanded by Turenne. The fate of Turenne and of Condé was to be uniformly victorious when they were fighting together at the head of the French and to be defeated when they were commanding the Spanish.

Turenne had with difficulty saved the wreck of the Spanish army at Rethel when, instead of a general of the king of France, he had been made the lieutenant of a Spanish general; the prince of Condé had the same fate before Arras (August 25th, 1654). He and the archduke besieging this city, Turenne attacked them in their camp and forced their lines; the troops of the archduke were put to flight; Condé, with two regiments of French and Lorrainers, sustained alone the attack of Turenne's army; and, while the archduke was in flight, he defeated Marshal d'Hocquincourt, repulsed Marshal de la Ferté, and retired victorious, covering the retreat of the defeated Spaniards.

The relief of Arras, the forcing of the lines, and the rout of the archduke covered Turenne with glory; and it is to be observed that in the letter concerning this victory written in the name of the king to the parliament the success of the entire campaign is ascribed to Cardinal Mazarin and that Turenne's name is not even mentioned. The cardinal had been in fact a few leagues from Arras with the king. He had even been in the camp at the siege of Stenay, which Turenne had taken before relieving Arras. Councils of war had been held in the presence of the cardinal. On this basis he ascribed to himself the honour of the events; and this vanity brought upon him a ridicule that all the authority of his ministry could not suppress. The

[<sup>1</sup> See note, page 488.]

[1654-1657 A.D.]

king was not present at the battle of Arras. He had gone into the trenches at the siege of Stenay, but Cardinal Mazarin was unwilling that he should further expose his person, upon which the tranquillity of the state and the power of the minister seemed to depend.

Thus on the one side, Mazarin, absolute master of France and of the young king, and on the other, Don Luis de Haro, who governed Spain and Philip IV, continued in the name of their masters to carry on the war, but with little vigour.

These two men vied with each other in directing their policies towards forming an alliance with Cromwell, the English Protector, who for some time enjoyed the satisfaction of seeing himself courted by the two most powerful kingdoms of Christendom. The Spanish minister offered to help him take Calais; Mazarin proposed to besiege Dunkirk and restore that city to him. Cromwell had to choose between the key of France and that of Flanders. He was also much solicited by Condé, but he did not wish to negotiate with a prince who had nothing left but his name and who was without a party in France and without power in Spain.

#### ALLIANCE WITH CROMWELL (1655 A.D.); WAR IN FLANDERS (1656-1658 A.D.)

In May, 1655, the Protector decided in favour of France, but without making any special treaty or a division of conquests in advance. He wished to shed lustre on his usurpation by greater enterprises. His design was to wrest Mexico from the Spaniards, but the latter were warned in time. Cromwell's admirals, however, took Jamaica from them. It was not until after the Jamaican expedition that Cromwell signed his treaty with the king of France, but without making any mention of Dunkirk. The Protector treated as equal with equal; he forced the king to give him the title of brother in his letters. In the copy of the treaty that remained in England his secretary signed before the French ambassador; but he negotiated really as a superior by forcing the king to drive out of his dominions Charles II and the duke of York, the grandsons of Henry IV, to whom France owed an asylum. A greater sacrifice of honour to fortune could not have been made.

While Mazarin was making this treaty Charles II asked for one of his nieces in marriage. The bad condition of his affairs that drove the prince to this step also brought upon him a refusal. It has even been suspected that the cardinal wished to marry to the son of Cromwell the niece whom he refused to the king of England. This much is certain — that when he afterwards saw the way to the throne more open to Charles II he wished to renew this marriage; but was refused in his turn.

The war continued in Flanders with varying success. Turenne, having besieged Valenciennes along with Marshal de la Ferté, suffered the same kind of reverse that Condé had sustained at Arras. The prince, assisted this time by Don John of Austria, who was more worthy to fight at his side than the archduke had been, forced La Ferté's lines, took him prisoner, and relieved Valenciennes (July 17th, 1656). Turenne did what Condé had done in a similar rout. He saved the defeated army and opposed the enemy everywhere; a little later he even besieged and took the little town of La Capelle (September 27th). This was perhaps the first time that a defeated army had dared to undertake a siege.

This famous march of Turenne, which was followed by the taking of La Capelle, was eclipsed by an even finer march of the prince of Condé.

Turenne had laid siege to Cambray when Condé, at the head of two thousand cavalry, forced a passage through the besieging army, and having driven back all who tried to stop him threw himself into the town (May 31st, 1657). The citizens received their deliverer on bended knees. Thus these two men, opposed to each other, exhibited the resources of their genius. We admire them in their retreats as well as in their victories, in their good conduct and even in their faults, which they were always able to retrieve. Their talents alternately arrested the progress of each monarchy; but the financial disorder in Spain and in France was a still greater obstacle to their success.

The alliance with Cromwell finally gave France a more marked superiority. On the one hand, Admiral Blake was about to burn the Spanish galleons and cause the loss of the sole treasure with which the war could be maintained. On the other hand, twenty English vessels had just blockaded the port of Dunkirk and six thousand veterans of the English Revolution reinforced Turenne's army. Then Dunkirk, the most important place in Flanders, was besieged by sea and land. Condé and Don John of Austria, having united all their forces, came forward to relieve it. The eyes of Europe were upon this event. Cardinal Mazarin brought Louis XIV near the scene of war without allowing him to get to it, although he was nearly twenty years old. The prince stopped at Calais, and hither Cromwell sent to him a pompous embassy, at the head of which was his son-in-law, Lord Falconberg. The king sent to him the duke de Créquy, and Mancini, duke de Nevers, a nephew of the cardinal, followed by two hundred noblemen. Mancini presented the Protector a remarkable letter from Cardinal Mazarin in which he said that he was sorry not to be able to pay him in person the respect due to the greatest man in the world.

Meanwhile the prince-marshal Turenne attacked the Spanish army, or rather the army of Flanders, near the Dunes. The latter was commanded by Don John of Austria, son of Philip IV and an actress, who two years later became the brother-in-law of Louis XIV. The prince of Condé was with this army but not in command; hence it was not difficult for Turenne to gain the victory (June 14th, 1658). The six thousand English soldiers contributed to the victory, which was complete.

The genius of the Great Condé was of no avail against the best troops of France and England. The Spanish army was destroyed. Dunkirk surrendered soon afterwards (June 23rd). The king came up with his minister in order to see the garrison pass out. The cardinal did not allow Louis XIV to appear either as warrior or as king. He had no money to distribute to the soldiers, and was poorly attended. When he was with the army he dined with Mazarin or with Marshal Turenne. This neglect of royal dignity was not in Louis XIV the effect of contempt for pomp, but of the confusion in his affairs and of the pains the cardinal took to unite splendour and authority in himself. Louis entered Dunkirk only to turn it over to Cromwell's ambassador, Lord Lockhart. Mazarin tried whether by finesse he could not evade the treaty and not give up the place; but Lockhart threatened, and English firmness got the better of Italian subtlety.

Several persons have asserted that the cardinal, who had attributed to himself the victory of Arras, tried to induce Turenne to yield to him again the honour of the battle of Dunes. Du Bec-Crépin, count de Moret, it is said, came on behalf of the minister and proposed to the general to write a letter in which it would appear that the cardinal had himself arranged the entire plan of operation. Turenne received these hints with contempt and would



[1658 A.D.]

not make a statement that would have brought disgrace upon a general of the army and ridicule upon a man of the church. Mazarin, who had been so foolish, now had the misfortune of remaining on ill terms with Turenne until his death.

In the midst of this first triumph the king fell ill at Calais and for several days was near death. Immediately all the courtiers turned towards his brother, Monsieur. Mazarin lavished deference and flattery upon Marshal du Plessis-Praslin, the former tutor of this young prince, and upon count de Guiche, his favourite. A cabal was formed in Paris that was bold enough to write to Calais against the cardinal. He made preparations to leave the kingdom and to conceal his immense riches. An empiric of Abbeville cured the king with emetic wine that the court physicians called poison. This good man seated himself upon the king's bed and said, "This is a very sick boy, but he is not going to die." When the king became convalescent the cardinal banished all who had intrigued against him.

A few months later Cromwell died (September 13th, 1658) at the age of fifty-five, in the midst of his projects for the strengthening of his power and the glory of his nation. Richard Cromwell succeeded peaceably and without opposition to the protectorate of his father, as a prince of Wales would have succeeded a king of England. The emperor Ferdinand III had died in 1657. His son Leopold, who was seventeen years old and already king of Hungary and Bohemia, had not been elected king of the Romans during the life-time of his father. Mazarin wished to attempt to make Louis XIV emperor. This was a chimerical idea; it would have been necessary either to coerce or to bribe the electors. France was neither strong enough to seize the empire nor rich enough to buy it; so the first overtures made at Frankfort by Marshal de Grammont and by Lionne were abandoned almost as soon as they were proposed. Leopold was elected. All that Mazarin's politics accomplished was to form an alliance, known as the League of the Rhine, with certain German princes,<sup>1</sup> to observe the Treaty of Westphalia, and to furnish a check to the authority of the emperor over the empire (August, 1658).



ENTRANCE GATE TO THE CHÂTEAU DE VINCENNES

[<sup>1</sup> The three ecclesiastical electors, the duke of Bavaria, the princes of Brunswick and of Hesse, the kings of Sweden and Denmark.]

France, after the battle of the Dunes, was powerful in her foreign relations through her glory and her arms as well as through the condition to which the other nations were reduced. But the country itself was suffering ; it was stripped of money, and there was need of peace.

#### THE TREATY OF THE PYRENEES (1659 A.D.)

The cardinal had to do two things in order to bring his ministry to a happy close—make peace and insure the tranquillity of the state by the marriage of the king. The intrigues during the latter's illness made Mazarin feel how necessary an heir to the throne was to the splendour of the minister. All these considerations determined him to marry Louis XIV promptly. Two princesses were proposed—the daughter of the king of Spain and the princess of Savoy. The king's heart had made another choice : he was desperately in love with Mademoiselle Mancini, one of the cardinal's nieces. Born with a tender heart and a firm will, full of passion and without experience, he would have been capable of resolving to marry the lady of his choice.

Madame de Motteville, the favourite of the queen-mother, whose *Mémoires* have a great air of truth, claims that Mazarin was tempted to let the king's love have its way and to place his niece on the throne. He had already married another niece to the prince de Conti, and one to the duke de Mercœur. The one whom Louis XIV loved had been asked in marriage by the king of England. These were titles enough to justify his ambitions. He adroitly sounded the queen-mother. "I fear," he said, "that the king has too great a desire to marry my niece." The queen, who knew the minister, understood that he desired what he feigned to fear. She replied to him with all the haughtiness of a princess of the blood of Austria, daughter, wife, and mother of kings, and with the bitterness which she had felt for some time towards a minister who affected to be independent of her. She said to him, "If the king were capable of this indignity I would place myself with my second son at the head of the whole nation against the king and yourself."

Mazarin, it is said, never forgave the queen this reply ; but he took the wiser course of thinking as she did. He made it a point of honour and merit to oppose the passion of Louis XIV. His power did not need a queen of his own blood to support him. He even feared the character of his niece ; and he believed he would further strengthen the power of his ministry by avoiding the dangerous glory of elevating his own house too high.

In the year 1656 he had sent Lionne to Spain to negotiate peace and to ask the hand of the infanta ; but Don Luis de Haro, convinced that, feeble as Spain was, France was not less so, rejected the cardinal's offer. The infanta, daughter of Philip IV by his first wife, was intended for the young Leopold. By his second marriage Philip had at that time only a son whose sickly infancy caused fears for his life. It was desired that the infanta, who might be the heir to many states, should transfer her rights to the house of Austria and not to a hostile dynasty ; but finally, Philip IV having had another son, Don Philip Prosper, and his wife being again *enceinte*, the danger involved in giving the infanta to the king of France seemed to him less great, and the battle of the Dunes made peace necessary to him.

The Spaniards promised the infanta and asked for a suspension of hostilities (1659). Mazarin and Don Luis de Haro repaired to the isle of Pheasants on the frontier of France and Spain. Although general peace and the

[1659 A.D.]

marriage of the king of France were the objects of their conference, more than a month passed in regulating ceremonies and settling difficulties of precedence. The cardinals called themselves the equals of the kings and the superiors of other sovereigns. France, with greater justice, claimed pre-eminence over the other powers. Don Luis de Haro, however, assumed perfect equality between France and Spain.

The conferences lasted four months. Mazarin and Don Luis employed all the resources of their respective policies; that of the cardinal was strategy, that of Don Luis, delay. The latter never gave promises: the former only equivocal ones. The genius of the Italian was to try to surprise; that of the Spaniard, to keep from being surprised.

Such are the vicissitudes of human affairs that of this famous Peace of the Pyrenees, signed November 7th, 1659, not two articles have endured. The king of France retained Roussillon which he would have kept anyway, without this peace, also Artois and Cerdagne; but the Spanish monarchy has no more possessions in Flanders.

But if Don Luis de Haro said that Cardinal Mazarin could deceive, it has been said since that he could foresee. He long meditated the alliance of the houses of France and Spain. This famous letter of his, written during the negotiations at Münster, is cited: "If the most Christian king could have the Netherlands and Franche-Comté as dower upon espousing the infanta, then we might aspire to the Spanish succession, whatever we might have to relinquish to the infanta; and it would not be a very long wait, since there is only the life of the prince her brother that could exclude her from it." This prince was Balthazar, who died in 1649.

The cardinal was evidently mistaken in thinking that the Netherlands and Franche-Comté could be given to the infanta as her marriage portion. Not a single city was stipulated for her dower. On the other hand, important cities that had been conquered, like St. Omer, Ypres, Menin, Oudenarde, and other places, were restored to the Spanish monarchy. Some were retained. The cardinal was not mistaken in believing that this relinquishment would be useless some day. But those who gave him the honour of this prediction make him also foresee that Prince Don Balthazar would die in 1649; that later the three children of the second marriage would be cut off in the cradle; that Charles, the fifth of the male children, would die without issue; and that this Austrian king would one day make a will in favour of a grandson of Louis XIV. But at any rate Cardinal Mazarin foresaw what value this relinquishment would have in case the male line of Philip should become extinct: and after more than fifty years strange events justified him.

Maria Theresa, the infanta, able to have as dower the cities that France restored, brought by her marriage contract nothing else than 500,000 gold crowns; it cost the king more than that to go to receive her at the frontier. These 500,000 crowns, equivalent to 2,500,000 livres, were the subject of a great deal of dispute between the two ministers. In the end France never received but 100,000 francs. Instead of this marriage bringing any other real and immediate advantage than that of peace, the infanta renounced all rights she might ever have to any of her father's lands. Louis XIV ratified this renunciation in the most solemn manner.<sup>1</sup>

[<sup>1</sup> It has been suggested that Mazarin purposely made the dowry such as Spain could not well pay, so that the treaty must be broken. That clause once broken, the renunciation of the succession was also void, with the rest of the treaty. If such was really Mazarin's plan, it was an extraordinary one.]



The duke of Lorraine, Charles IV, against whom France and Spain had much cause to complain, or rather who had much to complain of against them, was included in the treaty; but only as an unfortunate prince who was punished, because he could not make himself feared. France restored his states to him, demolishing Nancy, however, and forbade him to maintain troops. Don Luis de Haro forced Cardinal Mazarin to receive Condé into favour again, by threatening to leave in the sovereignty of the prince Rocroi, Le Catelet, and other places of which he was in possession. So France gained both these towns and the Great Condé. He lost his dignity of grand-master of the royal household, which was afterwards given to his son, and returned with scarcely anything but his glory.

Finally (August, 1660) Cardinal Mazarin brought the king with his new queen to Paris.<sup>1</sup> Mazarin acted exactly like a father who would marry his son without giving him charge of his own property. He returned more powerful and more jealous of his power, and even of honours, than ever. He required parliament to address him through deputies. This was something unparalleled in the monarchy, but it was not too great a reparation for the wrong that parliament had done him. He no longer gave his hand to the princes of the blood as formerly. He who had treated Don Luis de Haro as an equal tried to treat the Great Condé as an inferior. He went about with royal pomp, having besides his guards a company of musketeers, which was ever afterwards the second company of king's musketeers. There was no more freedom of access to him. If anyone was a poor enough courtier to ask a favour of the king, he was lost. The queen-mother, so long the stubborn protectress of Mazarin against France, was without credit as soon as he had no more need of her. Her son, the king, brought up in blind submission to this minister, could not shake off the yoke that she had imposed upon him as well as upon herself; Louis XIV could not reign during the lifetime of Mazarin.

#### LAST YEARS AND DEATH OF MAZARIN (1659-1661 A.D.)

A minister is excusable for the evil he does when the helm of state is forced into his hands by tempests; but during a calm he is answerable for the good that he fails to do. Mazarin did good only to himself and his family. Eight years of absolute and undisturbed power, from his final return until his death, were marked by no glorious or useful establishment; for the college of the Four Nations was only created by his will.<sup>2</sup>

He controlled the finances like the steward of a lord involved in debt. The king sometimes asked money of Fouquet, who replied, "Sire, there is nothing in your majesty's coffers, but the cardinal will lend you some." Mazarin was worth about two hundred millions, reckoning in the money values of to-day (*i.e.*, the middle of the eighteenth century). Several memoirs say that he amassed part of it by means far beneath the grandeur of his position. They relate that he shared with privateer captains the profits of their voyages. This has never been proved; but the Dutch suspected him of it, and they never would have suspected Cardinal Richelieu.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>[1]</sup> The marriage had taken place in June, 1660, at Fuenterrabia in the Pyrenees.]

<sup>[2]</sup> We may add that he pensioned several writers — among them Descartes and the historian Mézeray — and that he provided for the splendid Mazarin library, opened later to the public. "Mazarin," says Duruy,<sup>4</sup> "had the liveliest if not the best taste for art. He brought from Italy a number of paintings, statues, and curiosities — even actors and machinists who introduced the opera into France. In 1655 he founded the Academy of Painting and Sculpture."]

[1661 A.D.]

In high spirits was Mazarin at the moment of signing the great treaty at Bidassoa (Treaty of the Pyrenees). He wrote to Paris: "All will soon be over. I shall not stay long in the Basque country, unless I find amusement in watching them hunt whales, in learning their language and their dances."

However, the dancer was soon smitten by gout. His lungs became affected. The bed of the moribund, covered with cards, was a gaming table over which offices were sold. Cards and the sacrament went pell-mell.<sup>b</sup> It is said that on his death-bed he felt remorse, but outwardly he displayed courage. At least, he feared for his property, and he made the king a complete donation of it believing that the king would return it to him. He was not mistaken; the king returned the gift in three days. Finally he died at Vincennes, March 9th, 1661, and no one but the king seemed to mourn him, for this prince already knew how to dissemble. The yoke was beginning to weigh heavily upon him; he was impatient to reign. Nevertheless he wished to seem affected by a death that put him in possession of his throne. Louis XIV and the court wore mourning for Cardinal Mazarin, an unusual honour, and one which Henry IV had paid to the memory of Gabrielle d'Estrées.

We will not undertake [says Voltaire] to decide whether Mazarin was a great minister or not; his actions must speak for themselves. There is often a popular idea of a vast breadth of mind and an almost divine genius in those who have governed empires with some success. It is not a superior power of penetration that makes statesmen; it is their character. Men, if they have ever so little good sense, nearly all perceive their own interests. In this respect a citizen of Amsterdam or of Bern is as wise as Sejanus, Ximenes, Buckingham, Richelieu, or Mazarin; but our conduct and our enterprises depend solely upon the temper of our soul, and our successes depend upon fortune. For example, if such a genius as Pope Alexander VI or his son Borgia had had to take La Rochelle, he would have invited the principal leaders to his camp under a solemn oath and would have made away with them. Mazarin would have entered the city two or three years later by winning over and dividing the citizens. Don Luis de Haro would not have risked the enterprise. Richelieu built a dyke along the sea, after the example of Alexander, entered and took La Rochelle; but a less strong tide or a little greater promptness on the part of the English would have saved La Rochelle and made Richelieu seem foolhardy.

The character of men can be judged by their enterprises. It may well be said that the soul of Richelieu breathed pride and vengeance, that Mazarin was wise, pliant, and avaricious. But in order to tell in how far a minister has genius one must either have frequently heard him talk, or one must read what he has written. What is seen every day among courtiers often happens among statesmen: he who has most genius fails, while he who has in his character more of patience, force, pliancy, and persistence succeeds. On reading the letters of Cardinal Mazarin and the *Mémoires* of Cardina' de Retz one easily sees that De Retz was the superior genius. Nevertheless Mazarin was all-powerful and De Retz was overthrown. Finally, it is quite true that to make a powerful minister often nothing is needed but a mediocre mind, good sense, and luck; but to be a good minister a man must have love for the public welfare as his dominant passion. The great statesman is he who leaves to his country great and useful memorials.

The memorial that immortalises Cardinal Mazarin is the acquisition of Alsace. He gave this province to France at a time when France was

enraged at him; and by a singular fatality he did more good for the kingdom when he was persecuted than in the tranquillity of absolute power.<sup>i</sup>

Mazarin's end [says Michelet] was at least consistent with his life—he lived and died a cheat. He believed he had cheated the future. Fortunate player, he had all his plans well laid. The prophecies of his youth were fulfilled. He had appeared, at the age of twenty-five, upon a field of battle crying, "Peace! Peace!" From the noble and serious workers who had died painfully in preparing his opportunities, he filched the glory of the triumphant Peace of Westphalia and that of the Pyrenees. Richelieu sowed, Mazarin harvested. The one created the administration, the army, the navy, and died on the eve of Rocroi. The other spoiled everything and succeeded in everything. Great through the greatness of Condé, and greater through that of Turenne, his position was strengthened by even the futile tempest of the Fronde; he retains at least the honour of that forced and fatal peace into which France fell through sheer lassitude. This pedestal is still left him; his features even after death wear the mask of the Angel of Peace.

Was it really peace? Too late it had arrived: Germany, agonising in ruin, found no peace in the Treaty of Westphalia; Spain, dead and done with, was in no condition to reap benefit from the Peace of the Pyrenees. And France herself, entering by this door into a fifty years' struggle for the Spanish succession, was to find in this peace fiscal war at home and bloody strife abroad.<sup>b</sup>







## CHAPTER XIX

### “L'ÉTAT, C'EST MOI”

[1661-1715 A.D.]

The two foundations of the absolute throne of Louis XIV were terror and admiration : the terror of a power which had subjugated the army, the church, the magistracy, the noblesse, and the municipalities ; the admiration of a power to which literature and art, arms and fortune, rendered their richest and their uninterrupted tribute. King-worship had never before taken so entire a possession of any Christian state. Never had the luxurious pomp of an Oriental court been so intimately and so long associated with the energies, the refined tastes, and the intellectual culture of an European sovereignty. During fifty successive years, Louis continued to be the greatest actor on the noblest stage, and in the presence of the most enthusiastic audience, of the world.

—STEPHEN. *P*

NEVER had there been at any court more intrigues and hopes than during the last hours of Cardinal Mazarin. Women who had any pretence to beauty were flattering themselves that they would now govern a twenty-two-year-old prince whom love had already so far seduced as to make him offer his crown to his mistress. The young courtiers had hopes that the reign of the favourites would return ; each minister was expecting the first place ; none of them thought that a king who had been so excluded from affairs would dare take upon himself the burden of government. Mazarin had prolonged the king's childhood as far as he could ; and only for a short time had been giving him instructions, and that because the king had demanded it. So far were they from expecting to be governed by their sovereign, that of all those who had hitherto worked with the prime minister there was none who asked the king when he wished an audience. One and all asked, “To whom shall we now address ourselves ?”—and Louis XIV replied, “To me.”<sup>b</sup>

The secretary of state for war, Michel le Tellier, hastened with the astounding piece of news to the queen-mother, who laughed in his face : “In good faith, M. le Tellier, what do you think of it ?” This resolution, however, was nothing but the accomplishment of the advice twenty times

given by Mazarin, and if there was any cause for astonishment it was not that the king took the advice but that he held to it; he was, as La Bruyère says, "his own prime minister and exacted of the chief state functionaries that they deal directly with him." For thirty years he worked regularly eight hours a day. He relates in his *Mémoires*,<sup>f</sup> with legitimate pride, the effect produced by the announcement of his assumption of authority, and he recommends his son in a few truly eloquent words "not to forget that it is by work one reigns; to rule without working is to be ungrateful and defiant towards God, unjust and tyrannical towards man."

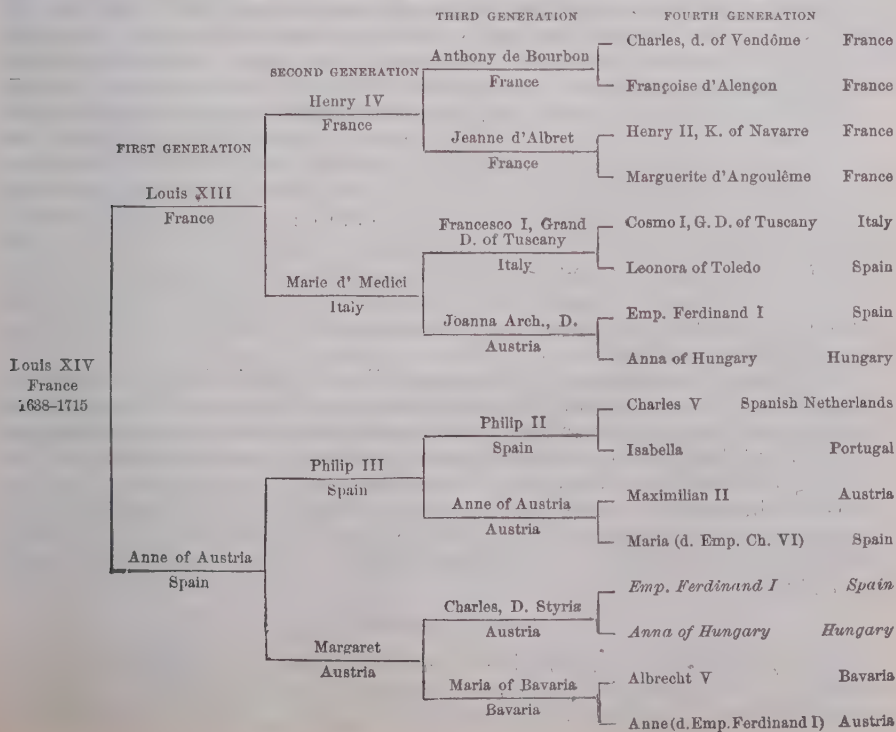
But what is still more remarkable is that the young prince who so boldly assumed the power had already mapped out his policy. Not only did Louis XIV rule with the boundless power of some of his predecessors, but he was the first to establish in France the theory of an absolute monarchy. In his eyes royalty was a divine institution. Sovereigns were the representatives of God upon earth—his inspired lieutenants; and on this account participators, in a fashion, in his power and infallibility. And as royalty, in making itself absolute, had kept to the old principle of feudal law, that sovereignty and property are the same thing, Louis not only believed himself master of his subjects, but the owner of their possessions—a monstrous doctrine which carries us back to oriental monarchies. At all events it did not seem to him that authority to which he recognised no limits but those imposed by conscience and by religion, ought to remain sterile. He wished it active and hard working; he believed that kings had imperious duties to fulfil. It was thus that Louis XIV understood his royal profession.<sup>c</sup> Nor can it be denied that he carried out to a large extent in practice the theory of royalty that he professed. He was destined to reign for fifty-four years after the death of Mazarin; his reign in its entirety being one of the longest in history. After Mazarin he had no minister whom he did not dominate: he was king in fact as well as in name. He came to be by far the most famous monarch of his time. His court at Versailles set a standard of magnificence which other monarchs of that and succeeding ages strove to imitate without hoping to rival.

In his political relations with his subjects, as has been said, Louis came to represent the culmination of that autocratic system which for generations had been almost steadily advancing in France,—a system which had known such exponents as Louis XI, Francis I, and Henry IV; and which Sully, Richelieu, and Mazarin had done so much to fortify. Nor did he confine his theory to his own subjects. He came finally to feel almost the same proprietary right in the affairs of Europe and he attempted with the aid of his armies to dictate to foreign nations somewhat as he dictated within the bounds of his own territory. And, having the good fortune to be served by two great soldiers, Condé and Turenne, he was enabled, notwithstanding his own rather meagre military talents, to carry out the idea here also with some measure of success. It was a qualified success, to be sure, for he did not secure the control of Holland at which he aimed; he did not very greatly extend the boundaries of France; and if his grandson was left finally in possession of the Spanish throne, this was a victory tempered with the concession that the thrones of Spain and France should never be consolidated. Nevertheless, to have embroiled all Europe in war after war; to have been the central figure of a long epoch; to have given his name to an important period of history; to have placed that name in the small list of those rulers to whom posterity concedes the title "Great,"—this surely is to have played the part of king right royally.

[1661-1715 A.D.]

This reign, then, is a curiously full and vital one. We shall best understand it perhaps if we study it first from within, witnessing the activities of the great monarch in his relations with his own people before turning (in subsequent chapters) to the foreign relations of the kingdom. As preliminary to this study of the economic and social development of France during the long reign of Louis XIV, we must take a glance at the interesting figure of the monarch himself. In the first place it must be remembered that this remarkable man had a remarkable heritage. He numbered among his direct ancestors not far removed such remarkable characters as Henry IV of France, the German empêrör Charles V, and the Spanish sovereigns Ferdinand and Isabella. This in itself suggests a strange mixture of races in his ancestry. But further examination of his ancestral tree reveals even more striking facts. It appears that this greatest of French kings is, so far as his ancestral blood is concerned, almost as much Spaniard or Italian as he is French; and quite as much German. His father was born in France, his mother in Spain; of his four grandparents one was born in France, one in Spain, one in Italy, one in Germany. Of his thirty ancestors within four generations only eight were born in France while ten were born in Germany or in the yet farther outlying regions of Hungary and Bohemia; the remainder of the company being distributed between Spain (and Portugal) and Italy. The subtended table<sup>1</sup> showing details of the ancestry of Louis XIV for four generations will make these facts clear at a glance. It is

<sup>1</sup> Table of the direct ancestors of Louis XIV for four generations, showing birthplace of each ancestor. It will be noted that Ferdinand I and Anna of Hungary appear twice in the fourth generation column. The actual number of persons, therefore, is twenty-eight instead of thirty.<sup>a</sup>





worthy of careful study as illustrating in detail the heterogeneity of ethnic elements that went to build up the personality of this cosmopolite. Persons fond of generalising as to national characteristics will perhaps feel that the more conspicuous traits of Louis' personality are not difficult to account for in the light of his conglomerate ancestry.

Leaving such speculations, however, to whoever may choose to make them, let us turn from the ancestry of the king to the king himself. "He had," says Kitchin,<sup>g</sup> "all the qualities which strike the eye: and was, as Bolingbroke acutely remarked, 'if not the greatest king, the best actor of majesty at least that ever filled a throne'; as a king should be, he was courteous, dignified, calm, and 'debonair,' firm in act and speech, and constant: he had a great sense of duty and propriety; and said himself that a king should act according to the dictates of good sense; he cultivated that habitual discretion and seriousness of manner which often cloak ignorance or want of capacity. He spoke but little, that little, however, was to the point; he was reserved, was thought rather stingy, did not often laugh. These characteristics were backed by one marked quality, strength of will, which could be obstinacy: and were all made subservient to one persistent passion, the inordinate desire of reputation and glory." Yet Kitchin sees in Louis, on the whole, a "second-rate man," distinctly inferior in many ways to his grandfather, Henry IV. Thus he declares that "In no branch of his life's work does Louis show one spark of originality; even Voltaire confesses that there was 'more uprightness and dignity than spring' in him: he had no boldness and no enthusiasm: 'he made war without being a warrior,' decreed many laws, but had not the slightest idea of legislation; he busied himself with administration, but had no real organising gifts. He had that sure mark which distinguishes the second-rate man from the great man: he loved details for their own sake; he shrank instinctively from all that was noble and strong; and chose the inferior agent in preference to the better."

It seems almost paradoxical to pronounce such a judgment as this upon a monarch of such celebrity. Yet perhaps the judgment is not far from just. Louis XIV had the good fortune to follow Henry IV and Richelieu and Mazarin; the later years of his reign, in which he was in effect gathering the harvest of his own sowing, are far less notable than are the earlier ones during which he profited by the labours of his forerunners. Yet after all allowances are made for Louis' shortcomings and for his mistakes, it seems futile to deny that the famous monarch who for the space of almost three average generations dominated the European situation had at least some of the elements of greatness.

With this introduction to the personality of Louis XIV, we are now prepared to take up in detail the affairs of his government. First of all, as has been said, we shall consider those measures through which the internal prosperity of France was furthered during the early years of the reign. In so doing we shall have occasion to see something of the ministers who aided Louis in this work. There are no more Richelieus and Mazarins; yet in Colbert we have a man not altogether unworthy to wear the mantle of these great predecessors; nor are Le Tellier, Lionne, and Fouquet by any means despicable.<sup>a</sup>

#### THE MINISTERS

The *clercs au secret* who, in 1547, became ministers of state were four in number; each of them administered not only certain affairs, but all the affairs of certain provinces. They formed an impracticable organisation.

[1661 A.D.]

The religious wars, the troubles of Louis XIII's minority, prevented any change.<sup>1</sup>

In 1619 a single member of the ministry was charged with the conduct of war and with the correspondence with the *chefs de corps*; another in 1626 had the foreign affairs. Finally under Louis XIV the ministry of the king's household was established for ecclesiastical affairs and those of the navy. Important posts, raised to offices, that is to say, making their holders irremovable—such as the chancellor-keeper of the seals, chief of the magistracy, and controller-general of the finances—were like two other ministries. The special functions allotted to each of the four secretaries of state did not prevent them from keeping, for other affairs, the old-time division by provinces which existed until the Revolution.

The ministers whom Mazarin had left behind him were Pierre Séguier, chancellor and keeper of the seals, a sort of irremovable minister who was clever enough, by assuming no political importance, to make himself regarded as necessary for fifty years; Michel le Tellier, secretary of state for war, Hugues de Lionne who had charge of the marine (the portfolio of which he kept till 1669) and of foreign affairs; and Nicholas Fouquet, the superintendent of finance. The first two were distinguished men, the third a superior man; as for the fourth, Fouquet, by his encouragement of letters, he had acquired the reputation of a generous Mæcenas, and he counted illustrious persons among his friends—Pellisson, La Fontaine, Gourville, Madame de Sévigné and Mademoiselle de Scudéry, who have pleaded his cause before posterity without gaining it. He had put, or rather left, the finances in extreme disorder and he himself drew without scruple on the treasury. He was increasing the king's expenses and diminishing the receipts; finally, what was still more serious, he seemed to seek supporters everywhere, even amongst the great nobles, and he fortified the places of which he held command as though to prepare for himself, in case of disgrace, an impregnable retreat. He was almost a frondeur; he was certainly a knave. Less was needed for Louis to strike him.

The king had a secret minister who every evening called his attention to the errors and falsehoods of the superintendent. This was Jean-Baptiste Colbert, born at Rheims in 1619 of an ancient family of tradesmen and magistrates. He had been intendant to Mazarin, who before he died had said to the king: "Sire, I owe you everything; but I think I am to some extent discharging my debt when I give you Colbert."<sup>c</sup>

This working together in secret was the cause of the catastrophe of Fouquet, in which were involved many others. The fall of this minister, who is much less to be reproached than is Cardinal Mazarin, teaches us that it is not the privilege of everybody to commit the same faults.<sup>b</sup>

The precaution of disarming Fouquet was made in advance. His post of general prosecutor assured him the privilege of being judged by parliament;

<sup>1</sup> There were in Louis XIV's day three councils: (1) The supreme council, to which the king summoned the secretaries of state and sometimes the princes of the blood. It had the general direction of the governmental policy and important affairs. It judged appeals from the state council. (2) The state council, placed beneath the ministry but above the higher courts. It was the great administrative body of the realm, meeting four times a week, the chancellor presiding. On one day it read and discussed the reports of the provincial governors; on another it discussed financial questions; on another it listened to complaints on taxation; on another it adjudged differences between the courts. The state councillors were eighteen in number. (3) The grand council, which occupied itself with cases covering the bishoprics and the benefices at the king's disposal. It judged the edicts of the sovereign courts and the conflicts between the parliament and the lower courts. Its decisions were executive throughout the whole kingdom, while the sentences of each parliament applied only to its own territory.

and the king put no trust, and for reason, in the justice of parliament. Fouquet therefore was skilfully inveigled into selling his post. It is said that he discarded his robe of office in the hope of obtaining the *cordon bleu*, which the king did not wish any longer to give to persons connected with justice. Moreover, he was counting on becoming chancellor on the death of the aged Séguier. Of the 1,400,000 francs, the price of his office, he offered one million as a pure gift to the king, who had expressed to him a desire for ready money. He thus prepared the instruments of his own ruin. It was feared that at the moment of his arrest his friends would attempt to get him to Belle-Île and to agitate Brittany and Normandy where many malcontents were under cover. A journey to Brittany was planned for the coming month of September, under pretence of holding the provincial estate at Nantes and of obtaining a greater gratuitous gift through the presence of the king.<sup>d</sup>

Fouquet's undoing was thus already resolved upon when the king accepted the magnificent fête which the minister arranged for him at his house at Vaux for August 17th, 1661. The palace and its gardens had cost him about eighteen millions.<sup>1</sup> He had built the mansion twice over and bought three hamlets whose area was included in the enormous gardens, then considered the most beautiful in all Europe. The fountains of Vaux, since relegated to mediocrity by those of Versailles, Marly, and St. Cloud, were marvels in their day. But however magnificent the place, its enormous cost proves that he had been served with as little economy as he himself served the king. It was also true that St. Germain and Fontainebleau, the only pleasure places used by the king, could not compare in beauty with Vaux. Louis XIV felt this and it irritated him. All over the mansion were to be seen the arms and motto of Fouquet—a squirrel with these words, *Quo non ascendam?* (To what point shall I not mount?)

The king interpreted the device for himself; the ambition of the motto did not serve to appease the monarch. The courtiers remarked that the squirrel was everywhere painted pursued by a snake which was the arms of Colbert. The fête was far beyond those which Mazarin had given, not only in magnificence but in taste. The *Facheux* of Molière was presented for the first time: Pellisson had written the prologue, which was much admired.<sup>b</sup>

The king said to the queen-mother in anger, "Ah, madame, shall we not make this fellow disgorge his prey?" And he was tempted to have the minister arrested on the spot; however, he restrained himself.<sup>c</sup>

On the 5th of September, during the prearranged sojourn of the court of Nantes, D'Artagnan, captain of the musketeers, laid hands on Fouquet as he was leaving the cabinet of the king, put him into a coach and conducted him under a strong escort to the château of Angers. He had the greatest difficulty in protecting the superintendent during the journey from the fury of the people. All his houses were sealed and his property was seized. Among the latter were found directions as to what his friends should do in case he was arrested. The plan, like those that Cardinal de Retz had made several times, consisted in procuring for him places, money, and presses by means of which France could be inundated with pamphlets. Fouquet was transferred without delay to Vincennes and brought before a chamber of justice.<sup>e</sup>

He was accused of wasting the revenues, which was only too true, and of plotting against the safety of the state, which was never proved. At the end of three years nine judges gave their voices for death, thirteen others

[<sup>1</sup>i. e. 18,000,000 either francs or livres, franc being the name of the coin and livre the bookkeeping term of identical value.]



[1661 A.D.]

for banishment. The king, aggravating the penalty, changed it into perpetual imprisonment and Fouquet was incarcerated in the citadel of Pinerolo, where he died after nineteen years of captivity (March 23, 1680).<sup>c</sup>

*The Man with the Iron Mask*

For a long time Fouquet's end remained a mystery; and even Voltaire, writing little more than a half century afterwards, says, "We do not know where died the unfortunate man, whose least actions in the days of his power made a stir." For this reason attempts were afterwards made to connect Fouquet with one of the most extraordinary episodes of the secret history of Louis XIV's reign.<sup>a</sup>

We know that a masked and unknown prisoner, object of an extraordinary surveillance, died in 1703 in the Bastille, whither he had been brought from the Île Ste. Marguerite in 1698 (and was buried under the name of Marchiali). He had been detained about ten years in these islands, and traces of his existence are found in the fortress of Exilles and at Pinerolo as far back as 1681. Now no great personage disappeared in Europe about this time. What powerful motive had the government of Louis XIV for concealing this mysterious visage from human sight? Many explanations more or less chimeric, more or less plausible, have been attempted of the "man with the iron mask" (an erroneous term; the mask was not of iron but of black velvet; it was probably one of those *loups* so long in use). In 1837 Le Bibliophile Jacob (Paul la Croix) published an ingenious volume to prove that Fouquet was passed off as dead, sequestered anew, and, masked, dragged from fortress to fortress until his death in 1703.<sup>d</sup>

Many other theories have been advanced to account for this person's identity. It has been said that he was a twin brother of Louis XIV, who had been made to disappear; the count de Vermandois, natural son of Louis XIV and Mademoiselle de la Vallière, who was imprisoned for having struck the dauphin; the duke de Beaufort, who disappeared at the siege of Candia (1669); the duke of Monmouth, nephew of James II; Count Girolamo Mattioli, minister of Mantua, who was abducted from Turin for having prevented his master from selling Casale to the king of France (this hypothesis is sustained by Topin<sup>e</sup>); or Giovanni di Gonzaga, Mattioli's secretary; a son of Anne of Austria by Buckingham or Mazarin; the Armenian patriarch Avedick; and, according to a recent theory of M. Bazeries, a certain general De Bulonde, imprisoned for raising the siege of Candia in spite of Catinat's orders.<sup>h</sup> But the very multiplicity of theories sufficiently shows the doubtful character of each and all of them; and the identification of the man with the iron mask still holds a place among the most curious of the unsolved enigmas of history.<sup>a</sup>

THE MINISTRY OF COLBERT

The great trial of Fouquet involved another victim: Pellisson was condemned to restore 200,000 livres. But he was one of those skilful persons who, having fallen, always rise. From having been a Calvinist he became a Catholic and perhaps died a Protestant; from being Fouquet's friend he became the favourite of the king [Louis XIV] and drew up his *Mémoires* in which he speaks of the superintendent's thefts, and he founded a prize at the Academy for an annual eulogy of Louis XIV. Thanks to his verses and his prose, which were supple like his conduct, he was very successful in money matters. In 1677 he was in receipt of 75,000 livres, just the same sum as Vauban

received, without counting abbeys and priories. Finally he was a kind of prime minister and had charge of the funds devoted to the conversion of heretics, and yet he brought so much dignity into his office that posterity has forgotten in him the man of business and only remembers the man of letters. Colbert succeeded Fouquet with the title of controller-general. In 1666 Michel le Tellier left his charge to his son, the celebrated Louvois; the first ministry of Louis XIV was thus complete.

Colbert directed five of the French departments of administration: the king's household, with the fine arts, the finances, agriculture, with commerce, public works, and, after 1669, the navy—a crushing weight under which he did not succumb.

“Jean Baptiste Colbert,” says a contemporary, “had naturally a frowning countenance. His hollow eyes and thick eyebrows gave him an air of austerity and rendered him at first sight savage and forbidding; but afterwards when one came to know him, he was sufficiently facile, expeditious, and immutably steadfast. He was persuaded that good faith is the solid foundation of all business. Infinite application and an insatiable desire to learn took with him the place of knowledge. He was a restorer of the finances, which on his accession to the ministry he found in a very bad condition. A solid but ponderous intelligence, born principally for calculation, he disentangled all the embarrassments which the superintendents and royal treasurers had purposely introduced into the accounts in order that they might fish in troubled waters.” Let us add that this austere and hard financier, “this man of marble,” as Gui Patin calls him, had a heart. “We must be careful of every five sous in matters which are not of necessity,” he wrote to Louis XIV, “and lavish millions when it is a question of your glory. A useless banquet costing 3,000 livres gives me incredible pain; and when it is a question of millions of gold for the affair of Poland, I would sell all my goods, I would pledge my wife and children, and I would go on foot all my life to provide them.”

### *Reorganisation of the Finances*

The finances, indeed, had fallen back into the chaos from which Sully had rescued them. The public debt was four hundred and thirty millions, the revenues were swallowed up three years in advance, and out of eighty-four millions in annual imposts the treasury received scarcely thirty-five. Colbert began by annulling or reimbursing at the rate of purchase eight millions of bonds on the Hôtel-de-Ville, which had been acquired at an insignificant price, and caused the *chambre de police* to make an investigation of the malversations committed by officers of finance during the last twenty-five years; the very curés had to press their parishioners to denounce abuses. The money lenders who had taken advantage of the necessities of the state to lend to it at usurious interest were made to disgorge their profits; the fines rose to one hundred and ten millions; several money lenders were hanged. These were measures in harmony with the spirit of the times but not in accordance with good policy; the surest way for the state to avoid having to submit to burdensome contracts in evil days is to hold, in good ones, to a promise once given, because there are no usurers save for those who are suspected of not paying their debts.

Colbert was the true creator of the budget. Hitherto money had been dispensed haphazard, without consulting the receipts of the treasury. He was the first to draw up annually a provisional statement divided into two

[1661 A.D.]

chapters in which the probable revenues and expenses were set down beforehand. When a secretary of state had a disbursement to make he signed an order for the intended payment; the persons receiving it presented it at the office of the controller-general's department, when the payment of the sum was charged on a particular fund and this assignment was presented for the king's signature.

Colbert modified the form and assessment of the imposts. The *taille*, or tax on landed property, was personal, that is it was paid by the *roturiers* and in certain circumstances two or three times in the same year. He wished to make it real as it was in the south, as it now is everywhere — that is to say, payable on the landed property, whoever the holders might be. In 1661 it had reached fifty-three millions; he brought it back to thirty-two. Amid the troubles of the Fronde many persons had been ennobled on their own authority or had bought titles of nobility for a few crowns; these were so many privileged individuals added to the real ones. As early as 1662 Molière in the *École des femmes* had laughed at this vanity which cost the people dear. A royal ordinance revoked all the letters of nobility granted within the last thirty years: Gros-Pierre was obliged to show his titles and had none, and nearly forty thousand families amongst the richest in the parishes were once more subjected to the impost which proportionately lightened the burdens of their neighbours.

The controller-general rightfully preferred to the *taille* the *aides* or indirect taxes to which all contributed. He diminished the price of salt, a commodity of the first necessity to the poor; but he increased or created taxes on coffee, tobacco, wines, cards, etc., and from one million five hundred thousand francs brought them up to twenty-one millions. Thus the indirect taxes, some of which have been so vigorously attacked in our own day, had their origin in an idea of justice and equality.

He disliked loans, not because he did not understand the advantage of borrowing at a low price to repay burdensome debts, but he dreaded giving Louis XIV facilities for burdening the future to the advantage of the present. On leaving the council in which the first loan was decided on, in 1672, he bitterly reproached Lamoignon for having approved this measure. "Do you know as I do the man with whom we have to deal, his passion for display, for great enterprises, for all kinds of expenses? Here is a free course opened for loans and by consequence for unlimited expenditure and taxes. You shall answer for it to the nation and to posterity."

In truth a time was to come when Colbert would be no longer there and Louis XIV would borrow at 400 per cent. At least the great minister tried



COLBERT  
(1619-1683)



to protect the treasury against the exigencies of the financiers by inviting the small capitalists to pour their funds directly, without costly intermediaries, into a loan account which he established for the purpose and into which the money flowed.<sup>c</sup>

Colbert's efforts extended into so many fields that it is impossible to follow them in detail. His service to agriculture was most beneficial. He exempted very large families from paying tithes, and forbade the seizure of implements and beasts of labour for non-payment of taxes. He improved the breeds of horses and cattle by crossing them with imported animals. His code for water highways and forests is still largely in force.

He assisted industry by sparing no means of obtaining the manufacturing secrets of neighbouring countries. In 1669, says Duruy,<sup>c</sup> there were 42,220 looms and more than 60,000 workers in wool alone. The draperies of Sedan, Louviers, Abbeville, and Elbeuf were unrivalled in Europe; tin plate, steel, faience, and morocco leather, which had largely been imported, were now made in France; the cloth and serges of Holland, Genoese point, and velvets were imitated and equalled, the carpets of Persia and Turkey surpassed at the Savonnerie, at Aubusson, and at Beauvais. The rich silken stuffs shot with gold and silver were made at Tours and at Lyons; at Tour-la-Ville (near Cherbourg) and at Paris they made finer glassware than at Venice. The tapestries of Flanders yielded to those of the Gobelins.

For commerce the great minister did much by regulating customs and reducing tariffs. He made Dunkirk, Bayonne, and Marseilles free ports, and was the projector of the Burgundian canal opened in 1692, and built between 1664 and 1681, that connected the Mediterranean at Cette with the Garonne (and consequently the ocean) at Toulouse. Henry IV's council of commerce was re-established in 1665 and the king presided over its fortnightly meetings.

At that period the Dutch and the English were far ahead of the French in foreign trade. The better to compete with these rivals Colbert substituted privileged associations for the isolated efforts of individuals. "He established," says Duruy,<sup>c</sup> "five great companies modelled on the English and Dutch societies; those of the *Indes Orientales* and the *Indes Occidentales* in 1664; the *Compagnie du Nord* and the *Compagnie du Levant* in 1666, and the *Compagnie du Sénégal* in 1673, according them exclusive commercial monopolies and granting them considerable loans. He wished to restore life to the colonial system, much neglected since the days of Richelieu. The French now possessed only Canada, with Acadia, Cayenne, the Île de Bourbon [Île de Réunion], and several establishments in Madagascar and the Indies. Colbert purchased, for less than a million, Martinique, Guadeloupe, St. Lucia, Grenada, and the Grenadines, Marie Galante, St. Martin, St. Christopher, St. Bartholomew, Santa Cruz, and Tortuga (Île de la Tortue) in the West Indies. He placed under the protection of France the French filibusters of Santo Domingo who had seized the western portion of the island (1664). He planted new colonies in Cayenne (1677) and in Canada (1665). He took Newfoundland in order to control the entrance to the St. Lawrence, and began the occupation of the magnificent valley of the Mississippi, which had just been explored by that adventurous captain, Robert de la Salle (1680). In Africa he wrested Gorée in Senegal from the Dutch in 1665 and took possession of the east coast of Madagascar. In Asia the *Compagnie des Indes* established itself at Surat and Chandarnagar and afterwards at Pondicherry," but to offset these achievements he was short-sighted enough to close the colonial ports to foreign vessels and to forbid in 1669 the importation of sugar and tobacco from Brazil.

[1661-1683 A.D.]

Colbert also revived the navy and established the naval inscription by which the people of these maritime provinces, in return for certain advantages, furnished the necessary recruits for the navy, dividing them according to age and family position into different classes (the *régime des classes*). He likewise instituted in 1672 the corps of marine guards, composed of one thousand gentlemen, in order to have good officers, a school of cannoneers for good marksmen, a school of hydrography, and a board of naval construction.

For the encouragement of the fine arts and the sciences, the Academy of Inscriptions and Belle-Lettres was founded in 1663, the Academy of Science in 1666, the Academy of Music (1669), the Academy of Architecture in 1671. "A school of fine arts established at Rome (1667) received the prize pupils of the Academy of Painting in Paris who copied on canvas or in marble the masterpieces of antiquity. The cabinet of medals founded also a school for the study of oriental languages. The Royal Library received many additions and the Mazarine Library was opened to the public. The Jardin des Plantes was enlarged and the foundation of academies in the provinces encouraged. Most of the famous *littérateurs* and artists of the day were pensioned, including many from foreign countries who were induced to take up their residence in France."

### *Michelet's Estimate of Colbert*

The king in 1683 was relieved of Colbert, who pressed heavily upon him, forced him to reckon, and was always talking of making the receipts balance the expenditure. In his long ministry of twenty years he had passed through two phases. During the first he tried to live on the revenue; during the second, dragged on and compelled, he borrowed and lived on the future. One moment he lightened the taxes and nevertheless collected ninety millions; but the king spent one hundred millions.

Between him and the king there was a dispute about everything: concerning buildings—he condemned Versailles: concerning religion—he upheld the Protestant manufacturers. He died from his public disgrace—died because he could do nothing and had lost hope. Ridiculous quarrels were forced upon him. The king reproached him for the expense of Versailles, which had been built in spite of his advice to the contrary.<sup>1</sup>

He died, detested and cursed. It was found necessary to bury him at night to protect his body from the insults of the populace. Songs were composed, *ponts neufs* on the death of the tyrant. Was this word wrongly applied? Not at all. This great man had been the tyrant of France in two ways at once—tyrant through his position, the times, and the necessity of things; tyrant through his violence in well doing and his impatience, through his impulsiveness of will.

The war and Louvois, the king and the court, Versailles and the immense waste had been blamed very justly. But there was something else. The situation was tyrannical. Colbert built on a foundation already ruined, on that of the misery which grew in that century without anything being able to stop it—political and moral causes come from afar, above all, the indolence of the nobility and of the Catholics, which after having ruined Spain

[<sup>1</sup> Louis XIV had little love for Paris and created Versailles, or rather greatly enlarged the old château of Louis XIII, by making immense additions, and by constructing the fine façade on the park side which, with its extended wings, made it the most superb and vast abode in the world.]

was about to ruin France. Mazarin had killed Colbert in advance. The tax placed by the league of notables on the small landholder, which was doubled about 1648, compelled him to sell his field to the lord of the parish. But these fields, gathered together under idle hands, produced little. Under Colbert there was a famine every three years. To sustain the army and the working classes with ease, he himself kept the wheat at a low price, almost always forbidding its exportation, thus discouraging agricultural labour. From 1600 to 1700 every manufactured article quintupled in value. Wheat alone was treated as a natural product, in connection with which labour would avail nothing; nothing was done for it; it remained at the same price. That evil of Spain, the hatred of work, the taste for a life of ease had for a long time been inoculated in France. Colbert revolved in the circle of a fatal contradiction. He wanted to discourage idleness, he said; he struck at the false nobles. With what? With the authority of the king — of the king of nobles, who, attracting everything to the court, “ennobling” the nation, drew it into idleness. The dead and unproductive life of the courtier, of the priest, more and more deadened everything.

This man of work was devoured by three great unproductive classes: the nobles, who more and more lived on the state; the officials, whom the progress of order brought into existence; the third class, the permanent army, enormously increased. Now, the king drawing little or nothing from the large rich body, that is the clergy, Colbert, triply crushed, was obliged to create a productive class, to over-stimulate work by driving industry abroad. War of customs duties, and soon a war of armies, resulted. He himself, who was so interested in maintaining peace, actively engaged in the war against Holland, and expected to gain something from it for the navy and for industry.

History can cite nothing greater or more terrible than his sudden improvisation of the marine. It astonishes, it frightens, both by material enormity and by moral violence. Colbert demanded from France the severest sacrifice which had ever been asked of her (before the conscription<sup>1</sup>).

He showed the same vehement impatience in commercial regulations, in the improvisation of a French industry. He was justly indignant at seeing an ingenious people, very artistic in many things, awaiting and receiving from elsewhere all the products of the useful arts. Manufactories are not only a product of wealth but of education also, a special development of certain faculties, of a certain aptitude. A people who did only one thing would be very low in the scale of nations. Colbert awakened and revealed in the French people an unknown aptitude; he caused a new art to burst forth, that above all, which puts good taste and elegance into all the requirements for the fitting out of a house, which relieves material life by a noble gleam of mind. It was splendid, it was grand of him. But the means were less happy. On the one hand, this budding industry he wanted perfect all at once; that young plant which could not grow without the liberties of life he confined and choked with tyrannical precautions. Almost at the outset, his regulations were laws of terror (even to putting a person in the pillory for defective merchandise, 1670). By requiring this perfection he hoped to gain credit for French goods abroad and to make people buy them with confidence. But, on the other hand, he prevented the manufacture of goods of inferior quality, to satisfy the less pretentious needs of the poorer classes.

The grandeur of this industrial creation has been told wonderfully well;

[<sup>1</sup> The above mentioned *régime des classes*.]



[1661-1683 A.D.]

but not its fall, its prompt decadence. It perished both from the general poverty (no more buyers) and from emigration (the producers left even before the death of Colbert). His last glances beheld the decay of the edifice which was soon to crumble to pieces.

The great historian of France for the end of this century is Pesant de Boisguillebert. He is not acquainted with ancient times and he is wrong in thinking that evils date from 1660. He is none the less truthful and admirable in the picture he gives of the misery of the country and of the crying abuses which continued even under Colbert. The three fiscal terrors (*tailles, aides, douanes*) are found there in characters of fire. One must see the unfortunate peasant collectors, who raise the land-tax and are responsible for it, march through the village. They go only together in companies for fear of being killed. But it is impossible to take away anything from him who has nothing. Everything falls back upon the collectors. The king's bailiff seizes their cattle, the village flocks, then even their persons. They are imprisoned.

The case of the *aides* is much worse. The clerks, become merchants, make a fierce war on the merchants who wish to buy wine from the vine grower and not from them. All communication is broken off. "Everything which comes from Japan quadruples its price, merely on account of the distance. But everything here which passes from one province to another becomes twenty times dearer, twenty-four times. Wine for a sou at Orleans is worth twenty-four at Rouen. The salesman alone is six times more terrible than pirates and tempests, than a sea of four thousand leagues." France pulls up its vines. The people no longer drink anything but water. The custom-house has killed foreign commerce. No merchant dares any longer to put himself in the hands of a receiver, who brings a suit against him if he wishes and who is judged only by his own judges.

Thus the people, thus Colbert, remained the miserable slaves of the financiers, of the general farmers of the taxes, of negotiators, of partisans more powerful than the king. Colbert, on his coming to power, had had the good fortune to hang several of them. In vain. They survived and flourished and in the end strangled him; much worse, they caused his name to be cursed. Under Mazarin there was absolute chaos. Under Colbert there was relative order. The old abuses subsisted, but with the odious force of order which an established government lent to them. Under Mazarin France, miserable and in rags, still drank wine; but under Colbert it drank water.

Progress was an evil. Under Colbert, the farming of the taxes was not given out to favourites, but was sold at auction, to the highest bidder, and thus it brought in more. Yes, but on the condition that the farmers were permitted



COSTUME OF A NOBLEMAN, TIME OF  
LOUIS XIV

to use the terrible severity which made tax collecting a war. In his mortal effort Colbert thus acted against himself. She escaped him, however, do what he would — this France whom he wished to cure, tormented by *recors*, eaten up by bailiffs' men, expropriated, sold, and executed.

The great malediction under which he died troubled him on his death-bed. A letter from the king came to him and he did not wish to read it. "If I had done for God," said he, "what I have done for this man, I would be sure of being saved, and I do not know where I am going." We know it, hero! You are going into glory. You remain in the heart of France. Great nations, who judge with time like God, are as equitable as he, valuing the labour less according to the result than in proportion to the effort, the grandeur of the desire.<sup>1</sup>

After Colbert's death his ministry was divided. The marquis of Seignelay, his son, had the navy; the finances were intrusted to Claude le Pelletier (1683-1689), later by the count de Pontchartrain (1689-1699); these last succeeded but did not replace him. After 1689 the general penury was such, that Louis was obliged to send to the mint the masterpieces in chiselled silver which adorned Versailles.

#### LOUVOIS

Colbert had organised peace; Louvois, "the greatest and most brutal of clerks," organised war. François Michel le Tellier, marquis de Louvois, was born in 1641. At the age of fifteen years he entered the office of his father, the secretary of state, and was initiated by a long apprenticeship into the science of military administration, to which he brought an activity equal to that of Colbert. When Louis XIV determined to assume the rule, Louvois became the real minister of war, although he did not succeed his father, Michel le Tellier, till 1666. He reformed the army, and his reforms lasted as long as the old monarchy. If he preserved the system of voluntary enlistment which had been in practice for three centuries, he diminished abuses and dangers by a more exact discipline and more severe regulations. He established uniforms by ordering that each regiment should be distinguished by the colour of its clothes and by various marks (1670). He introduced the use of copper pontoons for crossing rivers; he instituted magazines of food and supplies, barracks, military hospitals, the Hôtel des Invalides, all things almost unknown before his time. He created the corps of engineers whence came the great Vauban's best pupils; schools of artillery at Douai, Metz, and Strasburg, the companies of grenadiers in the infantry, the regiments of hussars in the cavalry, and lastly cadet companies, a species of military school for the *gentilshommes*.

The army still showed the spirit of feudal times. The soldier belonged less to the king than to his colonel; the cavalry was given too much importance and the nobility would serve only in it. From this reign the French infantry became and long remained the first in the world. Louvois required it to march in step and substituted the gun and bayonet for the pike which was still prevalent; but it was not till after his time that Vauban succeeded in making the gun at once a weapon for projectiles and a weapon for fencing, and so rendered it the most formidable instrument of destruction which was ever put into the hands of men.

He made a revolution in the army by the *ordre du tableau* and by the creation of the service of inspection. He did not destroy the venality of offices which had been introduced into the army, and was exercised

[1666-1691 A.D.]

almost entirely to the profit of the nobles; but in order to merit promotion it was no longer sufficient for them to have ancestors—they must have services; and the grades, from the rank of colonel, became the prize of seniority—an excellent reform in those days, which would be so now no longer. The hatred of the nobility pursued the minister who was degrading “those born to command others, on the pretext that it is reasonable to learn to obey in order to command; who wished to accustom seigneurs to equality and to mingle with all the world indiscriminately.” Louvois, with inflexible firmness, required that each should perform his duty; to secure this he instituted inspectors-general who made the king's authority and his own everywhere present; and severe rebukes awaited negligent officers.

He created recreation camps, a ruinous innovation when these assemblies of troops were only a spectacle to divert the ladies of the court and the king's *ennui*, but an excellent school for officers and generals when preparing for the great manœuvres of war. It was only after his death that the order of St. Louis was instituted (1693) for the purpose of bestowing honours as a reward for military services—this time without distinction of birth, but not without distinction of religion; the reformed could not obtain it. By such measures France was able to have under arms, in the war of Flanders, 125,000 men; for that with Holland, 180,000; before Ryswick, 300,000; during the War of the Spanish Succession, 450,000.

#### VAUBAN

There was one point, the only one, perhaps, on which the minister of war and the minister of marine were in accord: namely, the fortification of the kingdom. To accomplish this immense work they found the man who is, with Colbert, the greatest of this reign. Le Prestre de Vauban was a *gentilhomme* of no great family, who was born at Saulieu in Burgundy in 1633. His father died in the service, leaving him only his name. A prior of the neighbourhood took him in and brought him up. When he had completed his seventeenth year the Fronde was in full swing. Eleven of his brothers, uncles, and relatives were under arms; one morning Vauban ran away and hastened to join the Great Condé, who received him as a cadet and soon made him an officer.

Vauban fought well; he studied more. The good prior had given him some notions of geometry; he developed them and these first acquirements decided his vocation. Having passed into the royal army he served under the chevalier de Clerville, the most renowned engineer of that time, and at twenty-five directed the works during the sieges of Gravelines, Ypres, and Oudenarde. In 1668 his reputation was so great that Louis XIV charged him with the fortification of Dunkirk. This first work of the young engineer was a masterpiece: two moles projecting over six thousand feet into the water and defended by formidable batteries created a harbour where nature had put only an unfavourable shore. The waters inside and those of the high tides skilfully manipulated, incessantly hollowed the channel and restored to the sea the mud it brought up. Henceforth Vauban was the indispensable man whom every general demanded when he had a siege to make. In time of war he took towns; in time of peace he fortified them. It has been calculated that he worked on 300 old towns, that he constructed 33 new ones, that he conducted 53 sieges, and was present at 140 important actions. He was several times wounded; for in order to reconnoitre the situation of a place and to spare the blood of his soldiers, he exposed himself



in such a manner as to call forth the accusation of temerity, had not his cool and deliberate courage been like the fulfilment of a duty.

Vauban, who fortified towns, knew still better how to take them. He introduced the use of hollow cannon-balls for dispersing earth; ricochet firing to dismount the artillery of the besieged and destroy the angles of the bastions; above all he perfected the parallels at the siege of Maestricht in 1673. These parallels joined the trenches which converged towards the town, and gave the attack the advantage over the defence. Vauban went forward slowly but surely; he marched under cover by lines on which the troops were in a position to render each other mutual support, did not hurry on attacks when he could dispense with them, took pains to spare the soldiers, who had previously been flung away, and attained his object incomparably more quickly and with fewer losses, because he first silenced the enemy's fire and left on the ramparts neither a tenable point nor a cannon in condition to be fired. There was no longer any impregnable fortress and it was easy to look forward to the day when every well-besieged town would be taken. It is to him that we also owe the invention of the socket which allows the infantry to fire whilst still keeping the bayonet at the end of the gun.

#### SÉGUIER, LEGISLATIVE WORKS

In a memorial handed to the king, August 15th, 1665, Colbert had proposed to remodel the whole legislation so that there should be in France but one law, one system of weights and measures; in addition he asked for gratuitous justice, the abolition of the venality of offices, the price of which was reckoned at four hundred and twenty millions, and the diminution of the number of monks, and the encouragement of useful callings.

A commission was appointed. When the members had held a meeting and at last brought their task to a conclusion they discussed the matter with eminent members of the parliament in the presence of the ministers, under the presidency of the chancellor Séguier, sometimes under that of the king. Six codes were the result of these deliberations: in 1667 the civil ordinance or Code Louis which abolished some iniquitous procedure belonging to the justice of the Middle Ages, "true witness of human imbecility," says Montaigne, shortened its delays and regulated the form of the registers of births, marriages, and deaths which, it was ordered, were to be deposited at the office of each law-court; in 1669 that of Rivers and Forests which continues in its principal dispositions; in 1670 the ordinance of Criminal Instruction which the parliaments accepted only after many *lettres de cachet* and decrees of exile; it restricted the application of the torture and various cases of provisional imprisonment, fixed rights of jurisdiction so that none might be deprived of his natural judges, laid down identical rules for all tribunals, thus preparing the way for unity of principle by means of unity of form, but did not yet allow either counsel or defender for the accused in capital cases, preserved the atrocity of earlier penalties, the wheel and quartering, and still made the penalty disproportionate to the crime; in 1673 the ordinance of Commerce, a true title to glory for Colbert; in 1681 that of the Navy and the Colonies, which has formed the common law of the nations of Europe and serves them to this day as maritime law; in 1685 the Black Code, which regulated the condition of negroes in the French colonies.

These ordinances form the greatest work of codification executed from Justinian to Napoleon. Some portions of them are still in operation.

[1661-1715 A.D.]

# LIONNE, FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DIPLOMACY

If Colbert and Louvois, by the re-establishment of the finances, the creation of a navy, and the reform of the army, allowed Louis XIV to make war successfully, Lionne, secretary of state for foreign affairs, prepared that success by his negotiations. “He had,” says Choisy, “a superior genius: his understanding, naturally keen and penetrating, had been still further sharpened in the affairs in which the cardinal had early employed him.” Saint-Simon, who was no flatterer, also says that he did everything with a skill and superiority quite unequalled. The king indeed watched closely over this branch; he himself wrote the first despatches to his ambassadors; he often wrote minutes of the most important letters with his own hand, and he always had the instructions sent in his name read aloud to him.

When Lionne died in 1671 the king gave him as successor the marquis de Pomponne who had conducted several embassies with success and was then in Sweden, whose king he had succeeded in detaching from the Dutch alliance. Pomponne directed all the negotiations which terminated in the Peace of Nimeguen. “But,” said Louis XIV, “the office I gave him was found to be too great and extensive for him. I was obliged to order him to retire, because everything that passed through his hands lost something of the grandeur and force which are needed in executing the orders of a king of France who is not unfortunate.”



A COURT COSTUME, TIME OF LOUIS XIV

## TRIUMPH OF THE ABSOLUTE MONARCHY

Some of these ministers of Louis XIV, especially Colbert and Louvois, were certainly great administrators; they were not, they could not be, great statesmen. Colbert himself aimed at making France richer only in order to render the king more powerful; and all laboured to constitute the excessive centralisation which enveloped the whole country, its industry and commerce, the arms and the brain, with a thousand bonds of a minute regulation, so that the initiative of the ministers was everywhere substituted for the action of individuals and communities. The result of this system was to be that France would live less by her own vitality than by that of her government. When age and sickness should freeze that ever-present hand all would decline. A great people would be subjected to the vicissitudes of one man's existence.

If the administration of the realm was as much the work of Louis XIV's ministers as his own, one thing belonged to him alone: this was the general

direction he gave to the government and to society—the skilful and energetic manner with which he knew how to control all other powers, to annul them, and make them to serve his greatness; it was in fact that art of ruling which no other prince, in Saint-Simon's<sup>i</sup> judgment, possessed to a greater degree. We have already seen his ideas on the rights of sovereigns; he had summed them up in that phrase attributed to him, it is said, in his youth, at the end of the Fronde: “*L'État, c'est moi*—The State, it is I.”<sup>1</sup>

He believed this; everybody believed it with him, and the church taught it. Bossuet founded the divine right of the monarchy on maxims drawn from the Scriptures. “Oh kings, ye are gods,” exclaimed the great bishop at the very moment that Lebrun was filling Versailles with the apotheosis of Louis XIV. While he lived there was but one uncontrolled and limitless will—his own. The states-general might have recalled other wills, but he never convoked it; he punished those that spoke of it, and when, at the Treaty of Utrecht, the allies, still defying his ambition, tried to exact that the conditions of peace should be ratified by a national assembly, he haughtily refused and declared that he regarded the demand as an insult to the majesty of the throne. The minority of the provinces had their own estates, but he suppressed many of them. Those which remained, as in Languedoc, Burgundy, Provence, Brittany, etc., never assembled except to execute the orders of the ministers. Whatever remained of municipal liberty disappeared like that of the provinces. The king, coining money with the ancient rights dear to the towns, changed the mayoralties into hereditary offices and sold them to the highest bidders. An edict of 1683 placed the financial administration of the towns under the direction of the intendants. Their finances did not improve. The communities were made responsible for the payment of the *taille* as the *curiates* had been under the Roman emperors. Former fiscal arrangements had ruined the magistrates. The new one held them exempt, but ruined the communes.

A phrase sums up this entire policy—unfortunately it was spoken by Colbert: “It is not well,” he wrote to a governor, charging him to let an elective magistracy fall into desuetude, “that some one should speak in the name of all.”

### *Submission of Parliament*

Royalty had taken five centuries to undermine the great body of the feudal aristocracy, and the better to perfect this work had formed with its own hands another body—that of the judiciary order. In the sixteenth century they spoke of the parliaments as “the strong columns on which the monarchy is supported,” but in the seventeenth the new royalty wished for no other support than its absolute power.

Nevertheless, thanks to the sale of offices, which left the same offices in the same hands, thanks to the dignity of the magistrate's lives, to the political rôles they had played on several occasions, to the *esprit de corps* which had quickly been established in the bosom of the great judiciary companies, there had been raised alongside the nobility of the sword a nobility of the robe, which seemed quite as troublesome as the other because it already had its souvenirs and regrets. It was not always easily managed. It parried attacks with that force of inertia peculiar to assemblies of aged men, which is difficult to overcome at a time when tradition stands for law. The spirit

[<sup>1</sup> If the words were not uttered the thought was certainly present. Louis XIV is known to have written on one occasion, “The nation does not constitute a body in France; it resides entirely in the person of the king.”]



[1661-1715 A.D.]

of opposition, everywhere punished, took refuge here—political opposition, scarcely sensible in the parliament of Paris, provincial opposition in the others, all religious opposition, under the form of Jansenism. One of Louis XIV's ideas which he sought to realise with the greatest perseverance was to transform the parliaments into simple courts of appeal, to put his state councils over them, even the parliament of Paris which had brought about the Fronde. In an edict of 1667 he proscribed it from enregistering ordinances within a week and he suffered no remonstrance. The following year he had torn from the parliament registers the records of all its deliberations during the civil war, in order to efface even the memory of its old-time pretensions. Besides this he changed its title of sovereign court into that of superior court, as if the first were a usurpation of royal sovereignty.

### *Submission of the Nobility*

It appeared a more difficult task to reduce the nobles. Cardinal Richelieu had razed their fortresses and cut off the heads of some of the most unruly. Mazarin had bought them or vanquished them by ruse. Louis XIV made himself their master by drawing them around him by his fêtes, dragging them from their domains, where they thought too often of their ancestors and still felt themselves free, filling his antechamber and household posts with the descendants of those who had made his fathers tremble, and forming for royalty such brilliant corteges as the representative of God on earth would wish to be surrounded by.

If they had titles and honours they had no political influence in the state. In his councils, the king, after the death of Mazarin, admitted but a single one of the old noblesse, the duke de Beauvilliers, governor of the royal children; and he chose all his ministers from those of middle conditions, in order, according to Saint-Simon's<sup>i</sup> forceful expression, to be able "to plunge them into the depths of nothingness from which he had drawn them." The French nobility never knew how, like that of England, to become a political class; it was never anything but a military caste.

### *The Third Estate*

Louis XIV preferred, following in this the ancient monarchical traditions, to be served by the middle class, more educated and, moreover, more devoted, because it did not yet feel the inconveniences of absolute power, as it had been feeling for centuries those of the feudal régime. Louis turned over to it all the financial, political, and judicial functions; he established it peacefully in the administration of the realm; he pushed it energetically towards commerce and industry—two forces of the new era—and the regard he had for those *petites gens* named Boileau, Racine, Molière, announced the coming substitution of the rights of intellect for those of birth. Louis XIV thus unknowingly paved the way for democracy in France and the Revolution. However he must not be regarded as a sort of bourgeois king, a *roi des maltôtiers*, as Saint-Simon<sup>i</sup> disdainfully calls him. His policy, the high idea he had of his person, the rigorous ceremonial which made a sort of redoubtable and inaccessible divinity of him, the *carroussels*, the brilliant fêtes—none of these recalls to mind the modest pictures of constitutional monarchies.<sup>1</sup> More than that, those nobodies whom Louis made his councillors, his ambas-

[<sup>1</sup> In 1680 the Paris *corps de ville* solemnly conferred on the king the title of Louis the Great, which, hitherto used sometimes on medals, now became *de rigneur* in official language.<sup>4</sup>]

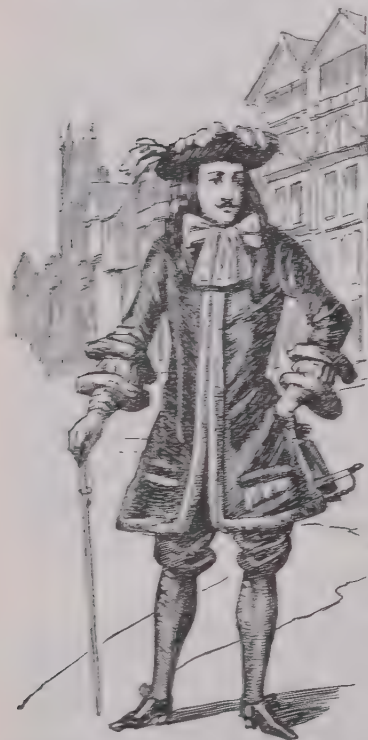
sadors, and his secretaries of state quitted their plebeian state before entering his court. They became the marquis de Louvois, the count de Pontchartrain, the marquis de Torcy. While working with the bourgeois, the grandson of Henry IV always had the desire to remain the king of the noblemen.

### LOUIS XIV AND THE CHURCH

Louis XIV conducted himself towards the clergy as he had done towards the nobility—in honouring them he watched to see that they robbed him of none of his power. The great lords, with but few exceptions, were removed from the church as they had been from the administration. Therefore the

aristocratic Saint-Simon reproaches Louis “with having ruined the episcopacy by filling it with seminarian pedants and their pupils without education and without birth”—a strange reproach from the mouth of a man who had lived with Bossuet, Fénelon, Fléchier, and Massillon, the eternal honour of the French church.

The clergy was therefore under Louis XIV one force the more at the disposal of royalty. In the affair of the *régale*, the bishops even upheld the king against Rome. The *régale* was the king's right to enjoy the revenues of certain benefices, bishoprics, and archbishoprics, during vacancies in the sees. In 1673 an edict declared all the French sees subject to the *régale*. Two bishops refused to obey and their action was approved by the pope. Louis XIV, to end the dispute, convoked an assembly of French clergy which adopted, in 1682, under the inspiration of Bossuet, four propositions which were registered by the courts and the faculty of theology. They were in substance: God gave to St. Peter and his successors no power, direct or indirect, over temporal affairs. The Gallican church approves those decrees of the Council of Constance which declare the œcumenical councils superior to the pope in spiritual affairs. The rules and customs received in the kingdom and in the Gallican church



STREET SCENE, TIME OF LOUIS XIV  
FROM AN OLD FRENCH PRINT

must remain unalterable. The pope's decisions, in matter of doctrine, shall not be irreformable until the church has accepted them.

Innocent XI neither approved nor quashed these resolutions, but he refused to grant bulls of investiture to those bishops, appointed by the government, who had been members of the assembly. The consequence was that at his death there were twenty dioceses without heads. The matter was, however, brought to a conclusion in 1693 by a compromise. Innocent XII granted the bulls of investiture and the king ceased to impose upon the theological faculties the obligation of teaching the four propositions of 1682.

[1680-1685 A.D.]

*The Protestants*

The dissenters profited nothing by the quarrel with the court of Rome.<sup>c</sup> Since the Peace of Alais the Protestants, being deprived of their political organisation, of their "towns of security," and of everything which had helped to form them into a party, had been living in obscurity, doing their best to make their enemies forget them, and carefully abstaining from taking any part in the civil troubles of the time. During the Fronde not one of them had shown any sign of life. Their attitude towards the government was that of a child in disgrace, and towards the Catholics that of a disdainful enemy. They persisted in isolating themselves from the rest of the nation, and continued to correspond with their friends in England and Holland. They were law-abiding, peaceable, and industrious citizens, and contributed their full share to the greatness and prosperity of their country by their courage and their energy.

Nevertheless, the nation continued to look on them with mistrust, as if they were foreigners; France felt as if there were a little Holland in her midst, rejoicing at the success of the greater one (with which it was then waging ineffectual war). To reunite the Protestants with the national church was a fixed idea with Louis XIV. This desire inspired his policy, and was the chief goal of all his efforts; this was to be "the noble work and special feature of his reign"; and he looked upon the enterprise as a noble one, not only from a political but from a religious point of view. He was beginning to get into a narrow devotional groove, and allowed the Jesuits to exercise a powerful influence over him. He wished to free himself from the reproach of heresy, which his conduct towards the pope had drawn down upon him, and to atone for the irregularities of his youth. He resolved to revoke the Edict of Nantes. The assembly of the clergy, the parliament of Toulouse, the Catholics in the south all advocated this measure so strongly that it appeared to be the general desire of the nation; Louvois in his ambition, Le Tellier in his fanatical piety, also did their best to urge the king on, and last, but not least, Madame de Maintenon, whose influence during the rest of his life was to be paramount, threw all the weight of her persuasions into the scale in order to bring about the revocation of this edict.

Up to this time bribery had been the chief means employed in the attempts to convert the Protestants. Richelieu had used this method with great success. Louis XIV followed his example with favourable results; flattery, favours, rewards of every kind were lavishly bestowed in the attempt to gain over the Protestants. Pensions were given to the newly converted, they were exempted from taxation, all sorts of offices were given to them over the heads of staunch Catholics. A fund was formed for making conversions, with Pellisson, a converted Protestant, as director. France was flooded with missions, sermons, tracts, and books of dogma.

Calvinism suffered such severe losses that Madame de Maintenon said, "Very soon it will be ridiculous to belong to that religion." But these methods of bribery and persuasion were not rapid enough, and harsher methods began to be used: royal edicts, parliamentary decisions, and orders issued by governors of provinces and cities rendered the preaching of the reformed doctrines difficult, made the Protestant pastors very uneasy, forbade their synods to assemble. Protestants were deprived of their pensions and of their titles of nobility; the chief burden of the taxes was laid on them; they were excluded from the king's household, from the university, from holding municipal offices. They were also forbidden to practice as



lawyers or doctors. They were expelled from financial offices, the rights of free citizenship were refused to them, they were not allowed to be members of corporations, their schools were closed, any of their places of worship which had been built since 1598 were destroyed, and their children were taken from them to be educated as Catholics. Then the Protestants began to fly from France (1682); but emigration was forbidden under pain of being sent to the galleys.

The Calvinists in the south made one last appeal to the king in March, 1684, begging him to allow them to serve God according to the dictates of their own conscience, or else to take refuge in some other country. For answer, the king sent them a number of missionaries accompanied by a detachment of dragoons, who were supposed to be the most cruel of all the French soldiers. Every day conversions by the hundred were announced to the king. On the 2nd of September all the Protestants of Montauban changed their religion by a resolution passed at a meeting in the town hall; on the 5th of October Montpellier, Castres, Lunel, etc., followed suit; then the dioceses of Gap and Embrun, then the whole of Poitou. The governor of Languedoc said that he had seen sixty thousand people converted in three days. It was thought that nothing more remained to be done, but to publicly announce the destruction of a sect which had only a few adherents left in distant provinces, among the rude inhabitants of the mountainous parts; it was necessary to strike only one more decisive blow and so complete the work for which a long series of unjust acts and the ingenious tyranny of the last fifty years had been the preparation. Père Lachaise, the king's confessor, and Louvois promised that not a single drop of blood should be shed.

#### *Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685 A.D.)*

Accordingly on the 22nd of October, 1685, an edict appeared ordaining: (1) The suppression of all the privileges which had been accorded to the Protestants by Henry IV and Louis XIII; (2) the proscription of Protestant worship throughout the kingdom (except Alsace and Strasburg); (3) the expulsion of Protestant ministers, the closing of Protestant schools, and the demolition of the churches, etc. Numerous rewards were given to those who agreed to change their religion; Calvinists were forbidden on pain of being sent to the galleys and the confiscation of their property, to go out of France; permission was given them to remain on their own property and engage in business without their worship being interfered with so long as they did not hold public services.

This edict was received in France with the greatest enthusiasm: sermons, poems, pictures, medals were produced with astounding rapidity to celebrate this great act of unity! At last the whole country was to be under one jurisdiction and under one king! Louis XIV was a second Constantine, a modern Theodosius. Never had any king performed such a wonderful achievement, nor was it likely that any parallel to it would be seen in the future. The whole of Europe was amazed at the promptitude and ease with which this great king had stamped out a heresy which had defied the efforts of six of his predecessors.

The only complaints that arose were directed against the leniency of that clause which allowed the Protestants to worship in their own fashion in private. This clause was only a lure, and Louvois wrote to the governors and those in authority: "His majesty desires that those who refuse to embrace his religion should be treated with the utmost rigour, and those

[1661-1685 A.D.]

who foolishly pride themselves on being the last to be converted are to be driven to the extremity of their endurance.” Then began a series of bloody atrocities which the king had never commanded, and which were not at all in accordance with his character for moderation. A defenceless population was delivered over to the cruel brutality of the soldiery, men were put to the torture, women were subjected to a dishonour worse than death, children were torn from their parents, houses and farms were wrecked, converts who refused to take the sacraments were sent to the galleys, as were those who harboured Protestant ministers or those who attempted to leave the kingdom. Sentence of death was pronounced against all who practised any other than the Catholic religion, against all Protestant ministers, and all who formed themselves into gatherings or held meetings. Those who were weak yielded; they were dragged to the altar and, with the executioner standing over them, forced to commit sacrilege. “Torture, abjuration, and forced communion,” says Saint-Simon,<sup>i</sup> “often all took place within twenty-four hours,” and the executioners were the guides and the sponsors of the convert. Almost all the bishops took part in these hasty irreverent practices. Most of them urged on the executioners and used every means to swell the number of conversions, for they sent an account of their triumphs to the court, and were anxious to gain as much glory and substantial recompense as possible. The king received from all quarters news and details of these persecutions; those who had abjured Protestantism and received the communion were counted by the thousand. The king gloried in his power and in his piety; the bishops sent him the most fulsome panegyrics on the great work he was doing; pulpits rang with his praises.

The Protestants fled from the country. The police were unable to prevent them. Certificates of confession were required from all travellers, sentence of death was pronounced against anyone who countenanced or assisted others in emigrating. The emigrants had been deprived of seventeen millions of francs in house and land property, the frontier was guarded by numerous troops; but all these measures were vain, and in spite of them fifty thousand families left the kingdom, and took refuge in Holland, England, Germany, and Switzerland. They consisted of nobles, tradesmen, and manufacturers. This active, energetic, and enlightened body of men, placed at the service of foreigners their talents, their swords, the secrets of French manufactures, their wealth, and a relentless hatred of the tyrant who had banished them. Their emigration did an irreparable injury to France. They were received everywhere with the greatest kindness; they were even invited to leave their country, and good positions were promised them. One part of London was peopled with silk-weavers and workers in crystal and steel; and England became the leading manufacturing nation. Brandenburg rose from its abasement; Berlin became a town; Prussia was opened up; the influence of the refugees on Frederick William's states was so marked that it is from this time that their greatness and their subsequent weight among European powers may be dated. Amsterdam built a thousand houses for them, William gave them pensions, granted them privileges, and provided them with places of worship; he formed them into a royal guard of six hundred noblemen and two regiments. He made use of their ministers, embittered by hatred, to flood Europe with pamphlets against Louis XIV. Henceforth on every battle-field the French would meet these emigrants filled with a fierce hatred of their country, and, for more than a century afterward, French soldiers found that their bitterest enemies in Germany were the descendants of these refugees.]

*The Jansenists*

Nor did Louis protect the Jansenists who were, on certain points, in disagreement with the church of Rome. The Jansenists owed their doctrine to a bishop of Ypres, named Jansenius, who died in 1638, and to the abbé of St. Cyran who had sustained some ancient opinions, which seemed to be new, upon grace and predestination. Jansenism deserves at least a passing word especially on account of the character of the men who defended it. The most illustrious of them, the great Arnauld, Lemaistre de Sacy, Nicole, and Lancelot, retired to the ancient Cistercian abbey of Port-Royal des Champs, near Versailles, when Pascal also joined them in 1654, and there, leading a solitary life, these Catholic puritans set the world an example of assiduous works of the hands and the intellect, of lively piety, and of austerity which went as far as asceticism. They wrote, for the most part in common, some excellent works which are still in use; they had some illustrious pupils, among others Racine; they won over to a great part of their doctrine almost the entire magistracy.<sup>c</sup>

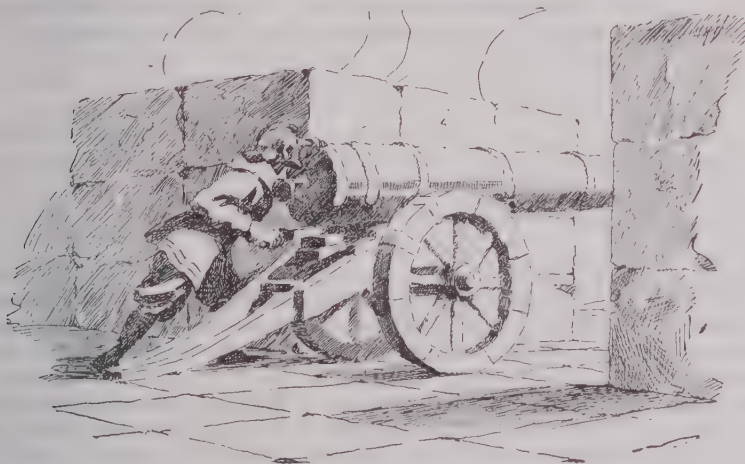
The Jesuits then monopolised the authority and influence of the church, whose spirit and moral code they attempted to modify, and adapt to the present courtly and despotic times. The studious, reasoning, and ascetic brethren of Port-Royal saw the tendency of the Jesuit preaching, the false and worldly basis of their creed. It was on the subject of Jansenism that the Jesuits had declared themselves, and had come forth in the arena of argument. The pious wits of Port-Royal seized the opportunity, took up a cause sufficiently absurd in its fundamental dogmas, but which they were enabled to support by battering the still more absurd outworks of the Jesuits. The latter won the pope to their side, and obtained from the head of the church a condemnation of the tenets of Jansenius. The polemic writers of Port-Royal bowed to his holiness, confessed that he was infallible as a high priest, in condemning such and such belief, but most fallible as a critic, since not one of these propositions, so lustily condemned, were to be found in Jansenius. This ingenuus effrontery succeeded; for, under colour of disputing about such abstractions, Pascal and Arnauld attacked their enemies in more vulnerable points—in their moral laxity, their sophistic logic, their worldliness, courtliness, and servility. Louis XIV took the Jesuit side. Many of the courtiers, who dared no longer draw the sword in rebellion, ventured to move the tongue, and exercise thought at least in independence. Amongst the most distinguished sectaries of Port-Royal was the duchess de Longueville, sister of Condé, the famous partisan of the Fronde, and mistress of La Rochefoucauld. Her hôtel, once the resort of the coadjutor [de Retz] and his party, of the hot cavaliers that drove the court from Paris, was now the lurking-place and concealment of the Jansenists. She braved the royal authority at all times, whether in the cause of the noblesse or of religion; gallant and dissolute in the Fronde, in Jansenism rigid and devout. "She was Jansenist in truth and heart," says Brienne, "just as she had indulged her gallantries with the same sincerity, and always drums beating" (the expression means openly and boldly): "a princess of the blood need fear nothing; and Madame de Longueville marched on her way with head erect." Although the Jansenism of Pascal and of Arnauld was the protestation of reason, common sense, and deep religious feeling, against the corruptions of the Jesuits, that of Madame de Longueville and her class must be considered as a kind of covert opposition to the court, and to the despotic will of the sovereign. The froward love of independence, that could no longer



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exercise itself in political intrigue, found more harmless vent in criticism and polemics.<sup>k</sup>

The outcome of the Jansenist disputes was that in 1709 the king caused the buildings of Port-Royal des Champs to be levelled to the ground.<sup>1</sup> The bodies of the inoffensive solitaires were disinterred, and dogs were seen quarrelling over them.



CANNON USED IN THE TIME OF LOUIS XIV

#### THE POLICE

The police was the creation of Louis XIV. In 1687 he appointed a magistrate to oversee the Paris police, Nicholas de la Reynie, who was succeeded in 1697 by the marquis d'Argenson — these were the first two *lieutenants de police*. They established order, decency, and security in the city. Now commenced the system of public lighting; from the 1st of November to the 1st of March, lanterns, burning candles, were placed at the ends and in the middle of every street. There were five thousand of these lights in Paris. The watch was augmented and reorganised. Firemen replaced the Capuchins in the fire service. The narrow streets, often cut up and always filthy, were cleaned, widened, and paved; coaches and cabs for the public were introduced; Pascal even devised the omnibuses, which did not succeed at that time. The custom of going about Paris on horseback was no longer kept up except by a few obstinate representatives of the olden times.

The police attended to other things; it censured all writings,<sup>2</sup> it held up the post, and read in what was afterwards called the *cabinet noir*, all suspected correspondence, and to relieve the government of too slow methods of justice it multiplied the *lettres de cachet*<sup>3</sup> which removed all guarantee of

<sup>1</sup> In 1669 the sister house of Port-Royal de Paris was placed under Jesuit management. It was to this house that Clement XI ordered the transference of the property of Port-Royal des Champs, the year before the buildings were destroyed. The aged sisters were dispersed.

<sup>2</sup> In 1694 a printer and a publisher were hanged for libel, by sentence of De la Reynie. Several persons were interrogated or died in the Bastille for the same reason. The author of the pamphlet against the archbishop of Rheims was imprisoned in an iron cage at Mont St. Michel.

<sup>3</sup> These were letters written by order of the king, countersigned by a secretary of state, and sealed with the king's seal, by virtue of which the police arrested a citizen, and imprisoned him without trial, as long as it pleased the government, without his being seen or allowed to receive letters from anyone.

personal liberty to citizens. The new power charged with the overseeing of persons and opinions, thus became like an ever-open eye, always defiant of royalty. Thus were all the orders of state, all the existing authorities, all the conditions — parliament, nobility, bourgeois, clergy, and dissenters — reduced and dominated. Vauban, Catinat, and Fénelon resisted the contagion. Condé himself, in spite of his rank, his services, and his spirit, became a courtier. Turenne alone managed to keep a position from which he could tell the king many truths which others dared not repeat.<sup>c</sup>

#### THE COURT OF THE GRAND MONARCH

Louis XIV put so much brilliancy and magnificence into his court that the smallest details of its life seem interesting to posterity, to such an extent were they an object of curiosity to all the courts of Europe and to all his contemporaries. The splendour of his government shone on his pettiest actions.

That is why no historian has failed to write of the early affections of Louis XIV for the baroness de Beauvais, for Mademoiselle d'Argencourt, for the niece of Cardinal Mazarin, who was married to the count de Soissons, the father of Prince Eugene, and above all for Marie Mancini, her sister, who afterwards married the constable Colonna.

The court, after the triumphant return of Mazarin after the Peace of the Pyrenees, busied itself with games, and the ballet, with comedy, which, being only new born, had not yet become an art, and with tragedy, which had become a sublime art in the hands of Pierre Corneille. A *curé* of St. Germain l'Auxerrois, who inclined to the rigorous ideas of the Jansenists, had often written to the queen against these spectacles, ever since the first years of the regency. He claimed that a person would be damned for being present at them. He even had this anathema signed by seven doctors of the Sorbonne, but the abbé de Beaumont, the king's preceptor, provided himself with more approbations of doctors, than the strict *curé* had with condemnations. He thus quieted the scruples of the queen, and, when he became archbishop of Paris, he gave his authority to the opinion he had supported as abbé.

There had been one continual succession of fêtes, entertainments, and galantries since the marriage of the king. Interrupted by the death of Mazarin, they were redoubled on the marriage of Monsieur, brother of the king, with Henrietta of England, sister of Charles II [which took place twenty days after Mazarin's death]. After the cardinal's death the court became the centre of amusements and the model for other courts. The king prided himself on giving fêtes which should cast those of Vaux into oblivion.

The good taste of society had not yet received its full perfection at court. The queen-mother, Anne of Austria, began to be fond of retirement.<sup>1</sup> The reigning queen could scarcely speak French and her goodness was her only merit. The princess of England, the queen's sister-in-law, brought to court the attraction of a kindly and animated style of conversation, which was soon seconded by her reading of good works and her sure and fine taste. She perfected herself in the language, which she still wrote poorly at the time of her marriage. She inspired a fresh mental stimulus, and introduced graces and a politeness into court, of which the rest of Europe had scarcely an idea. Madame had all the wit of her brother Charles II, embellished by the charms

[<sup>1</sup> Anne of Austria died of cancer January 20th, 1666.]

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of her sex, by the talent and the desire to please. The court of Louis XIV breathed forth a gallantry which a sense of propriety made more piquant. That which reigned at the court of Charles II was bolder, and too much grossness disfigured its amusements.

There was at first between Madame and the king a great deal of sprightly coquetry and a secret understanding, which was shown in little attentions often repeated.<sup>1</sup> The king sent her verses; she answered them. It chanced that the same man was at once the confidant of the king and of Madame in this ingenious intercourse. This was the marquis of Dangeau. He conducted the correspondence for both king and princess; thus serving both of them without letting one suspect what he was doing for the other.

### *Mademoiselle de la Vallière*

These pastimes gave way to the more serious and more protracted passion which the king had for Mademoiselle de la Vallière, maid of honour to Madame. He experienced with her the rare pleasure of being loved solely for himself. She was for two years the hidden object of all the gallant amusements, all the entertainments which the king gave. A young *valet de chambre* of the king, named Belloc, composed several recitals which were interspersed between dances, sometimes in the queen's, sometimes in Madame's apartments, and these recitals expressed with an air of mystery the secrets of their hearts, which soon ceased to be a secret.

All these public entertainments which the king gave were so many homages to his mistress. In 1662, a tournament (*carrousel*) was held opposite the Tuileries in a large enclosure which has retained its name from this event, Place du Carrousel. There were five *quadrilles*. The king was at the head of the Romans; his brother of the Persians, the prince of Condé of the Turks, the duke d'Enghien, his son, of the Indians, the duke of Guise of the Americans.

The queen-mother, the reigning queen, the queen of England, widow of Charles I, forgetting for the moment her misfortunes, were under a dais to see this spectacle. The count de Saulx, son of the duke de Lesdiguières, took the prize and received it from the hand of the queen-mother. These fêtes reanimated more than ever the taste for devices and emblems, which tournaments had formerly made the fashion, and which had lasted after them.

In 1662, an antiquarian called D'Ouvrier designed for Louis XIV the emblem of a sun darting its rays on a globe, with the words: *Nec pluribus impar*. The idea imitated somewhat a Spanish device made for Philip II, and which was more appropriate for the Spanish king, who owned the best part of the New World and so many states in the old, than for a young king of France who as yet gave only hopes. This device had a prodigious success. The *armoires* of the king, the crown furniture, the tapestries, the carvings, were decorated with it. The king never wore it in his tournaments.

The fête of Versailles, in 1664, surpassed that of the carrousel by its

[<sup>1</sup> Madame's husband, Philip duke of Orleans, who had assumed that title on the death of Gaston in 1660, was a man of licentious habits, and although he distinguished himself in war, as we shall see, his effeminacy was of a most marked type. There is no doubt that Monsieur was most indifferent to his wife, and many historians, including Michelet,<sup>2</sup> believe that Louis XIV was the father of her children. Of these, two daughters arrived at maturity — Marie Louise, who married Charles II of Spain, and Anne Marie, who married Victor Amadeus of Savoy, afterwards king of Sardinia. Madame died 1670, under circumstances which will be related in the next chapter, and which were open to the suspicion of poison. The following year Monsieur married the princess palatine — Charlotte Elizabeth. She was the mother of the duke of Orleans, regent of the realm, and died in 1722.]



originality, by its magnificence, and by the pleasures of mind which, being joined to the splendours of these diversions, added an attraction and graces which no fête before had ever had. Versailles began to be a charming place of abode.

The 5th of May the king came there with the court, composed of six hundred persons, who, together with their suites, were entertained at his expense, as well as all those who assisted in preparing the entertainments. Nothing was ever lacking at these fêtes except buildings especially con-

structed for giving them, such as were raised by the Greeks and Romans. The quickness, however, with which theatres, amphitheatres, and porticoes were erected, and ornamented with as much magnificence as good taste, was a marvel which added to the illusion and which, diversified since in a thousand different ways, increased the charm of these exhibitions.

There was first a sort of tournament. Those who were to take part appeared on the first day as in a review; they were preceded by heralds at arms, by pages and equerries who carried their devices and their shields. On the shields were written verses composed by Périigni and Benserade. This latter especially had a singular talent for those gallant verses in which he always made delicate and piquant allusions to the character of the persons, to the personages of antiquity or of fable which were represented, and to the passions which animated the court. The king represented Roger;



MADemoisELLE DE LA VALLIÈRE  
(1644-1710)

all the crown diamonds glittered on his coat and on the horse he rode. The queens and three hundred ladies, under triumphal arches, watched this entrance.

The king with all eyes fastened upon him distinguished only those of La Vallière. The fête was for her alone; she enjoyed it hidden in the crowd. The cavalcade was followed by a gilded car, 18 feet high, 15 feet wide, and 24 feet long, representing the chariot of the sun. The four ages, of gold, silver, bronze, and iron, the signs of the zodiac, the seasons, the hours, followed this car on foot. Everything was in character. Shepherds carried pieces of the barrier which were adjusted to the sound of trumpets, followed at intervals by bagpipes and violins. Certain persons who followed Apollo's car came first to the queens to recite verses appropriate to the place and time, to the king and the ladies. When the races were finished and night was come, four thousand great torches lit up the space wherein fêtes were given. Tables were served by two hundred persons, representing the seasons, fauns, sylvan creatures, dryads, together with shepherds, vintagers, harvesters. Pan and Diana advanced on a moving mountain from which

[1661-1715 A.D.]

they descended to place on tables the most delicious products of field and forest. Behind these tables in the half circle, a theatre filled with performers arose. The arcades which surrounded the tables and theatre were ornamented with five hundred green and silver chandeliers, holding candles; a gilded balustrade shut in this vast enclosure. These fêtes, so far superior to those invented in romances, lasted for seven days. The king carried off the prize of the games four times, and then let other cavaliers contest for the prizes he had gained, which he abandoned to them. The comedy of the *Princesse d'Élide*, although not one of Molière's best, was one of the most agreeable attractions of these entertainments, on account of an infinity of fine allegories on the customs of the times and by the apposite observations which form an agreeable feature of such entertainments, but which lose their point for posterity.

The chief glory of these entertainments, which in France perfected good taste, good form, and talent, came from the fact that they detracted nothing from the continual labours of the monarch. Without these labours he would have been able only to hold a court, he would not have known how to reign; and if the magnificent amusements of this court had increased the misery of the people, they would have been only odious; but the same man who had given these fêtes had also given the people bread in the famine of 1662. He caused grain to be brought, which the rich bought at a low price, and which he gave to poor families at the gate of the Louvre. He had returned three millions of taxes to the people; no part of the interior administration had been neglected.<sup>b</sup> Yet it cannot be overlooked that bad economies underlay most of these financial measures,—as, indeed, of all Colbert's work.<sup>a</sup>

The legate Chigi, sent by Pope Alexander VII, arrived at Versailles in the midst of all these enjoyments to render satisfaction to the king for the assault of the papal guards.<sup>b</sup> This attack had taken place on August 20th, 1662, at Rome. It precipitated a quarrel very similar to that which had taken place in London the preceding year. The liveried servants of the duke de Créqui, the ambassador, had a fight with the Corsican guard; one of them was killed, the duke was insulted and his coach fired upon. Louis XIV demanded reparation. The court of Rome attempted, according to the custom of the times, to gain time; the king insisted, sent the papal nuncio to the frontier under escort, occupied the county of Venaissin, sent troops into the duchies of Parma and Modena in Italy, and finally threatened war. Alexander VII, seeing that these menaces were serious, gave in (1664). His own brother, the legate Fabio Chigi, brought in person the desired satisfaction. Louis XIV then gave back Avignon and Venaissin.<sup>c</sup> This visit of the papal delegate revealed to the court a new spectacle. The grand ceremonies were fêtes for the public. The honours paid him made the satisfaction more brilliant. Seated under a dais, he received the greetings of the superior courts, of the municipal courts, and of the clergy. He entered Paris to the sound of cannon, having the great Condé at his right and the son of that prince at his left; and in this manner he came to humiliate himself, Rome, and the pope, before a king who had not yet drawn a sword. After the audience he dined with Louis XIV, and the chief thought of all was to treat him magnificently and give him pleasure.

All this gave to the court of Louis XIV an air of grandeur which affected all the other courts of Europe. The king wanted this *éclat*, which was attached to his person, to reflect on all that surrounded him. To distinguish his principal courtiers he invented blue cassocks embroidered with

gold and silver. The permission to wear them was a great favour to men influenced chiefly by vanity. They were sought after almost like the collars of the order. We may mention here, since we are speaking of details, that it was the fashion then to wear cassocks over a doublet ornamented with ribbons, and over this cassock passed a shoulder band to which the sword was attached. A kind of lace band was worn around the neck and on the head a hat decorated with two rows of feathers. This fashion, which lasted until 1684, became that of all Europe with the exception of Spain and Poland. Almost everywhere people prided themselves on imitating the court of Louis XIV.

Louis established order in his household, regulated ranks and factions, and created new offices in connection with his person, such as that of the grand-master of his wardrobe. He re-established the tables instituted by Francis I, and augmented them. There were twelve for the officers of the king's household, which were served with as much niceness and profusion as those of many sovereigns. He wanted all strangers to be invited to them, and this attention lasted during all his reign. There was another attention which was even more select and polite. When he had the pavilions of Marly built in 1679, all the ladies found a complete toilet-set in their apartments; nothing which belonged to commodious luxury was forgotten. Whoever was on a journey could give repasts in his apartments, and was served there with the same delicacy as the master. These little things acquire value only when they are sustained by greater ones. In everything which the king did might be seen splendour and generosity. He made a present of 200,000 francs to the daughters of his ministers on their marriage.

One can easily imagine the effect which this magnificence had in Europe. The French were not the only ones who praised him: twelve panegyrics were pronounced on Louis XIV in different towns of Italy—an homage rendered neither from fear nor hope of favour, which the marquis Zampieri sent to the king.

He continued to extend his patronage to letters and to the arts. Proofs of this are the particular gratuities of about 4,000 livres to Racine, the fortune of Despréaux, that of Quinault, and above all that of Lully and of all the artists who consecrated their work to him. The king danced in ballets until the year 1670. He was then thirty-two years old. The tragedy of *Britannicus* was played before him at St. Germain; he was struck by these verses:

*Pour mérite premier, pour vertu singulière,  
Il excelle à traîner un char dans la carrière,  
À disputer des prix indignes de ses mains,  
À se donner lui-même en spectacle aux Romains.*

After that he never again danced in public: the poet had reformed the monarch. His union with La Vallière still continued in spite of his frequent infidelities to her. These infidelities cost him little trouble. He never found women who resisted him, and he always came back to the one who, by the sweetness and goodness of her character, by her sincere affection, and even by the chains of habit, had subjugated him without the aid of art. But beginning with the year 1669, La Vallière perceived that Madame de Montespan was gaining the ascendancy; she fought against it with her usual sweetness; she supported for a long time, and almost without complaining, the pain of being the witness of her rival's triumph: she still thought herself happy in being even thought of by the king, whom she continued to love, and in seeing him without being loved by him.



[1670-1675 A.D.]

Finally in 1675 she embraced the resource of tender souls, which need deep and intense sentiments to subjugate them. She thought that God alone could succeed her lover in her heart. Her conversion became just as celebrated as her affection. She became a Carmelite at Paris and persevered in her resolve. To wear haircloth, to walk with bare feet, to fast rigorously, to sing at night in chorus in an unknown tongue—all this did not repulse the delicacy of a woman accustomed to so much glory, luxury, and pleasure. She lived this austere life from 1675 to 1710, under the simple name of Louise de la Miséricorde.

It is known that when Sister Louise de la Miséricorde was told of the death of the duke de Vermandois, whom she had borne to the king, she said: "I ought to weep for his birth more than for his death." One daughter was left to her, who resembled the king the most of all his children. She married the prince Armand de Conti, nephew of the Great Condé.

### *Madame de Montespan*

In the meantime the marquise de Montespan was enjoying the king's favour with much *éclat* and authority. Athénaïs de Mortemar, wife of the marquis de Montespan, her elder sister the marquise de Thiange, and her younger sister, for whom she obtained the abbey of Fontevault, were the most beautiful women of their day, and all three joined to this distinction singular attractions of mind. The duke de Vivonne, their brother, and marshal of France, was also one of the men at court who had the most good taste and was best read. It was to him that the king said one day: "But what is the good of reading?" The duke de Vivonne, who was stout and red faced, answered: "Reading does for the mind what your partridges do to my cheeks."

These four persons were universally popular by a singular style of conversation mingled with pleasantry, naïveté, and wit, which was known as *l'esprit de Mortemar*. They all wrote with an ease and grace peculiar to them.

Madame de Montespan's triumph burst forth during a journey which the king made to Flanders in 1670. The ruin of the Dutch was prepared on this journey in the midst of entertainments. It was a continual fête, accompanied with great pomp. The king, who made all his war expeditions on horseback, made this one for the first time in a closed carriage. Postchaises had not yet been invented. The queen, Madame, her sister-in-law, and the marquise de Montespan were in this superb equipage, followed by many others, and when Madame de Montespan was alone she had four



MADAME DE MONTESPAN  
(1641-1707)

bodyguards at the doors of her carriage. The dauphin came next with his court. Mademoiselle with hers; it was before the fatal event of her marriage; she took part in all these triumphs in peace and saw with complaisance her lover, the king's favourite, at the head of his company of guards. The most beautiful crown furniture was carried to the towns where they slept. In every city they found a masked or dress ball, or fireworks. All his military retinue accompanied the king and all his household retinue followed or preceded him. The tables were kept as at St. Germain. In this pomp the court visited all the conquered cities. The principal ladies of Brussels, of Ghent came to see this magnificence. The king invited them to his table. He made them very handsome presents. All the officers of the garrison troops received gratuities. His liberality cost the king several times fifteen hundred gold louis a day.

All the honour, all the homage was for Madame de Montespan, except what duty gave to the queen. Nevertheless this lady did not share the secrets of state. The king knew how to distinguish affairs of state from pleasure. The unfortunate experience of a maid of honour to the queen in 1673 gave rise to a new court order. The danger attached to the position of a young girl in a gallant and voluptuous court caused twelve ladies of the palace to be substituted for the twelve maids of honour, who had graced the court and the queen's presence. After that the queens' households were composed in that manner. This arrangement made the court larger and more magnificent, by establishing in it the husbands and families of these ladies, which increased the society and spread greater opulence.

### *Poisoning: The Brinvilliers Case*

About 1670 the crime of poisoning began to be prevalent in France. This revenge of cowards had not been employed during the horrors of the civil war, but, by a singular fatality, had infected France in the time of glory and of the pleasures which softened manners, even as it found its way into ancient Rome in the fairest days of the republic.

Two Italians, one of whom bore the name of Exili, worked for a long time with a German apothecary called Glaser, in quest of the philosopher's stone. In this enterprise the two Italians lost the little they had and endeavoured, by crime, to repair the harm done by their folly; they secretly sold poisons. Confession, the greatest curb to human wickedness but which is abused in the idea that one may perform the crimes one is sure of expiating, was the means of informing the grand penitentiary of Paris that certain persons had died of poison; he apprised the government. The two Italians were suspected, and put in the Bastille; one of the two died there; Exili remained there without being convicted; and from the depths of his prison he spread through Paris those dark secrets which cost the lives of the civil lieutenant D'Aubrai and his family, and which finally led to the establishment of the Chamber of Poisons, called the *Chambre Ardente*.

Love was the prime source of these horrible tragedies. The marquis of Brinvilliers, son-in-law of the civil lieutenant D'Aubrai, had in his house Sainte-Croix, the captain of his regiment, a man with too handsome a face: his wife warned him of the consequences; the husband persisted in letting the young man remain in the house with his wife, a young, beautiful, and susceptible woman. What might have been expected happened: they fell in love with each other. The civil lieutenant, father of the marquise, was harsh and imprudent enough to solicit a *lettre de cachet* and get the captain, who

[1670-1685 A.D.]

needed only to be returned to his regiment, sent to the Bastille. Sainte-Croix was unfortunately put in a room with Exili : this Italian taught him how to revenge himself ; the results make one shudder. The marquise did not attempt the life of her husband, who had had some indulgence for a love of which he was himself the cause, but the fury of her vengeance induced her to poison her father, her two brothers, and her sister. Amidst so many crimes she was religious ; she often went to confession, and when she was arrested at Liège a general confession was even found written in her handwriting, which served not as a proof against her but as presumptive evidence. It is not true that she tried her poisons in the hospitals as the people said, and as written in the *Causes célèbres*, the work of a briefless barrister (François Gabot de Pitaval) and made for the people ; but it is true that she as well as Sainte-Croix had secret connections with persons afterwards accused of the same crimes. She was burned in 1676 after having had her head cut off. But from 1670, when Exili had begun to make poisons, down to 1680 this crime infected Paris. It cannot be concealed that Penautier, the receiver-general of the clergy and a friend of this woman, was accused some time afterwards of having put his secrets in practice and that it cost him half his wealth to suppress the indictment.

The Bavarian princess, wife of Monseigneur,<sup>1</sup> at first added brilliancy and vivacity to this court. The marquise de Montespan still attracted the principal attention but finally she ceased to please, and the violent transports of her grief did not bring back a heart that was forsaking her. However, she still kept her place at court, through her high position, being superintendent of the queen's household, and with the king through habit and through her authority. The youth and beauty of Mademoiselle de Fontanges, a son she had borne to the king in 1680, the title of duchess she had received, kept Madame de Maintenon away from the first place, to which she did not then dare to aspire but which she afterwards obtained. The duchess de Fontanges, however, and her son died in 1681.

The marquise de Montespan, although she no longer had an open rival, none the less did not possess the heart tired of her and of her complaints. When men are no longer in their youth they almost all have need of the society of an agreeable woman. Above all the weight of affairs makes this consolation necessary. The new favourite, Madame de Maintenon, who felt the secret power she was gaining every day, bore herself with that art so natural to women and which is never displeasing to men. She wrote one day to Madame de Frontenac, her cousin, in whom she placed an entire confidence : " I always send him away dissatisfied but never discouraged." During this time, when her favour was increasing and Madame de Montespan was nearing her fall, these two rivals saw each other every day, now with a secret bitterness, now with a passing confidence which the necessity of speaking to each other and the weariness of constraint sometimes put into their interviews. They agreed to write, each from her point of view, memoirs of all that happened at court. The work never went very far. Madame de Montespan took pleasure in reading selections from these memoirs to her friends, in the last years of her life. The pious devotion which was joined to all these secret intrigues further strengthened the favour of Madame de Maintenon and weakened that of Madame de Montespan. The king reproached himself for his attachment to a married woman and felt this scruple still more since he

[<sup>1</sup> By this title was known the "grand dauphin" Louis, only child of Louis XIV and his queen, born in 1661. The dauphin married in 1680 the princess Marie Anne Christine Victoire of Bavaria.]



had begun to feel no more love for her. This embarrassing situation continued until 1685, a year made memorable by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Very different scenes were to be seen at that time — on one side the despair and flight of a part of the nation, on the other new fêtes at Versailles; Trianon and Marly built; nature in all these places forced with delights, and gardens in which every art was exhausted. The marriage of the grandson of the Great Condé with Mademoiselle de Nantes, daughter of the king and Madame de Montespan, was the last triumph of this mistress who began to retire from court.

### *The Retirement of Montespan*

The king afterwards gave in marriage two other children he had had by her: Mademoiselle de Blois to the duke of Chartres, and the duke du Maine to Louise Bénédicte de Bourbon, granddaughter of the Great Condé and sister of Monsieur le Duc,<sup>1</sup> a princess celebrated for her wit and liking for the arts.

Before the celebration of the marriage of Monsieur le Duc with Mademoiselle de Nantes, the marquis de Seignelay in honour of that event gave the king a fête worthy of that monarch in the gardens of Sceaux, which had been planted by Le Nôtre with as much taste as those of Versailles. The idyll of Peace composed by Racine was performed on that occasion. At Versailles there was a new tournament and after the marriage the king displayed a singular magnificence, for which Cardinal Mazarin had given the first idea in 1656.

Four booths were put up in the salon at Marly, filled with the richest and most select products of the industry of Parisian workmen. These four booths were at the same time so many splendid decorations representing the four seasons of the year. Madame de Montespan presided over one with Monseigneur. Her rival, Madame de Maintenon, was in another with the duke du Maine. The newly married couple each had charge of one: Monsieur le Duc with Madame de Thiange; and Madame la Duchesse, whom propriety did not permit to have one with a man on account of her extreme youth, was with the duchess de Chevreuse. The so-called gentlemen and ladies *du voyage* drew lots for the jewels with which the booths were decorated. The king then made presents to the whole court in a manner worthy of a king. Cardinal Mazarin's lottery was less ingenious and less brilliant. These lotteries had been formerly put into fashion by the Roman emperors, but not one of them ever relieved its magnificence with so much gallantry.

After the marriage of her daughter Madame de Montespan did not again appear at court. She lived a very dignified life at Paris. She had a large income, but it was a life annuity, and the king always paid her a pension of 1,000 gold louis a month. She went every year to take the waters at Bourbon, and there married off the girls of the neighbourhood, whom she endowed. She was no longer at the age when the imagination, affected by lively impressions, sends one to the Carmelites. She died at Bourbon in 1707.

One year after the marriage of Mademoiselle de Nantes with Monsieur le Duc, the prince of Condé died at Fontainebleau, at the age of sixty-six, of an illness which was hastened by his desire to go to see Madame la Duchesse, who had smallpox.

[<sup>1</sup> Louis de Bourbon-Condé, who was the father of Louis XV's prime minister.]

[1686 A.D.]

*Madame de Maintenon*

Meanwhile, after the marriage of Madame la Duchesse, after the total eclipse of the mother, the victorious Madame de Maintenon achieved such an influence and inspired Louis XIV with so much tenderness and such scruples, that the king, by the advice of Père Lachaise, married her secretly in the month of January, 1686,<sup>1</sup> in the small chapel in the apartments occupied afterwards by the duke of Burgundy. There was no contract, no stipulation. The archbishop of Paris, Harlay de Chanvalon, pronounced the benediction, the confessor assisting. Montchevreuil and Bontemps, first valet de chambre, were the witnesses. Louis XIV was at the time in his forty-eighth year and the woman he espoused in her fifty-second. This sovereign, crowned with glory, desired to combine with the fatigues of governing the innocent joys of private life; this marriage bound him to nothing incompatible with his rank; it was always a problem to the court. Since Madame de Maintenon was really married, it respected her as the king's choice, without treating her as queen.



MADAME DE MAINTENON  
(1635-1719)

She was of an old family, granddaughter of Théodore Agrippa d'Aubigné, gentleman of the chamber to Henry IV. His father, Constant d'Aubigné, wishing to establish himself in business in the Carolinas, applied to the English government, and was thrown into the prison of the château Trompette, from which he escaped with the assistance of the daughter of the governor of the prison, a gentleman from Bordeaux named Cadillac. Constant d'Aubigné married his benefactress in 1627 and took her with him to the Carolinas. Returning with her to France after several years, both were imprisoned at Niort in Poitou, by order of the court. In this prison was born, in 1635, Françoise d'Aubigné, destined to know all the greatest hardships of life as well as the highest favours of fortune. Taken at the age of three to America (Martinique), brought back an orphan of twelve years, brought up with the greatest severity by Madame de Neuillant, mother of the duchess de Navailles her relative, she was only too glad to marry in 1651 Paul Scarron, who lived near her in the rue d'Enfer. Scarron came of an old family of parliament, distinguished by its important matrimonial alliances; but his profession of burlesque poet lowered him while making him popular. It was nevertheless a stroke of fortune for Mademoiselle d'Aubigné to marry this man, deformed in mind and body, and with very modest means. She abjured Calvinism, her own religion as well as that of her ancestors, before

[<sup>1</sup> The queen Maria Theresa had died July 30th, 1683, quite suddenly. She held so little place at court that the event was scarcely noticed.]

this marriage. Her beauty and wit soon made her distinguished. She was eagerly sought after by the best society of Paris, and this time of her youth was no doubt the happiest period of her life. After the death of her husband, in 1660, she was for a long time unable to obtain from the king a modest pension of 1,500 livres which Scarron had enjoyed. Finally, after several years, the king granted her one or two thousand, saying, "Madame, I have made you wait a long time, but you have so many friends that my only distinction could be in not being one of them." Meanwhile it is proved, by the letters of Madame de Maintenon, that she owed to Madame de Montespan the slight assistance she received to relieve her poverty. It was remembered several years later, when it became necessary to bring up secretly the duke du Maine, son of the king by the marquise de Montespan, born in 1672. The duke du Maine was born with a deformed foot. The chief physician, D'Aquin, who was in the secret, decided that the child should be taken to the baths at Barèges. It was necessary to find a confidential person to be intrusted with this charge. The king suggested Madame Scarron. Louvois went secretly to Paris to propose this journey to her. From that time on she was in charge of the education of the duke du Maine—chosen for this duty by the king and not by Madame de Montespan, as has erroneously been said.

She wrote directly to the king; her letters pleased him greatly. This was the origin of her good fortune—her shrewdness did the rest. The king, who at first did not like her, passed from aversion to confidence and from confidence to love. The letters which we have of hers are of much greater importance than they would seem: they show that mixture of religion and gallantry, of dignity and weakness, which are often found in the human heart, and which certainly were in that of Louis XIV. Madame de Maintenon seemed to be filled at the same time with an ambition and a devoutness which never appeared to conflict. Her confessor, Gobelin, approved equally of both: he was spiritual guide as well as courtier; his penitent, having become ungrateful towards Madame de Montespan, always dissembled this feeling. Her confessor encouraged her in her aspirations. She called religion to the assistance of her waning charms to supplant her benefactress, now become her rival.

This strange mixture of love and scruple on the part of the king, of ambition and devoutness on the part of the new mistress, seemed to have lasted from 1681 to 1686, the date of their marriage. Her elevation was for her only a seclusion. Shut up in her apartments, which were on the same floor as those of the king, she limited herself to the society of two or three ladies, retiring like herself—she saw even them very rarely. The king came to her apartments every day after supper, and remained until midnight. There he worked with his ministers, while Madame de Maintenon read, or occupied herself with needlework; she never attempted to speak on affairs of state, seemed often to ignore them, putting far from her any appearance of intrigue or plotting; much more occupied in humouring him who governed than seeking to govern, in managing her income, and expending it with the greatest cautiousness.

Louis XIV in marrying Madame de Maintenon gained only an agreeable and submissive companion. The sole public distinction which testified to her secret elevation was, that during mass she occupied one of those small gilded stalls which were supposed to be only for the king and queen. Beyond that, no display, no grandeur. The devoutness with which she had inspired the king and which had led to her marriage, became gradually a true and profound sentiment, which age and ennui served to strengthen. She already



[1661-1715 A.D.]

posed at the court and before the king as a foundress by gathering together at Noisy several young girls of the nobility; and the king had already set apart the revenues of the abbey of St. Denis for that budding community. St. Cyr was built at the foot of the park of Versailles in 1686.

On the death of the king she retired for life to St. Cyr. What is surprising, is that the king left her almost nothing. He simply recommended her to the duke of Orleans. She asked for a pension of only 24,000 livres, which was scrupulously paid her, until her death on April 15th, 1719.<sup>b</sup>

Turning now from this survey of the court, let us examine the effect of Louis XIV's policy on the nation at large.

#### EFFECT OF LOUIS XIV'S POLICY ON THE NATION

Louis XIV's reign falls into two parts, easy to distinguish, the one from the other; the first covers from 1661 to 1683, the second, and much the longer, from 1683 to 1715. In the first period, Louis XIV found four men of genius, who were also scrupulously honest men, to uphold and even direct him in everything concerning the internal government, diplomacy, warfare, and defence of the kingdom. In an equal degree Colbert, Lionne, Turenne, and Vauban exercised a salutary and fruitful influence over the king's mind, never divorcing the welfare of the kingdom from that of the king, and seeking before all else the greatness or the security of the empire by adopting the best of the measures which had proved so successful under Henry IV, Richelieu, and Mazarin. The profound reverence which Colbert, more especially, had for the memory of Richelieu, whom he wished the king to take as his model, provoked Louis' jests. "When any important matter was under discussion," says a contemporary chronicle, "the late king would often exclaim, 'Colbert there will tell us: Sire, the great Cardinal Richelieu.' Which, however, did not prevent Colbert from pursuing his object, and moulding the king in Richelieu's likeness."

In the second period, Louis, prematurely aged, disillusioned, and ill, reduced to a stern performance of his duties as a man and a Christian by the froward influence of an obstinate and ambitious woman, drew inspiration from none but narrow ideals, applying the most fatal maxims to home government and foreign policy. He yielded to the advice of persons whom he had for long encouraged to flatter his prejudices, and who urged him along a path of bloody repressions. Louvois, Madame de Maintenon, Chamillard, and Villeroi were the real wielders of authority. They sacrificed the well-being of the kingdom to their own interest, which they sought to confound with the interests of the crown. They prepared the way for the ruin of the state by the most disastrous home measures, while they ruined the prestige of France abroad by changing the character of her policy.<sup>m</sup>

The trouble was not only in the royal household; it also threatened to be in the state; for Louis, violating all laws civil and religious, placed the legitimated princes side by side with the princes of the blood. He forced the court to pay equal respect to both; and public morality received a blow from which it was slow to recover. The lessons in scandal which came from the throne were not lost, and the corruption, which was fermenting in spite of the apparent austerity of the last years, was to break out under the new reign without restraint and without shame. Those dukes of Orleans and Vendôme, given up to filthy debauches, that duke d'Antin surprised in a flagrant act of theft, and so many others who contrived at play to correct the chances of fortune; those princesses of the blood who at Marly

[1661-1715 A.D.]

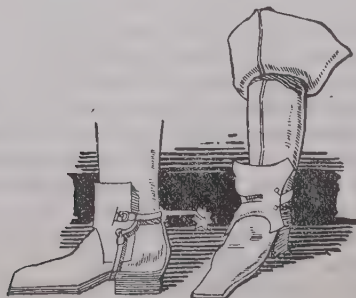
within two steps of the king and Madame de Maintenon, send for such strange pastimes<sup>1</sup>—that court in fine which, according to Saint-Simon,<sup>i</sup> “sweated hypocrisy,” all shows, under a king who plays the devotee, when he is no longer able to do otherwise, that human morality, conscience, and dignity can never be violated with impunity. Already, even in the very heart of Versailles, a premonitory cry is heard. In face of these gilded lives La Bruyère writes: “The great have no soul; I would be of the people.” It was at Versailles that the French nobility ruined themselves. There official ennui led to secret debauches; the habit of receiving everything from the monarch led to the belief that all was due not to services but to servility.

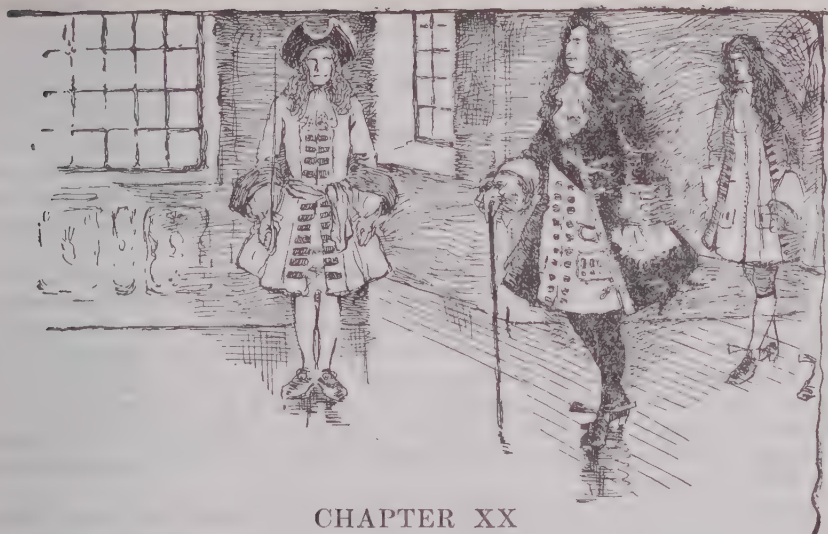
One irrefutable witness of the wretchedness of this period has been left to us—the memorials which the king demanded of the intendants on the condition of their provinces in order that his grandson the duke of Burgundy might by studying them become acquainted with the affairs of the administration. At every page these distressing words recur, “War, mortality, the continual quartering and passage of the soldiers, the militia, the great prerogatives, the withdrawal of the Huguenots have ruined this country.” Bridges, roads were in a deplorable state and commerce was annihilated. The frontier provinces were further crushed by requisitions and the pillage of the soldiers who, receiving neither pay nor food, helped themselves. In the generality of Rouen, out of 700,000 inhabitants 650,000 had a bundle of straw for their beds. In certain provinces the peasant was returning to a state of savagery: living for the most part on herbs and roots like the beasts; and, wild as they were, he fled if one approached. “There is no nation more savage than these people,” the intendant of Bourges says of those under his administration; “sometimes troops of them are to be seen in the country, seated in a circle in the middle of a field and always far from the roads; if one approach the band immediately disperses.”<sup>c</sup>

We have seen Louis XIV at home; let us now turn to his relations with other countries.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Monseigneur played late in the salon. On withdrawing to his own apartments he went up to the princesses (the duchesses de Chartres and de Bourbon) and found them smoking with pipes which they had sent for from the Swiss guardhouse. Monseigneur made them stop this diversion, but the smoke betrayed them. Next morning the king administered a rough rebuke.<sup>i</sup>

The duchess de la Ferté assembled her purveyors at her house and played a kind of lansquenet with them. She whispered in my ear, “I cheat them but they rob me.” *Mémoires* of Madame de Staël.<sup>o</sup>





## CHAPTER XX

### LOUIS XIV, SPAIN, AND HOLLAND

[1661-1679 A.D.]

I doubt whether any human being ever enjoyed, in greater perfection, the blessing of nerves toned to habitual energy, and exempt from all morbid sensitiveness. Heat, cold, pain, fatigue, and hunger seemed to have no power over him. Not only his delicate courtiers but his hardy veterans admired the stoicism of their invulnerable king; and his mental composure was on a level with his bodily hardihood. No provocation could excite him to unseemly anger, and no calamity could depress him to unmanly dejection. If he was often the victim, he was never the slave of appetite or passion. Though constantly exposed to the allurements of the most exquisite flattery, and the most fascinating caresses, he never yielded himself to the guidance of any favourite, male or female; but adhered, with immutable constancy and calmness, to the ministers whom he had either trained or chosen. — STEPHEN.<sup>1</sup>

THE foreign situation in 1661 was most favourable. If it was necessary to wind up the affairs of Mazarin, all that had to be done abroad was to gather the fruits and enjoy the glory acquired. Europe was basking in a peace so profound that not a cloud seemed to threaten it. The powers were all occupied in reorganising their forces, some like England in reconstructing their government. Louis XIV was one of the freest of sovereigns; he was the most powerful, thanks to Mazarin; and he became the wealthiest, thanks to Colbert.

He desired them to preserve peace and give no offence to Europe. Nevertheless he had inherited from Mazarin a fixed plan, and certain projects in harmony with the spirit of his government. His ambition was to invalidate the renunciation of Maria Theresa, in such a manner as to create a right for himself or his sons to the Spanish succession, or at least to the Netherlands.<sup>1</sup>

He charged the archbishop of Embrun, his ambassador at Madrid, to

[<sup>1</sup> See Volumes X and XIII.]



demand that the renunciation be revoked. He maintained that it was not *ipso facto*, the infanta not having renounced her rights and the court of Spain having itself thus decided; that in all respects it had failed to obtain the necessary ratification; finally that the condition on which it had been made, the payment of a dowry of 500,000 crowns, had not been complied with. He offered, in case his plea was accepted, to ally himself the more closely with Spain, and even abandon all claims to Portugal in her favour; but Philip and his ministers eluded the question and refused to give an opinion.

During the negotiations a serious affair occurred in London, where the baron de Vatteville, the Spanish ambassador, claimed precedence over the count d'Estrades, the ambassador of France. On October 8th, 1661, the Swedish envoy, the count de Brahé, was to be presented to the king of England. As the procession was about to start, D'Estrades tried to make his coach pass first, and a troop of armed men under orders from Vatteville stopped it. The Londoners took the part of the Spaniards; there was a fight—some were killed and wounded. In the end the French were obliged to retire.<sup>b</sup>

At this news Louis XIV ordered the Spanish ambassador to leave France, and the French ambassador to Spain to demand the punishment of Vatteville and a reparation which should make such affairs henceforth impossible.<sup>c</sup>

Philip IV granted this without much difficulty. Vatteville was recalled; and March 22nd, 1662, the marquis de Fuentes declared at the Louvre before the assembled court that the Spanish envoys would claim no precedence over those of France, except at the court of Vienna where they had long been accustomed to occupy the first place on account of the close ties which united the two branches of the house of Austria.

Meanwhile Spain still refused to recognise the rights of the infanta, and Louis XIV continued to uphold the Portuguese;<sup>1</sup> he even assisted in bringing about the marriage of Charles of England to a princess of the house of Braganza, who received Tangier, Bombay, and a considerable sum as dowry. Charles II sought, as did Cromwell, to develop English commerce and the navy, but he was needy, extravagant, and he feared the parsimony of parliament. Louis XIV advanced him money in secret and offered to buy back Dunkirk and Mardyck.<sup>2</sup> The bargain was concluded November 27th, 1662, and France recovered the two towns which Mazarin had turned over to Cromwell with regret.

By this acquisition Louis XIV took a first step towards the Netherlands, the object of his whole ambition. He awaited the moment when the question of Philip IV's successor should be opened to uphold the rights of the infanta in the Belgian provinces, even though the determination of these rights was still a matter of debate. He wavered between the desire to reunite the major part of the Spanish Netherlands to France, giving the rest to Holland, or to occupy only a few places and erect the ten Belgian provinces into a republic or a neutral state. The latter plan was the less brilliant, but the easiest to carry out; and a state thus constituted would oppose a barrier to foreign invasion. Louis XIV negotiated in secret to obtain the eventual concurrence of Holland in his plans, but in spite of the efforts of the grand pensionary, the celebrated Jan de Witt, he could not obtain this. The Dutch understood too well that a Belgian republic would be dependent on Louis and would not oppose his ambitions.<sup>b</sup> Besides this the Dutch had

[<sup>1</sup> Richelieu's interference in Portuguese affairs will be recalled.]

[<sup>2</sup> The price paid was five millions.]

[1661-1665 A.D.]

a cause for complaint in the tax of 50 sous a ton, placed by Fouquet in 1659, upon foreign ships trading in French ports. After long debates this tax was reduced by half for Dutch ships and a defensive and commercial treaty was signed in 1662 in which France and Holland agreed to protect each other's rights on land and sea.<sup>a</sup>

The duchies of Lorraine and Bar had been returned to Duke Charles IV in 1661 only on condition that he would not rebuild the ramparts of the towns, that he would only maintain one fortress, Marsal, and that French troops should have the right of passing through his territory. These conditions were not fulfilled. Louis lost patience and sent an army corps to Marsal. The duke bent before the necessity, and gave up Marsal on condition that he might hold the rest of his estates according to the terms of the treaty of 1661.<sup>c</sup>

Louis, admirably counselled by Lionne, took care in preparing the execution of his designs against the Netherlands not to arouse the defiance of Europe. He managed only ostensibly to sustain the Portuguese; simply authorising them to take into their service Marshal de Schomberg and a body of French volunteers which helped them defend their liberties.<sup>1</sup>

While Louis was feeling his strength he eagerly seized any opportunity for military enterprise which would give a high idea of himself and serve his policy.<sup>b</sup> In spite of his rough treatment of the head of the church in 1662-1664, he displayed zeal for the interests of Christianity against its great enemy the Turks, who continued to press the siege of Crete<sup>2</sup> and extend their conquests in Hungary and to desolate by piracy the entire coast of the Mediterranean. Divers plans were proposed in the king's council for attacking the Ottoman power on the Barbary coasts and repressing the pirates. A squadron commanded by the duke de Beaufort, the former hero of the Fronde, landed 5,000 picked soldiers at Jijelli, a small Algerian port between Bougie and Bona. Jijelli was taken without difficulty (July 22nd, 1664), but discord arose between Beaufort and his officers. They were soon hard pressed by the Turks of Algiers, reinforced by numerous Arab and Kabyle bands, while Beaufort cruised in front of Tunis instead of making a diversion against Algiers, as the king had ordered. The military resources of the Algerians and especially their artillery were greater than the French had imagined; discord broke out, and after having repelled a few attacks the French were compelled to re-embark in such haste that they left their cannon behind.

But the successes of Beaufort's squadron, which the famous Chevalier Paul commanded, soon wiped out the stigma of this reverse; two Algerian flotillas were annihilated during the course of the year 1665.<sup>c</sup>

A touching example of self-sacrifice was an incident of this war. The dey of Algiers had among his captives an officer from St. Malo, named Porcon de la Barbinais; he sent him to offer to the king proposals of peace, making him promise to return in case his mission failed. The lives of 600 Christians were dependent upon his keeping his word. The propositions were not accepted. Porcon knew it. He went to St. Malo, regulated his affairs, then returned to Algiers, certain of the fate which awaited him. The dey had him decapitated. This man was the equal of Regulus, yet he is little known to fame.<sup>d</sup>

[<sup>1</sup> These 4,000 veterans under Marshal de Schomberg assisted in 1665, by the battle of Villaviciosa, to settle the house of Braganza on its throne.]

[<sup>2</sup> Louis aided the Venetians to defend Crete. Between 1665 and 1669 more than fifty thousand men went there at different times.<sup>d</sup>]

Reasons and pretexts for war with the porte were not long wanting. In 1664 some acts of bad faith on the part of the viziers were taken as an excuse for sending 6,000 men under the orders of Coligny-Saligny into Hungary, which the Turks were invading. This was a means of dissipating the religious clouds which the threats against the pope had raised at Rome and elsewhere. Louis XIV had still another reason. He had undertaken in obtaining a [three years'] prorogation of the league of the Rhine (1663) to furnish a contingent to his imperial allies in case the empire should be threatened. He attached the highest importance to maintaining a league whose principal object would be to close the road to the Netherlands to Austrian troops if ever war should break out between France and Austria, and he believed it all the more easy to play the rôle of protector in Germany since the emperor's power there had sensibly declined since the Treaty of Westphalia.

Coligny-Saligny joined the Austro-German army commanded by Montecuculi; the French took a considerable part in the combat at Körmend, and especially in the battle of St. Gotthard (August 1st, 1664), where they paid dear for the principal honour of the victory. But the emperor and Austria, grateful though they were, could not pardon the French for having claimed to have saved the empire. Leopold hastened to treat with the Turks, and was as eager to deliver himself from his auxiliaries as he was from his enemies.<sup>b</sup>

Indeed the emperor was alarmed, and not without reason, to encounter the hand of Louis everywhere. A defensive alliance was concluded in August, 1663, between France and Denmark, as the result of a commercial treaty, advantageous to the French marine. A secret negotiation of the very highest importance was, about the same time, entered upon with Poland. Since 1661 that republic had taken Louis XIV as arbiter in its quarrels with Moscow. In 1663, King John Casimir Vasa, discouraged by Poland's constant woes, determined to lay down the crown: his wife, a princess of that branch of the Gonzagas which had long been established in France, entered into communication with Louis XIV to bring about the election of the duke d'Enghien, son of the Great Condé, to the Polish throne. With regret Louis saw Poland plunging to her own ruin, and decided to arrest the disaster by doing again that in which Henry III had so disgracefully failed — infusing French spirit into the land of the Jagellons. Colbert pushed the king to the same policy.<sup>c</sup>

#### THE WAR OF THE QUEEN'S RIGHTS (1667-1668 A.D.)

Meanwhile Louis XIV had not succeeded in having Maria Theresa's act of renunciation revoked, and he now thought of compelling Madrid to recognize the right of devolution.

Such was the name given in Brabant and some of the other Belgian provinces to the law, by virtue of which, when there were children of two different marriages, those of the first inherited in preference to those of the second. Louis XIV claimed Brabant and its annexes, in the name of Maria Theresa. Philip IV rejected this new claim, which was most contestable, since if the rule of devolution really existed in the above-mentioned provinces, it had to be proven that it applied to the succession of princes as well as to those of private individuals. Moreover all the acts emanating from Spanish sovereigns since Charles V were manifestly contradictory of this. Nevertheless both parties remained on pacific terms until the death of Philip IV and Anne of Austria. The king of Spain expired after a lingering illness



[1665 A.D.]

September 17th, 1665. The queen-mother, his sister, died of a cancer January 20th, 1666, after constant efforts to maintain peace between the two crowns.

Philip IV directed in his will that the 500,000 crowns constituting Maria Theresa's dowry should be paid, but he regulated the succession in such a manner as to confirm the renunciation of that princess and to exclude all pretensions of the house of France to any portion whatsoever of his estates. He left the throne of Spain to a sickly infant scarcely able to walk, and who nobody believed would live. Foreseeing the contingency by which the death of this child, the young Charles II, would extinguish the male line, he stipulated that the throne should pass in that event to his second daughter Margaret and her children. Margaret was then fourteen years of age; she was betrothed to the emperor Leopold, and did in fact marry him the following year.

The reign of an infant under the regency of a foreigner, his mother, Maria Anna of Austria, the exhausted condition of the Spanish realm on account of the Portuguese war, offered a magnificent opportunity for Louis XIV's ambition, but he waited until 1667 before declaring his project. Impatient as he was, a maritime war between England and Holland retarded the execution of his plans.

Under Charles II, as under Cromwell, England had in Holland a rival in commerce and the marine. Charles II, who was desirous of flattering public sentiment and who had the same reason as the Protector to seek in foreign war a diversion to calm restless spirits, entertained, moreover, a profound antipathy for De Witt and other leaders of the republican government at the Hague. He wished to re-establish the stadholdership to the profit of the young William of Orange, his sister's son.<sup>1</sup> In this state of feeling it only required a hostile meeting between some Dutch and English ships off the African coast to precipitate the two navies into a fearful war.

The Dutch convinced themselves that they were the attacked party and demanded assistance of Louis XIV in fulfilment of the guarantee he had given them in 1662. At first Louis refused, alleging that it was not proved that the English were the aggressors, and he offered his mediation. His desire was to act cautiously with regard to England and not drive her to an alliance which Spain was seeking. As to the Dutch, he was beginning to regard them with distrust. The grand pensionary De Witt joined to his fine qualities a shrewdness, a proud reserve, and a talent for making advances without committing himself, which were little to the taste of the French agents. D'Estrades, ambassador to the Hague in 1665, considered an English alliance more desirable for France than one with Holland.

The offer of mediation was declined. Louis XIV tried at least to confine his struggle to a naval war, for he did not wish to see the English on the continent. Meanwhile the states-general were insisting on the complete execution of the guarantee treaty. Louis ended by deciding to declare war on England. He gave out that he wished to convert the world to the religion which kept him to his word. But he informs us himself that there

[<sup>1</sup> In 1650 a violent attempt of the young William II of Nassau against the states-general had failed and the stadholder died a few months after, leaving an unborn son who was to become the famous William III. The stadholdership had been abolished and the grand pensionary of the province of Holland became the first personage of the United Provinces, like the president of the states-general. Jan de Witt had been filling these high functions since 1653. Elected at the age of twenty-five, he showed at once the ripeness of a great statesman and the devotion of a great citizen. With a mind at once practical and philosophic, loving letters and the arts as much as affairs, a wise administrator and skilful diplomat, he was not unlike the last great men of Greece; and a contemporary—a very competent judge, the count d'Estrades—has compared his mind to that of Richelieu.]

were still other reasons ; he wished to keep Holland from carrying out her projects against the Netherlands, and prevent a reconciliation with England that might some day be a serious danger to France. He therefore upheld her, but he kept as much as possible to the rôle of a looker-on, and let the English and Dutch fleets almost annihilate each other in the four great combats of two campaigns. The duke de Beaufort and the Brest squadron never left the Channel. The French never fought the English except in the West Indies, where they captured a portion of the island of St. Christopher.

In the beginning of 1667 Louis XIV supported Sweden's offer of mediation, and Breda was chosen as the seat of a congress. Besides the war, England was suffering from another scourge—the plague of 1666. Charles II was satisfied with France's promise of a personal subsidy and with the

restitution of St. Christopher without indemnity. The treaty was signed July 31st. Louis XIV did not await this moment to enter Flanders. He based his aggression on the formal refusal of all his demands by the court of Madrid, declaring that, having exhausted all peaceful means of obtaining justice, he was now going to take possession of what belonged to Maria Theresa.<sup>b</sup>

The league of the Rhine assured Louis of at least the neutrality of Germany ; the emperor was not prepared for war ; Europe, favourable or intimidated, beheld with astonishment King Louis XIV take the field in the month of May, 1667. He had collected an army of fifty thousand men carefully armed and equipped under the direction of Turenne, whom Louvois still obeyed with docility. This fine army was not unequal to the task of vindicating the queen's rights to the duchy of Brabant, the marquissate of Antwerp, Limburg, Hainault, the county of Namur, and other ter-



HENRI DE LA TOUR D'AUVERGNE  
(1611-1675)

ritories. "Heaven not having established a tribunal on earth from which the kings of France may demand justice, the most Christian king can expect it only of his arms," said the manifesto sent to the court of Spain. Louis XIV set out with Turenne. Marshal de Créquy was commissioned to keep a watch on Germany.

The Spaniards were caught unprepared ; Armentières, Charleroi, Douai, and Tournay had but inadequate garrisons and succumbed almost without a blow. While the army was occupied with the siege of Courtrai, Louis XIV returned to meet the queen at Compiègne ; the whole court followed him to the camp. "I brought the queen to Flanders," said Louis XIV, "to show her to the people of that country, who indeed received her with all the joy imaginable, showing that they were sorry there had not been more time to prepare themselves to receive her more worthily." It was at Courtrai that

[1667-1668 A.D.]

the queen took up her residence. Marshal de Turenne had gone in the direction of Dendermonde, but the Flemings had opened their sluices and the country was inundated; he was obliged to fall back on Oudenarde; the town was taken in two days. The king, still followed by the court, laid siege to Lille. Vauban, already celebrated as an engineer, formed his lines of circumvallation. Créquy's army rejoined that of Turenne; an effort on the part of the governor of the Netherlands to relieve the town was anticipated; the Spanish troops sent for that purpose arrived too late and were defeated as they retired; the citizens of Lille had forced the garrison to capitulate; Louis XIV entered the place on the 27th of August, ten days after the trenches were opened. On the 2nd of September the king set out on the way back to St. Germain; Turenne also took the town of Alost before going into winter quarters.

#### THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE

The first campaign of Louis XIV had been merely a warlike game almost without danger or bloodshed; it had nevertheless sufficed to alarm Europe. Scarcely had peace been concluded at Breda before another negotiation was secretly entered into between England, Holland, and Sweden. It was in vain that King Charles II was personally inclined to an alliance with France; his people had their eyes open to the dangers which Europe incurred from the arms of Louis XIV. On the 23rd of January, 1668, the celebrated Treaty of the Triple Alliance was signed at the Hague. The three powers requested the king of France to grant the Netherlands a truce till the month of May, in order to give time to treat with Spain and obtain from her, as France demanded, the final cession of the places conquered or of Franche-Comté in exchange. In reality the triple alliance was resolved to protect helpless Spain against France; a secret article pledged the three allies to take arms to restrain Louis XIV and if possible to bring him back to the position fixed by the Treaty of the Pyrenees. At the same moment Portugal made peace with Spain, which recognised her independence.

The king refused to concede the prolonged armistice which had been demanded of him: "I grant it till the 31st of March," he had said, "as I do not wish to miss the season for taking the field." The marquis of Castel Rodrigo laughed at this: "I am content," he said, "with the suspension of arms which winter imposes on the king of France." The governor of the Netherlands was mistaken; Louis XIV was about to prove that his soldiers, like those of Gustavus Adolphus, did not know what winter was. He had confided the command of his new army to the prince of Condé, who had been amnestied nine years before but had hitherto been a stranger to the royal favours.<sup>g</sup>

Under pretext of being in Burgundy for the estates, Monsieur le Prince had made careful note that Franche-Comté was without troops and unsuspecting, because the inhabitants did not doubt that the king would grant them neutrality as in the last war, since they had sent to him to demand it. He kept up the delusion.<sup>e</sup>

The gaieties of St. Germain were at their height, when in the depth of winter in the month of January, 1668, all were astonished to see troops marching in all directions, coming and going on the roads of Champagne and in the Three Bishoprics—trains of artillery, wagons of munitions stopping under various pretexts in the roads which lead from Champagne to Burgundy. That part of France was filled with movement of which the cause was unknown. The uninitiated out of interest, and the courtiers out of



curiosity, exhausted themselves in conjectures; Germany was alarmed; the object of these preparations and peculiar actions was a mystery to everybody. The secrets of conspiracies were never more closely guarded than in this enterprise of Louis XIV.

Finally, on February 2nd, the king left St. Germain with the young duke d'Enghien, son of the Great Condé, and several courtiers; the other officers being at the rendezvous with their troops. He travelled on horseback by long stages and arrived at Dijon. Twenty thousand men, assembled by twenty different routes, found themselves on the same day in Franche-Comté, several leagues from Besançon, the Great Condé at their head.<sup>f</sup> Besançon and Salins surrendered at sight of the troops. When the king arrived he went to Dôle and caused counterscarps and demilunes to be set up. Four or five hundred men were killed here. The amazed inhabitants, seeing themselves surrounded by troops and without hope of succour, surrendered on Shrove Tuesday, February 14th. The king at the same time marched to Gray. The governor made as though he would defend himself, but the marquis d'Yenne, governor-general under Castel Rodrigo, who was of the country and had all his property there, came to surrender to the king and, going to Gray, persuaded the governor to surrender. The king entered Gray on Sunday, the 19th of February, and there caused a *Te Deum* to be sung, having the governor-general at his right hand and the governor of the town itself on his left; and the same day he set out to return. Thus in twenty-two days of the month of February he had started from St. Germain, had been to Franche-Comté, taken complete possession of it, and returned to St. Germain.<sup>e</sup> The king was back at St. Germain preparing enormous armaments for the month of April; he had given the prince of Condé the government of Franche-Comté.

#### *Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle (1668 A.D.)*

War seemed imminent. The last days of the armistice were at hand. "The opinion of peace which prevails in France is a malady which is becoming widespread," Louvois wrote in the middle of March; "but we shall soon be cured, since the time to take the field is drawing near. You must give out everywhere that the Spaniards will not have peace." Louvois was uttering a shameless falsehood; the Spaniards were without resources, but they had still less courage than resources; and consented to the abandonment of all the places in the Netherlands conquered in 1667.

A congress was opened at Aix-la-Chapelle and was presided over by the nuncio of the new pope Clement IX, who was as favourable to France as his predecessor Innocent X had been to Spain — "a phantom arbitrator between phantom plenipotentiaries," says Voltaire. The real negotiations took place at St. Germain. "I did not only take care," writes Louis XIV, "to profit by the present conjuncture, but also to put myself in a position to turn to good account those which seemed likely to ensue. Amid the great augmentations which my fortune might receive, nothing seemed to me more necessary than to acquire for myself, among my smaller neighbours, a reputation for moderation and probity which might quiet in them those emotions of terror which all naturally feel at the aspect of too great power. I must not lack the means of breaking with Spain when I wish to do so; Franche-Comté which I surrendered might be reduced to such a condition that I could be master of it at any time, and my new conquests, well secured, would open me a surer entry to the Netherlands." Determined by these wise motives,

[1668-1671 A.D.]

the king gave the order to sign; and the 2nd of May, 1668, the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle was concluded. Before surrendering Franche-Comté the king gave orders to demolish the fortifications of Dôle and Gray; at the same time he commissioned Vauban to fortify Ath, Lille, and Tournay. The triple alliance was triumphant, the Dutch especially.<sup>g</sup>

## PROJECTS AGAINST HOLLAND (1668-1672 A.D.)

The first period of the diplomatic and military history of Louis XIV closes with the treaty that ended the War of the Queen's Rights. A new era is about to open in which Louis will cast aside the compass that was so safely directing the ship of France to follow no other guides than his passion and his fortune.

Recent events had succeeded in crushing the old French sympathies for Holland, much weakened since the Dutch defection of 1648. Resentment against the unfaithful ally, very keen in the active and military element of the nation, had reached a point of exasperation with the king, who was not unaware of the secret clauses of the Treaty of the Hague.<sup>1</sup> Louis, who had laid down his arms much less for the confederates of the Hague than for the sake of the future Spanish succession, bore a grudge against Holland, not so much for having really arrested his progress [by having formed the triple alliance] as for having boasted of doing so. Pride had turned the head of the little republic, which plumed itself on having laid colossal Spain low, saved Denmark from the blows of Sweden, beaten, or at least quit even with England, set a limit on French conquests, and drawn into its hands three-quarters of European commerce and sea trade.

But wounded pride was far from being the only motive that turned Louis XIV against Holland. He was convinced that he must crush her in order to get Belgium, and consequently he must appear, momentarily, to forget the end in order to remove the obstacle. He might then, strictly speaking, imagine to himself that he was still pursuing his old plans, and was only changing the means of French policy; but passion might easily make him take the means for the end. This passion, generated by diplomatic disappointments, was nourished and envenomed by the dissimilarity between the institutions, principles, and beliefs of the French and Dutch governments. Holland was not only an unfaithful ally — she was a republican and Protestant nation, the home of religious and political liberty, which Louis hated with a growing hatred as his monarchy became more clearly outlined in his head.

After the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, the ruin of Holland became the king's fixed idea. It was no longer a question of the commercial war so ably conducted by Colbert with his tariffs and his differential rights — it was a war of invasion and conquest that Louis was planning.<sup>c</sup>

The resolution taken, he adjourned its execution until such time as he had completed the organisation of his sea forces, which were not then on a level with those of the land, and until he could assure himself that Europe would not interfere with his plan. The able and indefatigable Lionne consecrated the last three years of his life (he died in 1671) to performing diplomatic wonders to acquire this certitude.

While he was waiting, Louis XIV neglected no opportunities that pre-

[<sup>1</sup> By these secret articles England and Holland agreed to make war on Louis XIV if he went back on his word, and they proposed to compel him to make peace without including Portugal, if Spain was determined on this point.]

sented themselves to feed warlike passions and provide employment for his unengaged officers and troops. In 1669 he sent a volunteer corps to Crete to assist the Venetians, threatened in the capital of that island. Beaufort disappeared in a combat, and Vivonne ineffectually bombarded the grand vizier's camp. But this was only a diversion from more important projects. Louis XIV wished to isolate Holland, and for that reason to break the triple alliance. He began by trying to detach England from it.

The English were not less jealous than the Dutch of France's maritime progress; they were not less frightened at Louis' ambitions. But Charles II did not share these feelings. Although he had experienced all the hazards of fortune, the vicissitudes of his life had in nowise elevated his character. After the Treaty of Breda, he signed that of the Triple Alliance and united with the Dutch, as a concession to national sentiment. But he did not like parliament, and felt an especial aversion for the Presbyterian spirit, and the religious passions which had brought about the English Revolution. Finally, about 1670, he resolved to become a Catholic, perhaps through real conviction, perhaps through the influence of his brother, the duke of York, a secret convert to the church of Rome, who was animated by the true ardour of a neophyte; perhaps because he hoped to find in Catholicism a more solid support for his throne and his royal prerogative than in Anglicanism.

To realise his object a French alliance was indispensable. France alone could provide him with the money he needed; his court was wasteful and in debt, and parliament measured out subsidies with jealous parsimony. If France demanded the sacrifice of Holland, he was ready to make it.

Under these conditions he readily lent ear to the overtures of the French ambassadors, Ruvigny and Colbert de Croissy, the minister's brother. He did not delay to let Louis XIV into the secret of his plans. Louis asked nothing better than to grant much on condition that England would join him in war on Holland. Nevertheless the negotiations dragged on account of the precautions necessary to secrecy, and it took more than a year to arrive finally at an understanding. When all was arranged Charles II demanded that his sister, the duchess of Orleans, should come to England and sign the treaty.<sup>b</sup>

### *The Treaty of Dover: Death of Madame (1670 A.D.)*

On the 24th of May Madame Henrietta suddenly left the court which was at Lille and embarked at Dunkirk for Dover where Charles II was awaiting her. She persuaded Charles to sign the treaty without delay (June 1st). The English monarch led his sister to hope that he would consent that the attack on Holland should precede his declaration of Catholicism. This is what Louis XIV most wished for. The treaty, however, far from committing Charles to this course, stipulated that after Charles should have made "the said declaration," Louis might choose the moment of attack on Holland.<sup>1</sup> Louis was to give Charles two millions, payable two and three months after the exchange of ratification and was to assist him with six thousand foot soldiers, if the return to Catholicism should excite trouble. Charles was to furnish Louis at least four thousand foot soldiers against Holland, Louis to reinforce the English fleet by thirty vessels, of at least forty guns, and to pay Charles an annual subsidy of three millions during the

<sup>1</sup> It was afterwards decided to defer the execution of the attack on Holland until 1672. A new treaty was signed at Dover, December 31st, 1670, modifying the first in several points.



[1670-1672 A.D.]

continuation of the war. The island of Walcheren (with Sluys and Causand at the mouth of the Schelde) were to go to England.

An unforeseen catastrophe fell now like a thunder-clap upon the two royal families which had just sealed the pact of Dover. The household of Louis XIV's brother had long been disturbed by domestic tempests. The amiable and brilliant Henrietta, adored by the court, esteemed by the king, who confided to her the most secret springs of his policy, inspired nothing but antipathy in her husband, an effeminate prince, as mediocre in mind as in heart, whose childish and strange habits have given rise to suspicion of shameful practices. The king had recently intervened in the family quarrels by imprisoning and afterwards exiling the chevalier de Lorraine, Monsieur's favourite. After this the king had had great difficulty in compelling his brother to allow Madame Henrietta to go to Dover.

She returned in triumph; leaving Dover on the 12th of June, she appeared for a moment at St. Germain where the court was established; the 24th of June her husband took her to St. Cloud, where she had scarcely arrived when she complained of pains in her stomach and side. For several days she lingered, and on the 29th, after having drunk a glass of chicory-water, she was seized with a violent pain in the side; the next day before daybreak she was dead. In her last agony she repeated several times that she was dying of poison.

An outbreak of terrible suspicion against her husband and his people occurred at once. The king had an autopsy performed by the most celebrated physicians and surgeons of Paris, who agreed that death was due to natural causes, and that it was a wonder the princess had lived so long with her lungs and liver so gravely affected. The question, however, has remained a question of controversy among historians to this day.<sup>1</sup> The news of this tragic event made a great stir in England; but the real sorrow expressed by Louis XIV and the report of the physicians calmed Charles II and his court.

#### *Treaties with Other Powers (1670-1672 A.D.)*

Already, as early as 1667, Louis XIV had privately provided for the neutrality of the empire by a secret treaty regulating the eventual partition of the Spanish monarchy. In case the little king of Spain should die without children, France was to receive the Netherlands, Franche-Comté, Navarre, Naples, and Sicily; Austria would keep Spain and the Milanese. Accordingly the emperor Leopold turned a deaf ear to the solicitations of the Dutch, who would have persuaded him to join the triple alliance; and a new agreement between France and the empire, signed secretly November 1st, 1670, reciprocally bound the two princes not to give help to their enemies. The German princes were more difficult to win over; they were beginning to be alarmed at the pretensions of France. The electors of Treves and Mainz had already assembled troops on the Rhine; and the duke of Lorraine seemed disposed to give them assistance. Louis XIV took as a pretext the erection of some fortifications contrary to the Treaty of Marsal; on the 23rd of August, 1670, he sent Marshal de Créquy into Lorraine; in the beginning of

[<sup>1</sup> The chevalier de Lorraine and a maitre d'hôtel of Monsieur, Morel by name, were among those suspected of poison. We have seen in the preceding chapter how epidemic that crime became about that time. However, the theory of natural death, the result of an abscess of the liver, hastened by domestic troubles, is now generally accepted as the cause of Madame's death. Dareste says it was due to cholera morbus. Madame was only twenty-six years old.]

September the duchy was entirely subdued and the duke a refugee. To the emperor's protest, the king responded that he did not want Lorraine for himself, but that he would never surrender it to anyone's petitions. Brandenburg and Saxony alone refused neutrality point-blank; France had renounced the Protestant alliances in Germany, and the Protestant electors recognised the danger which threatened them.

Sweden also recognised it, but Gustavus Adolphus and Oxenstierna were no longer there; the memory of former alliances with France alone remained; the Swedish senators, one after another, allowed themselves to be bought. The treaty was signed the 14th of April, 1672; for an annual subsidy of 600,000 livres Sweden pledged herself to offer armed opposition to the princes of the empire who should attempt to succour the United Provinces; a space was being cleared round Holland.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of the secrecy which surrounded the negotiations of Louis XIV, De Witt was filled with anxiety; always favourable to the French alliance, he had sought to calm the irritation of France which imputed the triple alliance to the Dutch. Jan de Witt negotiated everywhere; Charles' treaty with France had remained a profound secret, and the Dutch thought they could count on the good will of the English nation. They effaced the arms of England on the *Royal Charles*, a vessel taken by Tromp in 1667, and hid from sight a picture in the town hall of Dordrecht which represented the victory of Chatham with the *ruart*<sup>2</sup> Cornelis de Witt leaning against a cannon. These concessions to the pride of England were not made without a contest.

#### THE WAR WITH HOLLAND BEGINS (1672 A.D.)

The apprehensions of the grand pensionary were not without foundation; in the spring of 1672 all the negotiations of Louis XIV had been successful; his armaments were complete; he was at last about to crush the little power which had so long presented an obstacle to his designs. The king wrote in an unpublished memoir: "Amidst all my prosperity in my campaign of 1667, neither England nor the empire, both convinced of the justice of my cause, opposed themselves to the rapidity of my conquests, whatever interest they may have had to stop them. I found in my path only my good, faithful, and old-time friends, the Dutch, who instead of identifying themselves with my fortune as with the foundation of their state, sought to dictate to me and to compel me to peace, and even dared to threaten violence in case I refused to accept their interference. I confess that their insolence stung me keenly and that I was ready, at the risk of what might happen to my conquests in the Spanish Netherlands, to turn all my forces against this haughty and ungrateful nation; but having summoned prudence to my aid and considering that I had neither the number of troops nor the allies requisite for such an enterprise, I dissimulated and concluded peace on honourable conditions, resolved to postpone the punishment of this perfidy to another time." The time had come; to the last effort at conciliation attempted in the name of the states-general, by De Groot, son of the celebrated Grotius, the king answered with a haughty threat: "When I heard that the United Provinces were endeavouring to corrupt my allies, and were urging kings, my relatives, to enter into offensive leagues against me, I sought to put myself in a position to defend myself, and I raised some

[<sup>1</sup> This was an important departure from the old policy of Francis I and of Richelieu, who, for political reasons, made Protestant alliances abroad, though upholding Catholicism at home.]

<sup>2</sup> Ruart means inspector of the dykes.

[1672 A.D.]

troops; but I intend to have still more towards the spring, and I will then use them in the manner which I may judge the best adapted for the welfare of my states and for my glory." *g*

A public treaty had just been signed between France and England (February 12th), and the English, according to their custom, attacked without declaration of war. On March 23rd an English squadron assailed a Dutch merchant fleet returning from Smyrna off the isle of Wight. The Dutch defended themselves so well that the aggressors after two days of fighting were only able to capture two or three merchant ships and one man-of-war. Charles II's declaration of war was published March 29th, six days after this fight. That of Louis XIV was launched on the 6th of April.<sup>c</sup>

"The king sets out to-morrow, my daughter," writes Madame de Sévigné to Madame de Grignan on the 27th of April; "there will be 100,000 men outside Paris, the two armies will join hands; the king will give orders to Monsieur, Monsieur to Monsieur le Prince, Monsieur le Prince to M. de Turenne, and M. de Turenne to the two marshals, and even to the army of Marshal de Créquy." *g*

Ninety thousand men were gathered from Sedan to Charleroi; the bishop of Münster, the bishop of Cologne, and other German princes furnished about 20,000 more. The king led this magnificent army in person; Condé, Turenne, Luxemburg, Chamilly, were in command under him. Vauban was to take the towns, Pellisson to record the victories. What had Holland to bring in opposition to such an enemy? She had a formidable navy; two admirals, regarded to this day as the greatest of their century, Tromp and De Ruyter; rich colonies, and an immense commerce; but she had neglected her land-forces, so often dangerous in a republic; she could hardly count upon 25,000 militia, badly equipped and wholly without discipline, and 20,000 men promised by the elector of Brandenburg were at the same time very insufficient and very far away. The intestine struggles also enfeebled her; there were two parties, the one led by Jan de Witt, and entirely devoted to the cause of ancient liberty. The other aimed at the restoration of the young prince of Orange to the heritage of his ancestors, and profiting by the present danger nominated him captain-general at the age of twenty-two.



LOUIS II DE BOURBON, PRINCE DE CONDÉ  
(1621-1686)

*The Passage of the Rhine. (June, 1672 A.D.)*

Meanwhile Louis XIV advanced along the Maas, upon the lands of the bishop of Liège, his ally, in order not to invade Spanish territory, thence along the right bank of the Rhine from Wesel to Toll-Huys. There the



inhabitants informed the prince of Condé that the dryness of the season had made the river fordable. Crossing was easy. On the other shore only 400 to 500 cavalry were to be seen and two feeble regiments of infantry without cannon. The artillery mowed down their flank. While the king's household and the crack regiments of cavalry, in number about 15,000 men, were crossing in safety, the prince of Condé went beside them in a copper-bottomed boat. A small number of the Dutch cavalry rode into the river to give at least a semblance of resistance, but took flight immediately before the approaching multitude. Their infantry laid down their arms and begged for their lives. The French lost in that passage only the count de Nogent, and several cavalymen who strayed from the ford and were drowned. No one would have been killed on that day had it not been for the imprudence of the young duke de Longueville. It was said that, being intoxicated, he fired his pistol at the enemy, who were begging on their knees for their lives, crying, "No quarter for that rabble!" One of their officers was killed by his shot. The Dutch infantry despairingly resumed their weapons for a moment and fired a charge which killed the duke de Longueville. A captain of cavalry, who had not taken flight with the others, ran to the prince of Condé who was mounting his horse, and pressed his pistol against the prince's head, who by a movement turned aside and had his wrist shattered by the bullet. This was the only wound Condé ever received. The French, exasperated, charged upon that infantry, which took flight in all directions. Louis XIV crossed on a pontoon bridge with his infantry (June 12th, 1672).<sup>d</sup>

Such was the passage of the Rhine, celebrated ever after as one of the great events which should occupy the memories of men. That air of greatness with which the king surrounded all his actions, the fortunate rapidity of his conquests, the splendour of his reign, the idolatry of his courtiers, finally the tendency the French, above all the Parisians, have towards exaggeration joined to their ignorance concerning war which ruled in the idle life of the large cities — all this caused the passage of the Rhine to be regarded as a prodigious achievement whose fame continued to be exaggerated. The common belief was that the whole army had crossed the river swimming, in the face of a thoroughly entrenched army, and in spite of the artillery of an impregnable fortress called Tholus (Toll-Huys). It was very true that nothing could have been a more imposing sight to the foe than this passage, and if there had been a corps of serviceable troops on the other side the enterprise would have been very perilous.<sup>f</sup>

Fifteen years later Bossuet said in his funeral oration of the prince of Condé, "Let us leave the passage of the Rhine the prodigy of our century and of the life of Louis the Great." But Bossuet was not writing history in his funeral orations. Neither does Napoleon in his *Mémoires* share the enthusiasm of the sacred orator: "The passage of the Rhine is a military operation of the fourth order, since in that place the river is fordable, impoverished by the Waal, and moreover was defended by only a handful of men." "I have seen a woman," says Voltaire, "who crossed the Rhine twenty times at that place to defraud the customs." The Toll-Huys was exactly what its name indicates.

#### THE FRENCH IN HOLLAND AND GERMANY (1672-1673 A.D.)

With the Rhine crossed, Holland was open to invasion. The provinces of Overijssel, of Gelderland, and Utrecht submitted without trying to defend themselves; there were very few hours during the day in which the king did

[1672-1673 A.D.]

not receive news of some victory. An officer wrote to Turenne: "If you will send me fifty cavalrymen I will take two or three fortresses with them."

Four soldiers became in a few moments masters of Muiden, the key to Amsterdam, because the sluices by which the country surrounding the capital could be flooded were in this village. The generals called to council were anxious to march at once upon Amsterdam, Louvois thought it better to garrison the forts; the army was in this manner enfeebled and its operations retarded. Upon this the Dutch took courage once more, and concentrating the state forces into the hands of one man, raised William of Orange to the stadholdership (July 6th, 1672). This prince was to save the independence of his country.<sup>d</sup> Soon afterward an infuriated populace slaughtered the illustrious chiefs of the republican party, Jan and Cornelis de Witt. French historians charge William with complicity in these murders. Burnett, however, says that William "always spoke of it to me with the greatest horror possible," and there seems no good ground to doubt that this sentiment was genuine. To suppose otherwise would seem to belie the character of this far seeing, cautious, unconquerable man.<sup>a</sup>

The military dictatorship confided to the prince of Orange gave a new aspect to the situation; he had the dykes cut, flooding all the country surrounding Amsterdam, and forced the French to retreat before the inundation.<sup>d</sup>

The French king, in the meantime, in answer to the Dutch deputies who sought for peace (De Groot was of the number), demanded for himself the limit of the Rhine, and the re-establishment of the Catholic religion in Holland, besides satisfaction to the demands of the English. The Dutch magnanimously refused such terms. The capital was for this year secure behind its waters; the French army being weakened by garrisoning so many towns. Condé pressed the monarch to dismantle these towns, and unite the army to reduce Amsterdam; but Louvois, minister-at-war, biased by his peculiar pursuits, would not consent to the demolition of a single bulwark. The consequence was that nothing more could be effected, and Louis returned, to enjoy the congratulations of his capital and the flatteries of his court.<sup>j</sup>

#### THE NEW COALITION AGAINST FRANCE (1673 A.D.)

This is an epoch of great importance. The state system of the treaty of Westphalia was really upset by Louis' aggressions, *e.g.* the German states making common cause with Emperor; and the fear of French predominance acted from now on through the Dutch war and the War of the Spanish Succession as a new and dominant force in European politics, much as the pre-eminence of the Hapsburgs had acted before Westphalia. From now to the treaty of Utrecht, European history is on another track, and the treaty of Utrecht, which closes the foreign policy of Louis XIV, is the real end of the chapter of history we are now beginning.<sup>a</sup>

Neither Spain nor Germany could remain indifferent spectators of Louis XIV's progress and Holland's peril. Although Spain had not pronounced herself, Monterey, the governor of Brussels, had furnished the prince of Orange some auxiliary troops. The elector of Brandenburg, Frederick William—"the Great Elector"—promised his assistance to the states-general by a secret treaty. He also agitated the north German courts and that of Vienna, representing to them the necessity of a coalition. Austria, more reserved, was none the less exasperated in spite of the arrangement to which she had consented, and concluded a ten years' defensive alliance with the great

elector. The emperor likewise concluded another treaty with the states-general, promising auxiliary troops for a subsidy.

Louis XIV, warned by these events, gave these princes the most solemn assurances of his intention to respect the Treaty of Westphalia as well as the imperial territory. But as these assurances had no effect, he finally declared that the continuation of their armed condition would be regarded as an act of hostility against his allies of Cologne and Münster, and he declined the responsibility of any war that might ensue.

Montecuculi [the imperial general] and the great elector united their forces, which with the German contingents amounted to 40,000 men. Louis

XIV gave orders to Turenne to leave to Luxemburg the protection of the conquered towns in Holland, and to betake himself with 16,000 men to the lower Rhine, keeping the Germans from crossing, and to protect the territories of Cologne and Münster. Condé was charged with covering the upper Rhine and Alsace with an equal number of troops. The Germans' plan was to march upon the Maas, to establish themselves there, and then to bring thither the prince of Orange and cut off in this manner communication between France and the French garrisons in Holland. But Turenne, stationed at Andernach, kept them a long time on the banks of the Rhine. They tried to cross higher up; Condé had destroyed the bridge at Strasburg, but after several weeks they succeeded (on November 23rd) in building a bridge of boats near Mainz. Turenne doubled on his track to cover the Maas. The Germans spread themselves over the electorate of Treves and the Palatinate; but this country being already ruined they could find no sustenance, and they recrossed the Rhine to live on the lands of Cologne and Münster. Turenne followed them.

Meanwhile Orange rallied a Spanish corps commanded by Marchin; he drove off Duras who was guarding the Maas with several French regiments, and conceived

the bold idea of occupying Charleroi. He undertook the siege on the 15th of December, but he did not have sufficient material and had to retire before the arrival of Condé's troops and the Flemish garrisons which Louis XIV ordered to Charleroi. [Notwithstanding the lack of troops, withheld through the jealousy of Luvois, these are said to have been Turenne's most brilliant campaigns.]

By March, 1673, Turenne had driven the Germans across the Weser, and Frederick William, convinced of his powerlessness, and discontented with his allies, asked for peace. Louis XIV was eager to grant it, for he was in a hurry to dissolve the coalition, and simply imposed conditions that the elector should not assist Holland, or maintain troops beyond the Weser. Louis consented to withdraw his own troops from Frederick's territory



SOLDIER, TIME OF LOUIS XIV



[1672-1673 A.D.]

except from the towns in the duchy of Cleves, which he intended to hold until peace should be declared. This treaty was made definite the 6th of June, 1673, at Vossem, and Louis XIV almost at the same time signed two others with the duke of Hanover and the elector of Cologne, assuring defensive and offensive alliances on the part of France. Henceforth he regarded himself as delivered from all fear on the side of northern Germany.

Louis was not willing to submit to a mediation purposed by the emperor with arms in his hand. In the month of December, 1672, he accepted that which the Swedes offered. The mediation of Sweden was accepted by the other belligerents; it was agreed that a congress should be held at Cologne, but various delays postponed the first *pourparlers* until June, 1673.

Louis XIV in agreeing to this congress had attached little importance to it and counted in reality upon war alone. For the campaign of 1673 he disposed of 800,000 men without counting the garrisons of Roussillon, Pinerolo, and Lorraine. In the month of June he sent Turenne into Hesse to watch the imperials who were reorganising their army. He gave Condé the command of the Dutch garrisons and placed Luxemburg under him. He himself went to besiege Maestricht with 45,000 of his best troops. He had no desire to declare war upon the Spaniards although Monterey had upheld the Dutch; nevertheless he traversed their territory and made a false demonstration upon Brussels in order to deceive them.

The 10th of June he arrived before Maestricht. He had reserved for himself the chief command, which he wished to share with no one. But Vauban was with him and alone conducted and directed the work of approach. This was begun on the 17th and on the 29th the miner was under the town. The next day the garrison, although strong and well commanded, was obliged to capitulate.

If the taking of Maestricht was a brilliant success, the king really sacrificed to it the campaign in the Netherlands, which had an unfortunate ending. The Anglo-French fleet had, on its side, appeared in the arena. It numbered 90 ships of the line of which 30 were French. Parliament had voted a subsidy, but as it suspected King Charles' project of becoming a Catholic, it had made a condition that a declaration of conformity to the Anglican church should be imposed upon all officers of the crown. The duke of York was unwilling to submit to the obligation of the "test" and had been dismissed from the admiralty. De Ruyter took command of the Dutch fleet with Tromp second in command, and advanced against the enemy, giving two battles on the 7th and 14th of June which remained undecided. The Anglo-French fleet having put back into the Thames for repairs embarked the troops under Schomberg's command and set sail for the shores of the Netherlands. De Ruyter on the 21st of August gave a more decisive battle, in that it prevented the landing of the forces, and compelled the fleet to retire.

The Dutch, emboldened by this success, raised little by little their tone and their claims at the congress of Cologne. They cut down greatly the concessions they were offering France and reduced to almost nothing those they consented to grant the king of England, the elector of Cologne, and the bishop of Münster. They intended to make no sacrifice essential to keeping their rank as a great power. Louis XIV held out for a long time and obtained nothing; finally, on the 30th of September, he reduced his claims to Aire, St. Omer, Cambay, Ypres, and their dependencies and the two castellanies of Bailleul and Cassel. As these places belonged to Spain, he demanded that Spain should be indemnified by the United Provinces,

which would have recovered all that they had lost. This proposition was rejected like the others.

Holland was now counting on more important alliances than those of 1672. She no longer feared England, where the reawakening of the Protestant spirit would reduce Charles II to powerlessness. She had signed on the 30th of August three treaties, with Spain, with Austria, and with the duke of Lorraine. Spain had not declared war on Louis XIV, as she did not wish to enter the arena except with a European coalition; but now, having procured resources by extraordinary taxation and having succeeded in overcoming the irresolution of the court of Vienna, she made a twenty-five-years' treaty of offensive and defensive alliance with the republic, promising to furnish 8,000 men.

Austria, assured of Spain and the military co-operation of several German states, among others Saxony, resolved to recommence her preceding campaign. She made a point of war of Turenne's presence on the right bank of the Rhine and demanded the restitution of the places of the empire, that of Lorraine for Duke Charles IV, and the abandonment of France's claims to the fiefs of Alsace and the Three Bishoprics. On Louis XIV's refusal, Leopold addressed a declaration to the diet of Ratisbon, making known his intentions, and signed with Holland a ten-years' treaty of offensive and defensive alliance, enjoining himself for a subsidy to furnish 30,000 men. As for the duke of Lorraine, he put, on consideration of a subsidy, his sword and his troops at the service of the Dutch. Thus the latter were paying for the war, and the war under these conditions was changing its character, becoming European, and little by little withdrawing from their territory.

Louis XIV recalled Condé to Flanders, where he left him with but few troops. He gave Luxemburg the supreme command of the Dutch garrisons, and he planned himself to lead the army which had taken Maestricht to the Rhine, to occupy the bridges, and to support Turenne. Up to the last minute he refused to believe in the coalition, but when he saw it an accomplished fact he resolved to face it. Treves was occupied August 26th; Louis XIV then visited Alsace and Lorraine, strengthening fortifications without taking into consideration the privileges the towns enjoyed from the Treaty of Münster. Montecuculi, at the head of the imperials, left Bohemia in September and marched towards the Rhine. Turenne tried without success to stop him at the Tauber and at the crossing of the Main. He turned north, crossed the Rhine on a bridge of boats near Mainz, and finally marched upon Bonn, before which he joined the 25,000 Spanish and Dutch troops led by the prince of Orange, at the end of October.

Orange had taken the offensive, and captured Naerden in six days (September), crossed the Spanish Netherlands, where Condé had not sufficient force to stop him, and gained the electorate of Cologne, to join hands with the imperials. [This juncture of imperial and Dutch troops constituted an important success for the coalition.] United they attacked Bonn and took it on November 12th.

The taking of Bonn detached Germany from Louis XIV. Louvois had already a few days before given Luxemburg orders to evacuate Utrecht and the more distant places, keeping only those on the Maas, Waal, and Rhine, to destroy as far as possible abandoned fortifications, to reduce garrisons to 20,000, and to send home 30,000; but these orders took time to execute, and their execution, being compulsory, was a fresh subject of triumph for Holland and Europe.

1674 A.D.]

The winter stopped hostilities, without ending the reverses ; for Louis XIV now saw himself abandoned by England and the whole empire aroused against him.<sup>b</sup>

*Defection of England and the Imperial Allies (1674 A.D.)*

The Protestant inquietude of the English parliament had not yielded to the influence of the marquis de Ruvigny, French ambassador to London, and the nation wanted peace with the Dutch. Charles II yielded in appearance at least to the wishes of his people. On February 21st, 1674, he went to parliament to announce to the two houses that he had concluded with the United Provinces a prompt, honourable, and, he hoped, durable peace, as they had asked for. At the same time he wrote to Louis XIV asking him to pity rather than accuse him of a consent that had been dragged from him. The English and Irish regiments remained, without remark, in the service of France, and the king did not withdraw his subsidy from his royal pensioner.

Thus, link by link, the chain of alliance which Louis XIV had cast around Holland was coming apart. In her turn France was finding herself alone. The congress of Cologne had dissolved. None of the belligerents was looking for peace.<sup>g</sup>

The bishop of Münster, who could no longer count on the help of the French, had already secretly approached the emperor, and in April, 1674, agreed to defend by arms the decisions of the diet of Ratisbon, and restore all that he had taken from the Dutch. The electors of Treves and Mainz concluded an offensive pact with the emperor. So did the elector palatine, that eternal enemy of Austria. As early as January, Denmark, seeing Sweden inclined towards France, had thrown herself on the side of the emperor. The dukes of Brunswick and Lüneburg promised auxiliaries to Leopold for a subsidy. In May the elector of Cologne treated with the United Provinces, and then gave them back the places he had taken. Like the king of England, in abandoning France he at least left the soldiers he had furnished. On the 28th of May the Germanic diet finally pronounced against France and declared that the emperor's war was a war of the empire. The great work of French politics was destroyed ; Austria had regained, thanks to Louis XIV's excesses, the supremacy and the direction of Germany against France.<sup>c</sup>

OPERATIONS IN FRANCHE-COMTÉ; TURENNE IN ALSACE (1674-1675 A.D.)

With the war thus become European, Louis XIV changed its object with a decision that did him honour. He abandoned Holland, which he was not strong enough to retain, and turned all his forces against Spain, the weakest of the states of the league. With 20,000 men and Vauban, he took the direction of Franche-Comté. The second conquest was almost as rapid as the first ; Besançon was taken in nine days, and the entire province in six weeks (May, 1674).

The allies had planned for this year a double and formidable invasion of France by way of Lorraine and through the Netherlands. Turenne was to stop the one, Condé the other. But the enemy was so slow in beginning operations that the conquest of Franche-Comté was finished before they had decided on their movements. Turenne was thus enabled to take the offensive : he crossed the Rhine at Philippsburg with 20,000 men, destroyed with fire the whole Palatinate in order to prevent the enemy from subsisting



there, and fought a number of unimportant engagements at Sinsheim and at Ladenburg in July, 1674, where he showed resources of tactics unheard of until then.<sup>d</sup> To this day numberless ruins of castles along the Rhine bear witness to the savage work of Turenne.<sup>a</sup>

The imperials numbered 40,000 men. Moreover it was known that the elector of Brandenburg, Frederick William, was coming with all haste at the head of 20,000 men to assist Bournonville [who replaced Montecuculi, who was ill, in the command of the imperial troops], and to crush the French

by superiority of numbers. This juncture once effected, the French would be done for. Already in Germany they spoke of nothing less than marching on Paris itself. Many princesses accompanied the elector, saying they would "make the acquaintance of the French ladies, to learn manners from this polite nation."

Fortunately Turenne was on the watch. To prevent the two armies joining, he began by attacking that which was nearer. He approached Bournonville by a forced march of forty hours, and, without even giving his soldiers time to rest, fell on the surprised imperialists at Enzheim and forced them to retire under the walls of Strasburg in the greatest disorder (October 4th, 1674). It was a great victory, but the numerical inferiority of his troops hindered his reaping its full fruits. Ten days after this victory the elector of Brandenburg in his turn passed the Kehl bridge and joined his 20,000 men to Bournonville's army. Turenne received scarcely sufficient reinforcements to repair his losses at Enzheim. The situation became more and more serious. How could it be thought that the genius of a single man could compensate for such an overwhelming disparity of forces — how believe that 20,000 Frenchmen could hold their own against 60,000



A CAPTAIN, TIME OF LOUIS XIV

Germans? No one doubted that the nation would soon be swallowed up in defeat. Fear gained ground in the northeast provinces; peasants abandoned their fields and flocked into the towns to seek shelter from the enemy. Even at Paris great anxiety prevailed. It seemed as if the capital of France would soon be at the mercy of the German army.

Alsace comprises the country between the Rhine and the Vosges, forming, from Hüningen or Belfort at the south, to Weissenburg on the Lauter at the north, a long band of territory of almost constant breadth. The river and mountain which serve for limits for this province in the east and west run nearly parallel one with the other. The Vosges separate Alsace from Lorraine. After the juncture of the two armies near Strasburg on the 14th of October, Turenne retired slowly in good order in the direction of the defiles which assured communication between Alsace and Lorraine. The Germans followed the same route in this retrograde march. By this time November

[1674-1675 A.D.]

had arrived with its cold and snow. The German generals, reassured by Turenne's retreat, thought the campaign over. So they postponed military operations until the following spring, as well as the invasion of Lorraine or Franche-Comté, and thought of wintering quietly in Alsace. To get more supplies, they spread their troops all through the province and installed them in quarters separated one from the other. Seventy thousand imperials or Brandenburgers thus took up quarters from Strasburg to Belfort in upper and lower Alsacé. Frederick William installed himself at Colmar, where his wife and court joined him. The only thought now was how to speed the cold and rainy season by the help of *fêtes*.

Meanwhile Turenne was quietly marching on Lorraine with his troops. On the 29th of November the last French soldier left Alsace by the defile of Lützelstein, in the north of Zabern. The news reached Paris. The court murmured; Louvois let loose his wrath against the marshal who had failed to save Alsace; the people, who had had a momentary hope after the success at Enzheim, gave themselves up again to despair.

Turenne, not condescending to reassure public opinion—an opinion clearly against him—began to put into execution the admirable plan he had conceived. He divided his army into many detachments, placed them under the direction of experienced officers, to whom his only instructions were that they should defile from north to south along the western slopes of the Vosges; and reunite on a given day in the neighbourhood of Belfort. Thus, while the enemy dispersed itself imprudently in its winter quarters, the French army, concealing its intention by means of the Vosges chain, concentrated itself in upper Alsace. Issuing from the province near Zabern in the north, it re-entered at forty leagues from there, near Belfort in the south. Success complete, unheard of, crowned this splendid stroke of genius. Such was the devotion of the French soldiers to their chief that they accepted without murmuring the necessity of marching in the depths of winter, in a country without roads, covered with snow and intersected with torrents. From the 5th to the 27th of December, the army, at the cost of incredible fatigue, marched from Lützelstein to the pass of Belfort. There the marshal reassumed in person the command of the troops, which he had divided up to facilitate the march. On the 29th of December he came upon the first body of the enemy, near Mülhausen, and destroyed it. Horrified at this sudden appearance, in upper Alsace, of an army they had thought to be encamped in Lorraine, near Nancy or Metz, the German generals realised the mistake they had made in dispersing their forces. They tried to repair the fault by sending orders for concentration in every direction.

It was too late. Turenne advanced with lightning speed. From Mülhausen, the place of his first victory, he went northwards. Near Colmar, by Türkheim, the imperials showed fight. He attacked them furiously on the 5th of January, 1675, and put them to flight. The remnant of the enemy retired on Schlettstadt. The marshal pursued them without giving them any rest. From Schlettstadt he pursued them at the sword's point to Strasburg, making an immense number of prisoners and carrying off cannon and standards. On the 11th of January the small number of Germans who had not been put *hors de combat*, killed, or taken, during this terrible campaign, recrossed the bridge of Kehl in the greatest disorder (1675). Alsace was delivered. A formidable invasion was spared to France.<sup>k</sup>

This campaign prepared with such secrecy, executed with an adroitness so prudent, was ended in less than six weeks, and excited the enthusiasm of the whole of France; Louis XIV wrote to the marshal: "I hope you will

soon return, as I am most impatient to see you to demonstrate to you by word of mouth how much I appreciate the great and important services you have rendered me, in the last victory you have gained over my enemies." On the entire route the inhabitants whom Turenne had saved from the ravages of war turned out filled with admiration and gratitude, so that his return was a march of triumph until he reached St. Germain.

#### CONDÉ IN THE NETHERLANDS

While Turenne was victorious in foiling the invasion from the east, Condé arrested that of the north. He prevented 90,000 Spaniards and Dutch from invading Champagne. He entrenched himself at Charleroi, with the Sambre behind him, in a position where the prince of Orange dared not attack him. Condé, who did not voluntarily prolong the war of defence, pursued the enemy to his retreat and attacked the rearguard at Seneffe, near Mons (August, 1674), routing it completely, broke through the centre, and attacked and threw into disorder the remainder of the army, which was drawn up in a very strong position. When night came, he had had three horses shot under him, and the victory was still undecided. "He now," says an eye-witness, La Fare,<sup>1</sup> "ordered new battalions to advance and cannon to be brought forward to attack the enemy at daybreak. All who heard this order trembled, and it was very evident that he was the only one who still desired to continue the battle." The following day, the two armies separated with an equal loss of from seven to eight thousand men.

The prince of Orange, in order to prove that he had not been defeated, besieged Oudenarde. Condé proved himself the victor, and forced him to abandon this enterprise; but Grave, the last of the French conquests in Holland, opened its gates. Chamilly had defended it ninety-three days, and caused the loss of 16,000 men to the assailants.

#### LAST CAMPAIGNS OF TURENNE AND CONDÉ (1675 A.D.)

In the early summer (June, 1675) Turenne returned at the head of his army of the Rhine. He moved into the Palatinate. The emperor opposed him with Montecuculi, who passed for a consummate tactician. They took six weeks to follow and observe each other, and their reputations which had seemed to have reached their apogee were still more augmented by these actions. Finally they decided to come to battle near the village of Salzbach in a place chosen by Turenne; where he believed himself certain of victory, when the marshal on examining the position of a battery was struck by a stray shot, which also tore off the arm of Saint-Hilaire, lieutenant-general of the army (July 27th, 1675). The latter's son burst into tears. "It is not for me that you should weep," said Saint-Hilaire to him, "but for this great man." Turenne's death was truly a national calamity. Louis XIV, in order to show honour to the greatest military leader of his century, had him interred at St. Denis, in the royal sepulchre. But in time, the memory of the services of Turenne grew fainter, at least at court, and his reputation appeared overestimated. In 1710 in the midst of the distress of the War of the Succession, his family built a mausoleum for him in the chapel of St. Eustace. By order of the king, the ornamentations and armorial bearings were destroyed, under the pretext that they were not suitable to such a sacred spot.



[1675-1676 A.D.]

The death of Turenne undid the whole result of an able campaign. The French, discouraged and seemingly seized with a panic of terror, fled in the direction of the Rhine. Montecuculi penetrated into Alsace by the bridge of Strasburg. At the same time the duke of Lorraine, Charles IV, hastened to besiege the city of Treves with 20,000 men. Créqui tried to come to his assistance, but was beaten at Consarbrück. He rushed into the town, and after several weeks of heroic defence was obliged to capitulate through the cowardice of the garrison (September, 1675). "His misfortune," says Condé, "made him a great general." Condé was right.

After the death of Turenne, Condé was sent to Alsace to arrest the progress of Montecuculi and to reanimate the confidence of the troops. He forced the imperials to raise the sieges of Zabern and Hagenau, and to recross the Rhine. This was his last victory; he never again appeared at the head of the armies, but retired to Chantilly, where he lived thereafter in the society of men of letters and philosophers. During the campaign in Holland, he sought an interview with Spinoza, and when Malebranche published his *Recherche de la vérité* he sought to meet the author. He enjoyed holding erudite conversations as much as fighting battles, taking part in them with intelligence, with ardour, and sometimes, says La Fontaine, took reason, like victory, by the throat! If in conversations on literature he was sustaining a good cause he spoke with much grace and gentleness, but if he upheld a bad one it was not wise to contradict him. Boileau was once so astonished, relates Louis Racine, by the fire of his eyes in a dispute of that nature, that he prudently yielded, and said in a low voice to his neighbour, "From now on I shall always agree with the prince whenever he is in the wrong." Bossuet says, "What a charming picture is presented to us in the avenues of Chantilly, where the fountains play unceasingly by day and by night, and our greatest poets debate with one of our greatest warriors."

## EVENTS OF 1676; AFFAIRS IN SICILY

In the following year (1676) the same campaign of sieges of which Louis was so fond was recommenced. Condé and Bouchain were taken; Maestricht, besieged by the prince of Orange, was delivered; but the Germans re-entered Philippsburg, which Fay defended three months and did not give up until he ran out of powder. An unexpected victory, however, consoled France for these slight successes and reverses. The inhabitants of Messina, in Sicily, revolting against Spain, had placed themselves under the protection of Louis XIV in 1675. He sent them a fleet commanded by the duke de Vivonne, brother of Madame de Montespan, who had Duquesne under him. This illustrious sailor, born at Dieppe in 1610, had begun life as a privateer and pirate; after which he had entered the service of Sweden, where he acquired some reputation. Returning to France in order to enter the royal navy, he passed through all grades, became lieutenant-general, but could not rise any higher as he was a Protestant. On the coasts of Sicily his adversaries were De Ruyter and the Spanish. The first battle fought near the island of Stromboli was undecided (1676); a second combat off Syracuse was a complete victory; De Ruyter was killed there.

Louis XIV ordered military honours to be paid by all French ports to the vessel which transported to Holland the remains of that great naval hero. Finally Duquesne, Vivonne, and Tourville, in a last encounter at Palermo, crushed the hostile fleets. France had for a time the control of the Mediterranean (1676).

The Dutch had taken Cayenne in that same year, and ravaged the French Antilles. The vice-admiral D'Estrées armed, at his own expense, eight ships with which the king intrusted him, in consideration of reserving half the prizes. He retook Cayenne and destroyed ten ships of the enemy in the harbour of Tobago where they had thought themselves to be in security. In 1678 he took the island itself and all the Dutch factories in Senegal. The French flag now floated over the Atlantic as it did over the Mediterranean.<sup>d</sup>

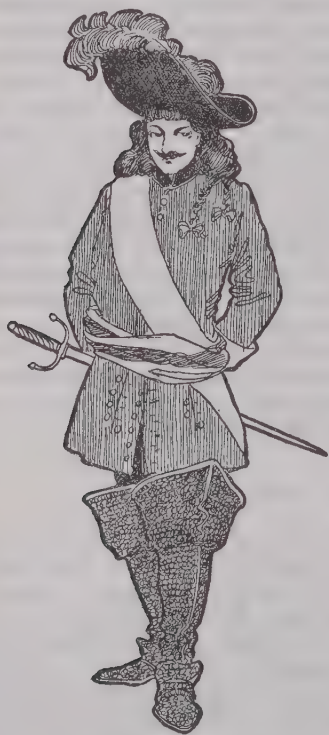
In spite of the sufferings of his kingdom Louis XIV persisted in 1676 in the conditions he wished to impose on England and the empire, and which these two powers were unwilling to accept. He was still flattering himself

over being able to keep England in the neutrality [she had committed herself to by the treaty of peace with Holland in 1674]. England's neutrality was indeed what concerned him most. He gave money to Charles II and gave orders to the ambassadors, Ruvigny and Courtin, to distribute more money, among such ministers, courtiers, and members of parliament as they could win over. But the English desired that, at any price, Louis should return his conquests or that Charles II should join the Dutch to crush him. Parliament demanded the recall of those English troops which Churchill was commanding in the army of the Rhine.

Charles himself was only desirous of satisfying public opinion; and of conciliating that satisfaction with what he had promised Louis. He believed he would do this by assuming the rôle of a mediator. He started the idea of a congress that it was difficult for the powers to reject, and which was particularly pleasing to Holland, overcome by the burden of maritime war. During the preliminary negotiations of the congress, for which the town of Nimeguen was chosen, Charles signed a new secret treaty with Louis XIV (February, 1676), the two kings reciprocally engaging to make no separate peace with the Dutch. Louis

XIV on his side overwhelmed the prince of Orange with offers that would detach him from Spain. All was useless.

The campaign of 1677 was preceded like that of 1676 by several attempts at negotiations in England and Holland. Courtin, who had replaced Ruvigny in England, wrote to Louis XIV that it was absolutely necessary to detach the prince of Orange from his allies, which might be accomplished by the intervention of Charles II. In consequence the king renewed to Orange and the states-general his former offers. He proposed to abandon the places necessary to cover Ghent and Brussels, to make a commercial treaty with Holland, and to conclude with her an eight years' truce which would give Spain the time to reflect. If, on the expiration of the delay, Spain persisted in sustaining other claims, France and Holland would divide the



SOLDIER, TIME OF LOUIS XIV

[1677 A.D.]

Netherlands between them. William did not absolutely repel these conditions, but replied that he could not abandon his allies without dishonour.

In order to have some faith placed in his pretended moderation, Louis signed with Charles II, on February 24th, a commercial treaty which offered some advantage to the English. Charles II insisted that France should make peace. He represented that Holland would not separate from her allies, that in the end he would be obliged to uphold her, and that he could not continually go against the sentiments and interests of his subjects.

The enterprises in Sicily had brought England's uneasiness to a climax. She already saw the ruin of her trade with the Levant, and Charles II proposed a project of peace, the basis of which was that France should keep Franche-Comté and a part of the places conquered in the Netherlands; that she should grant the Dutch a barrier and a commercial treaty; that she should indemnify the duke of Lorraine and abandon Sicily; but it remained to come to an understanding on a number of particular points and on the determination of the places that should remain to Louis XIV. The latter wished to give up only three — Charleroi, Ath, Oudenarde; and he demanded that Spain should cede him Ypres, Charlemont, and Luxemburg in exchange. He was all the more obstinate because he knew the states-general were tired of war and the damage inflicted upon commerce. He hoped to separate them from the prince of Orange, through the establishment of a barrier and some tariff concessions, but these concessions were so weak that the Dutch only laughed at them. As for the congress of Nimeguen, where the discussion of the propositions between the plenipotentiaries of the various countries began on the 6th of May, 1677, it would necessarily take too much time to put a stop to military events.<sup>b</sup>

## CAMPAIGN OF 1677; NEGOTIATIONS FOR PEACE

Créqui had succeeded Turenne in Germany, Luxemburg replaced Condé in the Netherlands. The former made amends for his defeat at Consarbrück by a campaign worthy of Turenne. By a succession of quick marches, which kept him constantly between the enemy and the French frontier, he covered Alsace and Lorraine against an adversary superior in numbers, defeated him at Kochersberg, between Strasburg and Zabern (October 7th, 1677), and took Freiburg from him, thus taking the war to the right bank of the Rhine. Luxemburg, who resembled more the victor of Rocroi, captured Valenciennes in conjunction with the king, where the musketeers raised formidable works in broad daylight, then Cambray, and with Monsieur, against the prince of Orange, fought the battle of Cassel, near St. Omer, which capitulated (April, 1677).<sup>d</sup>

The coalition was now seriously shaken. Orange was everywhere accused of small ability for leadership. At Brussels and at Ghent the people broke loose against the Dutch. Even in Holland the peace party began to be demonstrative. Louis XIV reduced his tariff by half, in October, 1677, in order to stimulate the pacific desires of the Dutch. The latter, exhausted and tired of continually paying useless subsidies to their allies, complained that the Spaniards were always behindhand in fulfilling their engagements, that the Germans never left Germany, and that the prince of Orange never found provisions or stores in Belgium.

William and his partisans replied to these complaints that the honour of the country was at stake, that the United Provinces could not abandon the allies to whom they owed their salvation, and he had still one resource.



This was to force England, which according to him was alone capable of doing it, to call a halt to the armies of Louis XIV. He went to London, where Charles II not only authorised but desired his presence, believing that it would be a convincing response to the defiance and murmurs of the nation. Scarcely had the prince arrived when he asked the hand of Mary, daughter of the duke of York. The king, who had long judged this alliance necessary, hastened to grant it. The marriage was celebrated on the 15th of November.

Charles II believed that Louis XIV would now raise no obstacle to accepting the proposals of peace; but he was mistaken—Louis rejected them, as going too far beyond those he had proposed himself, and which he already considered too moderate. The other powers, Spain and the empire, also declined them and preferred to continue the war. Charles II, having signed a treaty with the states-general on January 10th, 1678, found himself compelled to go further than he wished. He was obliged to recall the English troops serving in the French army and to prepare armaments.

Louis XIV took little notice of these demonstrations, strengthened the remainder of his armies, and decided to strike a great blow in the Netherlands, where Vauban had just retaken St. Ghislain in the depths of winter.

At the opening of the campaign of 1678, France could count on 219,000 men under arms, of whom half, it is true, were only fit for garrison service. Louvois was resolved to capture Ghent, and deceived the enemy by false demonstrations on other places, which led them to reduce the garrison at Ghent. When this had been done, he suddenly appeared under the walls of the town on the 1st of March. In less than two days 70,000 men were assembled and the siege was begun. Louis XIV, who had gone on a journey to Metz and the borders of the Maas to outwit the Spaniards, suddenly changed his direction and arrived on the 4th. The queen and the court followed closely, but stopped at Tournay. Four marshals, Humières, Luxemburg, Schomberg, and Lorges, assisted the king, Vauban pressed the works. The town, in spite of its siege and the number of watercourses and canals protecting it, was promptly surrounded. The 500 men forming the garrison declined to defend it. It surrendered the 9th, and on the 11th the castle capitulated. The army now marched upon Ypres, which it took on the 25th after eight days of entrenchment and in spite of a bloody resistance. The king, after this rapid campaign and its two important acquisitions, returned to St. Germain on the 7th of April.

Louis XIV now believed himself secure in imposing his conditions. He sent them the 9th of April to Nimeguen and to London: they were the same as before the taking of Ghent and Ypres. He allowed his plenipotentiary a month to have them accepted, but this term was further extended to the 10th of August. The latest successes of the French had had the effect that Louis XIV hoped for, that of strengthening the peace party in Holland. Amsterdam and the large towns refused to prolong these sacrifices. Charles II hastened to approve the French conditions. The Dutch, ready to agree to Louis' commercial stipulations, did not find his proposed restitution of places sufficient to form such an efficient barrier that they could oblige Spain to accept. Suddenly Villa-Hermosa (successor of Monterey in the governorship of the Spanish Netherlands) received the order from his court to lay down his arms. The Madrid cabinet, divided and exhausted, had resigned itself to the abandonment of that which had been lost, from fear of losing that which was still retained. This decision relieved the states of Holland of their last scruples. Louis XIV then put forward a condition which was

[1678 A.D.]

nearly the ruin of everything. He declared that, in engaging to restore Maestricht and the other places on the Maas of which he was master, he intended to maintain garrisons in them until his ally Sweden should have recovered that which Denmark and Brandenburg had taken from her. This exigence aroused the Spaniards, disconcerted the Dutch, exasperated the English, and drove Charles II to despair. They gave up all hope of ending the war. On July 26th, Charles II signed a treaty of defensive alliance with the states-général.

Louis XIV realised the necessity of getting out of this hole, and as he did not wish to recede, he engaged Sweden to ask the withdrawal of this condition, which Charles XI generously did. The Dutch plenipotentiaries at Nimeguen, Van Beverningk, Odyk, and Van Haren asked on August 7th for a conference with the French plenipotentiaries, D'Estrades, D'Avaux, and Colbert. They debated together for more than twenty-four hours, and finally, before midnight on the 10th, they signed a treaty of peace and a treaty of commerce with France.<sup>1</sup>

#### LOUIS XIV SETTLES WITH THE COALITION (1678-1679 A.D.)

The first treaty returned to the states-general Maestricht and the little towns which Louis XIV had kept in the vicinity and in Limburg, on sole condition that free exercise of the Catholic religion should be allowed. The second re-established freedom of commerce and navigation between the two peoples.

D'Estrades brought in person the news of the treaty to Marshal de Luxembourg, encamped on the plateau of Casteaux not far from Mons, which a detachment of his troops was blockading. The prince of Orange, who had come face to face with the French army with almost equal forces (45,000 men), knew of the Peace of Nimeguen, but had not yet received official notice. He began a sharp attack upon Luxembourg, and the battle raged for six hours around the abbey of St. Denis. It was a hard fight. A regiment of French refugees fighting under the Dutch flag was literally hacked to pieces. The day remained undecided; and on the next the courier announcing the peace arrived in the Dutch camp, and the two armies separated.

The Dutch having signed the peace were assailed with violent recriminations on the part of their German allies, especially the elector of Brandenburg, the king of Denmark, and the bishop of Münster. But the great point for them was to obtain the definite adhesion of Spain. The latter country, exhausted and ill-governed, had long shown a great repugnance to making peace. But as soon as Charles II had attained the age of fourteen, his majority, the great personages of the kingdom forced the queen to drive Valenzuela out; then they compelled her to accept exile herself. Don John took the title of prime minister and seized the government (June 20th, 1677). As the emperor insisted on the re-establishment of his sister, Maria Anna, Don John, almost embroiled with the court of Vienna, was compelled to lend his ear to pacific propositions.

The treaty between France and the court of Madrid was finally signed September 17th, 1678. Louis XIV restituted Courtrai, Oudenarde, Ath, and Charleroi, which the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle had given him; also Binche, St. Ghislain, Ghent Leuw, and Puigcerda in Catalonia, which Marshal de Navailles had taken that same year. On his side he retained with definite

[<sup>1</sup> The commercial party (the old one of De Witt) was attracted by Louis' offering commercial advantage, and thus forced the peace against the will of William of Orange.]

title St. Omer, Cassel, Aire, Bailleul, Poperinghe, Ypres, Wervicq, Warnton, Cambray, Bouchain, Valenciennes, Condé, Bavay, Mauberge, and the whole of Franche-Comté. The treaty of 1668 had in reality only been a truce, giving France advance posts in the heart of Belgium and leaving Spain with other places, isolated spots in the midst of French possessions, particularly on the borders of the Schelde. The treaty of 1678 established a much more regular border, by assuring France a series of strongholds bound one to the other, and closing all avenues to the kingdom from Dunkirk to the Maas, and leaving the Spanish Netherlands another series of places which offered the same advantages though in a less degree. The Treaty of Nimeguen was, in spite of a few restitutions demanded by Europe as a guarantee of peace, one of the most glorious and most advantageous that France had ever signed.

The emperor and the empire remained to be reckoned with. They were left out of the Dutch and Spanish treaties. They began by protesting and continuing the war. The imperial army, without stopping at the negotiations of Nimeguen, undertook, under the duke of Lorraine, to retake Freiburg in Breisgau, and to penetrate into Alsace. In May it appeared on the Rhine between Offenburg and Wilstett. Créqui was again charged with protecting Freiburg; and conducted a campaign which was as fortunate as it was able, and which placed a seal upon his fame. The Germans, reduced to powerlessness at every turn, quickly ended the campaign. The emperor, abandoned by the Dutch and embroiled with the Spaniards, ended by desiring peace. The possession of Philippsburg indemnified him for the loss of Strasburg. The princes of the empire, with the exception of a few in the north, refused to pursue the now objectless war. The subsidies of Spain and Holland had ceased. Leopold consented to a treaty which was signed January 15th, 1679, between the emperor, the empire, and France. The whole difficulty centred around the allies, whom Austria refused to abandon and for whom she demanded satisfaction. The king made a few concessions; but he would not give up Lorraine to Duke Charles except in retaining Nancy and four military routes. The duke rejected these conditions. Louis XIV also reserved to himself the right of passage through eight towns of the empire, to join the duchy of Cleves, and to continue the struggle with the elector of Brandenburg.

The imperial princes, interested in keeping their conquests over the Swedes, were the only ones who would not lay down their arms. They did not have to wait long to see themselves forced to do so, for Louis XIV was not willing at any price to abandon unfortunate allies whose actions had been of service to him. Pecuniary indemnity served to interest the dukes of Brunswick, Lüneburg, and the bishop of Münster. The elector of Brandenburg refused this sort of compensation. Créqui entered the duchy of Cleves, occupied the county of Mark, [the two possessions of the elector by the Rhine] and the town of Lippstadt beyond the Rhine, and advanced as far as the Weser, whose passage he forced June 30th, near Minden. The elector, incapable of continuing this unequal struggle, had on the eve of that day made his submission. His envoy signed at St. Germain a treaty by which he restored to the Swedes that which he had taken from them, stipulating a rectification of the Pomeranian frontier, and an indemnity of 300,000 crowns which France paid. The king of Denmark was the last to treat. He restored the towns he had taken, but received no pecuniary indemnity. These successive treaties, consequent upon those of Nimeguen, re-established things in Germany almost upon the footing of the Treaty of Westphalia.



[1680 A.D.]

All the powers had been weakened in the eight years' war. Holland alone escaped almost intact from the storm which had threatened to destroy her. As for Louis XIV, he emerged from the struggle aggrandised and triumphant. He triumphed all the more in that he owed nothing to anyone — not even to the king of England, who, having shown himself equally incapable of making war or peace, now raised against himself as much scorn in France as hatred in his own state. If France had suffered considerably from a prolonged struggle which demanded enormous sacrifices, she had displayed resources superior to those of any other power, although Holland had shown herself the richer in proportion. France had struggled single-handed against the empire. The king's proud device, "*Nec pluribus impar*," was justified. The courtiers and the soldiers were unanimous in granting him the title of Louis the Great; an equestrian statue representing him in the costume of a Roman emperor was raised a short time after in Paris in a square which was called the Place des Victoires,<sup>b</sup>





## CHAPTER XXI

### THE HEIGHT AND DECLINE OF THE BOURBON MONARCHY

[1679-1715 A.D.]

Louis had many royal qualities—a noble presence; manners full of grace and dignity; an elocution at once majestic and seductive; unwearied assiduity in business; a luminous understanding; an instinctive taste for whatever is magnificent in thought or action; and a genuine zeal for the welfare of his people. But for the high office of moulding and conducting the policy of the greatest of the nations of the civilised world, he wanted three indispensable gifts—an education so liberal as to have revealed to him the real interests and resources of his kingdom; the faculty by which a true statesman, in the silence of all established precedents, originates measures adapted to the innovations, whether progressive or immediate, of his times; and that dominion over passion and appetite which is the one essential condition of all true mental independence. Without such knowledge, such invention, and such self-control, Louis could not really think, and therefore could not really act for himself. — *Stephen.*<sup>3</sup>

AFTER Nimeguen, Louis XIV was at the climax of his fortunes. He had no equal among the other sovereigns of Europe. If he had not realised all his ambitions, if he had made political mistakes and military mistakes he had none the less shown a vigour, a spirit of continuity, a power of calculation and often a rectitude of judgment which placed him far above contemporary princes. He was served by great men, and he had always known how to direct them and appropriate their work to himself, although he had sometimes conceded too much to Louvois, and yielded too much to the desire to display in war the brilliance of his court. He continually saw everything and did everything himself in order to train himself by work, and, as he said, by this means to complete his ideas.

In 1679 France, instead of returning to her ancient peace footing, preserved an effective force of 140,000 men, part of which was so organised as to be able to take the field immediately. The maintenance of this armament had for its object the support of certain pretensions relative to the regulation of the frontiers. At Nimeguen the territories ceded on either side had not been delimited in a definite manner. Louis XIV and Louvois calculated on profiting by this circumstance to make new acquisitions. Louvois was ambitious of deriving as much advantage from peace as from war.

[1679-1680 A.D.]

Louvois no longer directed military affairs alone. For a long time he had been encroaching on the office of the secretary of state for foreign affairs. Pomponne, who complained of this and who lacked the authority and energy necessary to resist him, was disgraced. His successor was Colbert's own brother, Colbert de Croissy, formerly ambassador to London and plenipotentiary to the congress of Aix-la-Chapelle and Nimeguen; but Louvois' influence in diplomacy remained none the less preponderant.

## ACQUISITION OF FRONTIER PLACES (1679-1681 A.D.)

The regulation of the frontiers on the side of the Spanish Netherlands was debated in a conference which was opened at Courtrai in the month of December, 1679. During the long discussions which occupied it Louvois' ambition was particularly directed towards the eastern frontier, where he could proceed by other means than diplomatic arguments. As early as 1679 he occupied Homburg and Bitche, dependencies of Lorraine which had been pledged by Duke Charles IV to the electors of Treves and Mainz. He made the parliament of Besançon pronounce two decrees, the one of September 8th, 1679, which declared the reunion to Franche-Comté of the castellanies of Clermont, Châtelet, and Blamont—that is to say, more than eighty villages, forming part of the principality of Montbéliard, the property of the dukes of Würtemberg; the other, dated the 31st of August, 1680, declared the reunion of the principality itself.

At the parliament of Metz Louis instituted a *chambre de réunion*, intended to search out all the dependencies of the Three Bishoprics, that is to say, the territories which might be claimed as their fiefs by any title whatsoever. This question of dependencies had been the subject of old disputes between France and the empire. Louvois resolved to settle them finally by simple judiciary decrees and without beginning vexatious lawsuits with the empire and the German princes. He drew up himself, or caused to be drawn up under his own eyes, detailed instructions for the king's *procureur* of the *chambre de réunion* at Metz. The result of this inquiry was to reunite to France about eighty fiefs. The county of Zweibrücken was vacant and several competitors were disputing for it; Louvois seized it in virtue of a very ancient feudal right found in the title deeds of the bishopric of Metz. The king of Sweden, Charles XI, one of the principal claimants, protested; he was offered a sum of money to indemnify him. He refused to sell his rights and abandoned France, whose ally he had been in the late wars, to throw himself on the side of her enemies.

Another dispute—less old, since it dated only from the Treaty of Westphalia, but not less important—had for object the empire's jurisdiction in Alsace and the territories of ten towns reunited to France in 1648. Louis XIV had never recognised this jurisdiction; he had imposed oaths on the towns of Alsace which reserved his own rights and had taken little account of their privileges when these inconvenienced his armies. He had contented himself with conceding them, after the war, certain abatements of taxes under the name of compensation. In 1680 the sovereign council of Alsace, instituted by Mazarin at Ensisheim and afterwards transferred to Breisach, decreed the suppression of all imperial jurisdictions in the province and proceeded to reunions of territories, similar to those of the Three Bishoprics.

The reunion of Strasburg which was the most considerable was accomplished in another fashion. Strasburg, a free imperial city, had given good grounds for complaint, inasmuch as she had observed her neutrality but ill



during the last war; she had on several occasions delivered the bridge over the Rhine to the imperial troops. Louvois began by withdrawing certain neighbouring territories from the jurisdiction of Strasburg; then, eluding the vigilance of the imperial troops, he sent into Alsace 35,000 men, whom he scattered, but in such a manner as to be able to assemble them again at a given point. He watched for a favourable opportunity. The arrival in the city of an officer of the emperor having furnished him with the pretext he was seeking, he caused the approaches and the passage of the Rhine to be suddenly

occupied by his troops during the night of the 27-28th of September, 1681. The inhabitants, taken by surprise, demanded explanations. The French resident knew nothing; the officer who led the troops referred them to Montelar, the military commandant of Alsace. The latter informed them that he had orders to obtain their recognition of the sovereignty of France; but that otherwise their municipal, religious, and other privileges would be preserved.

The magistrates wrote to the diet and to the emperor to notify them of the extremity to which they found themselves reduced; their letters were intercepted. As they were not in a position to offer the least resistance they demanded to be allowed to consult the people. This consultation could be only a matter of form; acquiescence was a matter of necessity. On the 30th the city capitulated. Louvois' first act was to restore the cathedral to the Cath-



FRANÇOIS MICHEL LE TELLIER, MARQUIS DE LOUVOIS  
(1641-1691)

olic clergy, whilst guaranteeing religious liberty to the Protestants. Without loss of time the construction of a citadel, barracks, and entrenched cantonments was taken in hand, less for security against the inhabitants than to oppose a powerful bulwark to the empire. On the 24th of October Louis XIV came to make a triumphal entry into his new acquisition.

On the 30th of September, 1681, the day of the entry of a French corps into Strasburg, another entered Casale. Louvois had long aimed at dominating Piedmont and through Piedmont Italy. Casale, added to Pinerolo, should furnish him the means. Casale was a possession of the duke of Mantua. This duke was a debauched and prodigal prince, in pressing need of money.

On the 8th of July, 1681, a treaty was secretly signed at Mantua, between the duke and a French agent who had no official character, the abbé Morel. Some troops had been collected in Dauphiné and at Pinerolo. A passage for these troops was requested of the duchess of Savoy [widow of Charles Emmanuel and regent for the infant duke], with the threat that it would be insisted on. Finally, on the 30th of September, Catinat, who had been at Pinerolo incognito for several months, took possession [not only of

[1681 A.D.]

the citadel but of the castle and town of Casale in the name of Louis XIV.

Henceforth Piedmont was shut in between two French fortresses and Louvois assumed towards her the tone of a master. But the regent of Savoy resisted with extreme vigour; it was almost necessary to employ violence to obtain from her a free passage for the French troops passing from Pinerolo to Montferrat. Finally, in order to save the independence of Savoy, she accepted the condition of marrying her son to Mademoiselle d'Orléans, Monsieur's daughter (in 1684). Louis XIV thought that this marriage would complete the deliverance into his hands of Piedmont and secure him the entrance into Italy. He believed that the other Italian states were now condemned to submit to his dictation. The contrary was the case. Italy kept silence; but as soon as Victor Amadeus found an opportunity of escaping from France, which he detested, he had no difficulty in raising the peninsula against her.

The reunions declared in the Three Bishoprics and Alsace, and the occupation of Strasburg and Casale, did not make Louvois forget the conferences of Courtrai. The Spaniards showed in these conferences as much ill-will as weakness and sought to prolong them. They had pledged themselves to hand over Charlemont in exchange for Dinant, which was to be restored to them. They did not do so until 1681 after an infinite amount of chicanery. Louvois profited by these delays; he had the address to negotiate with the bishop of Liège, to whom Dinant belonged, a direct cession of that town to France and made use of this cession as an authority for not surrendering it to Spain. Almost immediately afterwards he occupied the little county of Chiny in Luxemburg, in virtue of an ancient title of the bishopric of Metz. He sent troops thither to make what was called a "pacific execution"; the country was reunited to the crown, and the work of hunting up his dependencies was taken in hand.

At last, on the 4th of August, 1681, Louis XIV notified the conference of Courtrai of his claims. They comprehended the castellany of Alost, the towns of Grammont, Ninove, Lessines, and various territories. He offered, it is true, to exchange those towns and territories which might be necessary for the defence of Brussels, in return for "equivalents." The Spaniards protesting against these pretensions, Louvois increased the French troops of the county of Chiny, established a sort of blockade round Luxemburg, seized the first difficulty which arose in consequence as a *casus belli*, pressed the blockade still closer during the winter, and made every preparation to make himself master of the place in the spring.



MARQUIS ABRAHAM DUQUESNE  
(1610-1688)

Nothing was more popular in France than this policy of aggrandisement. Men took little trouble to find out whether it were just or safe. It was enough that it should flatter national feeling and the military passions then greatly over-excited.

#### PREPARATIONS FOR A SECOND COALITION (1681-1682 A.D.)

But if France thus made herself the accomplice of the enterprises and the ambition of the king, it was not possible for Europe to content herself with being a passive spectator. Whilst Spain was discussing and protesting at Courtrai, Germany was discussing and protesting at Ratisbon and Frankfurt. Sweden was irritated, Italy discontented, Holland embarrassed. All the powers showed themselves attentive and anxious. None was strong enough to struggle alone; the question was whether, after a coalition dissolved at Nimeguen they would succeed in again drawing together and coming to an understanding.

Louis XIV had reason to fear it. Therefore, in spite of the disdainful majesty of his diplomacy, he endeavoured to make some of them advances of a nature calculated to flatter. The year which followed the Treaty of Nimeguen he married the eldest of his nieces, a very young girl, the eldest daughter of Monsieur and of Henrietta of England, to the king of Spain, Charles II. The young princess Marie Louise was the victim of policy and obliged to accept a union repugnant to her. The same year the dauphin, aged scarcely eighteen years, married a princess of Bavaria. The king was eager to secure the elector of Bavaria, who had been faithful to him since 1670; he hoped to strengthen himself in Germany by this alliance. The marriage of Monsieur's second daughter to the duke of Savoy, Victor Amadeus, which was concluded soon after, in 1684, had for object the extension of French influence in Italy.

Dutch patriotism had been on the watch against the ambition of Louis XIV. William had no difficulty in seizing the weapons the king gave him. He denounced French policy to Europe in a host of pamphlets which circulated everywhere. The answers which Louis XIV in his turn circulated, the language which he dictated to his envoys, did not bring reassurance.

The prince of Orange believed that in order to form another stronger and more solid coalition it was needful to provide a centre and a head. The centre should be Holland; the head himself. He began by joining with the king of Sweden, Charles XI, who, despoiled of his pretensions to the duchy of Zweibrücken, was the more irritated against France because he had been her ally. Sweden and Holland signed a treaty at the Hague, September 30th, 1681, to guarantee those of Westphalia and Nimeguen. The two princes solicited adhesions everywhere; they obtained that of the emperor on the 28th of February, 1682. Louis XIV did not choose to wait till the coalition should have grown or till William had succoured Luxemburg. In March he gave his troops the order to withdraw from the positions they occupied before the town and abandoned his claims. That the coalition was formidable is proved by the fact that Spain entered into it on the second of May and that this example was followed in the course of the year by an infinity of German princes, even by the elector of Bavaria.

In 1682 Louis XIV had stopped his progress before Luxemburg and had submitted his claims to the arbitration of the king of England who had already been mediator at Nimeguen. He had recoiled before the threat of a coalition



[1682-1684 A.D.]

and the indignation of the Germans, although in this direction he had secured the alliance of the elector of Brandenburg and of the king of Denmark, both recently his enemies but disposed to serve him since he was on bad terms with Sweden. In spite of the generosity he affected he seized an opportunity which presented itself to make the prince of Orange feel his vengeance. William had a lawsuit with the duchess de Nemours; the king gave the order to occupy his principality. The town of Orange was dismantled and its sovereignty declared to have devolved on the crown (August, 1682).<sup>1</sup> The prince sent Heinsius (the grand pensionary) to make complaint at Paris; he could obtain nothing and preserved keen resentment in consequence.

The empire through the diet at Ratisbon and the congress of Frankfort claimed various restitutions from France. However, Germany being then greatly threatened by the Turks, the majority of the princes restrained their irritation; they had even tried to obtain the king's support and assistance. Louis XIV held out hopes to them, but solely for the purpose of resuming in the empire the influence which he had had there at the time of the league of the Rhine, and in order to play the part of saviour.

In 1683 Louis organised practice camps in Flanders, on the Saar, in Alsace, and on the Saône. On the 1st of September, just as Vienna was thought to be on the point of succumbing [to the Turks], 35,000 men entered Belgium. The Spaniards protested, retaliated by occupying French territories in their turn, and on the 26th of October launched a declaration of war. The French invested Courtrai which was dismantled, entered both it and Dixmude without difficulty and bombarded Luxemburg. In March, 1684, Humières bombarded Oudenarde. In April Créquy, accompanied by Vauban, besieged Luxemburg which, strong in natural fortifications, was also heroically defended; but the genius of Vauban and the great resources of which he disposed triumphed over these difficulties and this resistance. On the 4th of June the garrison surrendered. Créquy then marched on Treves and filled up the town moats, in defiance of the elector's protest. At the same time Schomberg assisted the elector of Cologne, an ally of France, to restore his authority at Liège, which had shaken it off. Finally a French division under the command of Marshal de Bellefonds was sent into Catalonia.

Meantime Spain, in no condition to continue the war alone, was asking the Dutch and the emperor for their support or mediation. The struggle which the Germans were continuing in Hungary against the Turks compelled the powers to postpone their plans for a coalition. The Dutch assumed the character of mediators. Louis XIV again assumed an attitude of generosity and accepted their proposals on condition that they should recall a body of troops furnished by them to the governor of the Spanish Netherlands. A twenty years' truce was signed at Ratisbon—with Spain on the 11th of August, with the empire on the 15th. France kept Luxemburg, Beaumont, Bouvines, and Chimay, on consideration of restoring Courtrai and Dixmude. The empire recognised all the reunions effected, even that of Strasburg and of Kehl, on the sole condition that Louis XIV should abandon Tökely and the Hungarian rebels.<sup>2</sup>

[<sup>1</sup> It must be remembered however that the great opponent of France took his title from the principality of Orange, which is now in the department of Vaucluse by the Rhone, in southern France.]

[<sup>2</sup> Tökely was a Hungarian magnate—a Calvinist, who, implicated in a conspiracy, had aroused a portion of Hungary against the emperor. Louis XIV supported him in his war.]

## RELATIONS WITH TURKS AND BERBERS

During this time the Turks were again beginning to threaten Europe. Led by the Köprilis, viziers who were also great men, they had fallen on Poland, whose divisions seemed to deliver her up to them as a prey; and as they were suzerains of Transylvania they incessantly fomented revolts in Hungary against Austria. Louis XIV, in order to keep the empire's forces in check, took care to constantly favour the disturbances in Hungary and to maintain good relations with the porte.

The Turks were too proud and too distrustful; commercial privileges, annulled or evaded by the hostility of the pashas, were nothing but a cause of perpetual dispute. The piracies committed by the Berbers, tributaries of the grand seignior, were another. In 1681 some corsairs of Tripoli, pursued by Duquesne, took refuge under the protection of the pasha of Chios. Duquesne required that they should be delivered up to him and on the pasha's refusal cannonaded the town. The sultan sent his fleet to Chios; the French ambassador, Guilleragues, only succeeded in appeasing him by considerable presents. The following year Louis XIV, displeased with the divan, gave orders to Duquesne to punish the pirates of Algiers.

A shipbuilder of Bayonne, Renau, had just conceived the idea of a new form of vessel for use in bombardments. Duquesne made trial of it at Algiers and the trial was a complete success. The town was bombarded a first time August 30th, 1682, then twice more in June and August, 1683. The Algerians by way of reprisals set the European prisoners at the mouth of their cannons; the dey, who would have yielded, was put to death and replaced by one of his officers. The lack of ammunition, for these maritime bombardments were extremely costly, compelled Duquesne to retire before he had brought the enemy to terms. However, the Algerians ended by negotiating. Tourville, whom the admiral had left to cruise about with a squadron in sight of their port, signed the peace April 25th, 1684. The Algerians made reparation, restored the merchandise and captives they had carried off, engaged not to countenance other pirates, and gave all the guarantees required of them. Morocco had not expected to be attacked. In 1682 it had granted all the stipulations desirable, renewed the treaty of 1631, and consented to the institution or reorganisation of French consulates.<sup>b</sup>

Meanwhile a Christian city had been treated as though it were a den of pirates. The Genoese had sold arms and powder to the Algerians, and had built in their shipyards four war vessels for Spain, which had none of her own. Louis XIV forbade the Genoese to equip these ships; and, on their refusal, Duquesne and Seignelay in a few days threw 14,000 shells into the city, destroying a number of the palaces of Genoa la Superba (May, 1684). The doge had to come to Versailles to implore the king's pardon, in spite of an ancient law requiring the chief magistrate never to absent himself from the city. He was asked what was the strangest thing he saw at Versailles: "To see myself there," he replied.<sup>c</sup>

The significance of this humbling of Genoa is that this power was forced to abandon Spain, with which it had so long been in alliance, and become dependent upon France. Such a turn of affairs on the Mediterranean, added to the aggressions already made on the frontier, made war inevitable; but the old ally of Francis I, the Turk, was again the friend of the most Christian king. The emperor was too busy on his eastern frontier to pay attention to the west; and the accession of James II in England made William of Orange hesitate to act. In another year, however, the situation had changed.<sup>a</sup>

[1686-1689 A.D.]

## SECOND COALITION : THE LEAGUE OF AUGSBURG (1686 A.D.)

In the first months of 1686 various treaties were signed between Holland and Sweden, Sweden and Brandenburg, Brandenburg and the empire. All these states pledged themselves to guarantee the treaties of Westphalia, of Nineguen, and of Ratisbon, and protested against the reunions effected by Louis XIV. On the 9th of July the emperor, Spain, and Sweden as members of the empire, the elector of Bavaria, the circles of Bavaria and of Franconia, the princes of Saxony and others besides, formed at Augsburg a secret league, ostensibly for the preservation of the twenty years' truce, in reality to put an army of 60,000 men into the field against France. The league was to last for three years unless it were prorogued, and the command was to be given to the elector of Bavaria. The reason or pretext was the claim brought forward by Louis XIV to some territories which he maintained should belong to Madame as the heritage from her father, the elector palatine, who had died the preceding year.

William of Orange was again the soul of this coalition, although for the moment he affected to remain outside it; the king of Sweden was its principal promoter. The league was soon completed by the adhesion of Victor Amadeus and the other princes of Italy, though this was secret. The league in spite of very heterogeneous elements acquired a cohesive force which was quite new and held itself in readiness to take the offensive as soon as required.

Louis had flattered himself on converting the twenty years' truce into a definite peace, but the diet of Ratisbon formally refused this in January, 1687. He felt that he could not take a step without unchaining the tempest. Nevertheless he braved the pope and picked a quarrel with him.<sup>b</sup>

The Catholic ambassadors at Rome had stretched the right of asylum and immunity assumed from all time, and with reason, for their residences to the quarter in which they lived. Innocent XI wished to abolish this abuse which turned half the city into a den of criminals. He obtained without difficulty the consent of the other kings, but Louis, irritated against the pontiff on account of the *régat* (see chapter XIX) replied with haughtiness, that he had never acted on the example of others, and that it was for him to serve as an example. He sent the marquis de Lavardin with 800 armed *gentilshommes* to maintain himself in the possession of this unjust privilege. The pope excommunicated the ambassador; the king seized Avignon.

The matter was straightened out under Innocent XI's successor, but this pontiff conceived an intense dislike for him that was not without influence in the war of 1688. The occasion of this war was indeed the pope's opposition to France's candidate for the archiepiscopal see of Cologne, the cardinal von Fürstenberg who had thrown open the gates of Strasburg. He was elected by a majority of the chapter, fifteen votes against nine for his opponent, Clement of Bavaria. Nevertheless Innocent gave the latter the investiture.<sup>c</sup> Louis XIV had the papal nuncio put in prison and the Venaissin occupied by one of his officers, La Trousse, who expelled the vice-legat.

War was now begun against Europe and against the pope. Louis resolved to occupy Kaiserslautern and the cities of the Rhine. The dauphin, then twenty-six years old, was put at the head of the army of Germany. To assist him he was given Marshal de Duras, nephew of Turenne, and as lieutenant-generals Catinat, Montclar, Vauban, and Chamlay. "In sending you to command my army," Louis XIV said to him, "I give you opportunities of



exhibiting your merit; go and show it to all Europe, so that when I come to die it may not be noticed that the king is dead."

Open preparations had been avoided, but the dispositions had been so well taken that a few days sufficed to collect the troops before Philippsburg. The necessary artillery was drawn from Strasburg and Breisach, and the siege began the 27th of September; whilst Humières occupied the district of Liège with a first division, Boufflers with a second invaded the Cis-Rhenish Palatinate and seized Kaiserslautern, and finally Huxelles entered Speier with a third. Philippsburg was defended by the graf von Starhemberg. Vauban pressed the siege with his usual prudence and vigour in spite of the difficulties offered by the marshes which formed a girdle round the place. These difficulties were still further augmented by continual rains and a disastrous season.

Louvois requested the electors of Mainz and Treves to allow him to occupy Mainz and Coblenz. He had no idea of using moderation. The elector of Mainz admitted a French garrison into the capital. The markgraf of Baden-Durlach surrendered Durlach and Pforzheim. Heilbronn and Heidelberg opened their gates. But the elector of Treves refused to allow Coblenz to be occupied. The town was bombarded by Boufflers under Louvois' orders; the elector persisted in his refusal. Philippsburg capitulated on the 29th of October. The siege was murderous, especially for the engineers whom Vauban calls the "martyrs of the infantry." The siege of Mannheim was proceeded to without delay and occupied only a few days; the ill-paid soldiers of the elector palatine forced the governor to deliver up the town and citadel. Frankenthal surrendered in less than forty-eight hours and the French beheld themselves complete masters of the Palatinate.

Hitherto the French had had only inadequate garrisons to contend with. The only hostile force which had appeared was a corps of 3,000 men from Brandenburg which had entered Cologne under the orders of Schomberg, one of the refugee French Protestants. But Louvois permitted himself no illusions: all Germany was to be agitated in the ensuing campaign and if William of Orange, the soul of the league of Augsburg, had not taken the field, it was because he was at that very moment (November, 1688) taking possession of the throne of England. On the 26th of November war was declared between France and Holland. It did in fact exist between France and the emperor and the empire, although the official declaration of the diet of Ratisbon did not take place till somewhat later, the 24th of January, 1689.

#### THE REVOLUTION IN ENGLAND (1688 A.D.)

The English Revolution gave the greatest hopes to the league of Augsburg and the European coalition. Charles II had died in 1685. James II (the duke of York), who succeeded him, joined to the courage of a tried soldier more pride and decision of character. But his mediocrity, which afterwards impressed everyone in France, was early pointed out by the French envoys to the court of London. He resumed the projects formed before the Treaty of Dover—that is to say, he aimed at restoring Catholicism in his dominions, giving himself a permanent army, and suppressing the laws, such as that of *habeas corpus*, which seemed to encroach on his prerogative. These plans obliged him to seek the alliance of Louis XIV.

Now this alliance harmed more than it served him. The revocation of the Edict of Nantes alarmed the English Protestants, who believed, or affected to believe, that with a Catholic sovereign allied to Louis XIV their

[1689-1690 A.D.]

faith was in peril. James II addressed to all the foreign courts, as well as to his own subjects, declarations in which he blamed the persecution of the Huguenots; nowhere did he obtain credence.<sup>b</sup>

The Revolution which overthrew this "tyranny," and gave William III the throne of James II, was more than a mere substitution of royal personages. It changed royalty by divine right into royalty by consent, and founded the English constitutional or parliamentary monarchy. A new right, that of peoples, now arose in modern society, in the face of the absolute right of kings, which for two centuries had ruled them, and which was now finding in France its most glorious personification. There was nothing astonishing in the fearful struggle which now broke out between France and England. There was something more than two opposing interests; there were two different political ideas. In the sixteenth century, France had defended Protestantism and the liberties of Europe. In the seventeenth she threatened the conscience of the people and the independence of the states.

The rôle which France abandoned England now took up; she was to be the centre of all the coalitions against the house of Bourbon, as France had been the centre of resistance to the house of Austria. This political change upset all the conditions of war. While Louis was keeping England neutral by pensioning her kings, France had no one to fear on the continent, for, protected by the Pyrenees, the Alps, and the sea, she could face the Rhine and fight with both hands, without having to look behind. England now openly joined the league (1689). It was now necessary, not only to have armies on the Schelde, the Rhine, and in the Alps, but also fleets on the ocean, and in the most distant seas. It was the double effort that exhausted France.<sup>c</sup>

#### WAR OF THE LEAGUE OF AUGSBURG (1688-1697 A.D.)

War was declared on France by the diet of the empire, in the month of January, 1689; by England and Holland, in March; in April, by the elector of Brandenburg, and in May by Spain.<sup>b</sup>

Louis had, to oppose the coalition, 350,000 soldiers and 264 vessels or frigates. Single-handed against these princes, badly united among themselves, and obeying each other but badly, he mapped out a plan at the same time simple and bold. To overthrow William III would end the war at one stroke. Louis XIV intrusted a fleet to James II to aid him to remount his throne. Spain and Savoy were the two most feeble states of the league; the king turned against them the majority of his forces. On this side he attacked; on the Rhine, the whole of whose left bank almost to Coblenz he was occupying, he assumed the defensive, calculating that the Turks, whom he had just succeeded in inducing to break off negotiations with the emperor, would give that prince so much occupation on the lower Danube that France would have no fear of his sending a large force to the Rhine. Turenne, Condé, and Duquesne were dead; but Louis found able leaders to replace them — Luxemburg, Catinat, Boufflers, Lorges, and Tourville.

#### *Attempts to restore James II (1689-1692 A.D.)*

The war in favour of James II was fortunate at first. A squadron of thirteen large vessels carried the prince in May, 1689, to Ireland, Catholic like himself, and always groaning under the yoke of England. Convoys of troops, arms, and munitions left Le Havre, Brest, and Rochefort, protected by Château-Renaud, D'Estrées, and Tourville. The English and Dutch

[1690-1692 A.D.]

attempted to head them off. Château Renaud defeated one of these fleets in Bantry Bay; Tourville with 78 sail attacked their fleet off Beachy Head on the Sussex coast. Sixteen of the enemies' ships were sunk or burned on the shore, July 10th, 1690. This brilliant victory gave the empire of the ocean to Louis XIV for some time. But James II did not know how to follow it up. He had lost precious time at the siege of Londonderry, and William III attacked him on the Boyne, July 11th, 1690. The Irish, with their king, fled at the first attack; the French alone made some resistance. A regiment of Calvinist refugees under Marshal de Schomberg were especially prominent in routing the French. James II returned to France.

Louis XIV now prepared a descent on England itself; 20,000 men were assembled between Cherbourg and La Hogue; 300 transports were made ready at Brest. Tourville was to escort them with the 44 vessels he commanded and 30 others which D'Estrees was bringing him from Toulon. But the wind changed, and the Mediterranean fleet could not arrive in time. Louis XIV, accustomed to force a victory, and reckoning that a number of the English captains would pass to him, ordered his admiral to go seek the enemy, 99 sail strong. This was the battle of La Hogue, May 29th, 1692. Although there was no defection, Tourville held his own victoriously, for ten hours, against the Anglo-Dutch, who in spite of their numbers were more badly battered than the French. But it was impossible the next day to renew this heroic temerity: Tourville would at least have made a glorious retreat if he had had a port behind him; the breakwater at Cherbourg was not built at that time. He gave the signal to retire to Brest and St. Malo. Seven of his vessels gained the former port; the rest of the fleet entered the navigable



ANNE HILARION DE COTENTIN, COMTE  
DE TOURVILLE  
(1642-1701)

channel off the Cotentin shore; twenty-two passed through the race at Blanchard and arrived at St. Malo, but the tide reached low ebb, and the rest were prevented from following. Three stopped in front of Cherbourg and their captains, unable to defend them, set them on fire. Twelve took refuge in the harbour of La Hogue, which was no better prepared to offer shelter.

Tourville landed his guns, his stores, and his fittings, and on the approach of the English applied the torch to the hulls of his ships. The enemy could not boast of having taken a single one. This was the first blow dealt to the French navy, but it is not true, as has often been said, that it was its tomb, for the next year France was able to oppose equal if not superior fleets to the English and the Dutch. At any rate the re-establishment of the Stuarts in England was becoming an impossibility and the most important part of Louis XIV's plan had fallen through.<sup>c</sup>



[1688-1689 A.D.]

## DEVASTATION OF THE PALATINATE (1688-1689 A.D.)

The attention of Louis XIV and Louvois was especially directed to the side of Germany where France would have to face the coalition. Philippsburg and the Palatinate having been occupied, Louvois wished to remain on the defensive. France was already secured by a girdle of towns, of which the principal were Hüningen, Belfort, Landau, Philippsburg, and Mont-Royal, an important position on the Moselle which had been occupied and fortified after having been taken under various pretexts from the elector of Treves. Louvois resolved to demolish all the towns beyond it and to ravage the country for a great distance so as to oppose a desert to the enemy.



RUINS OF HEIDELBERG CASTLE

(Destroyed by order of Louvois)

Louvois according to his custom kept his plan a profound secret. He began by giving Montclar orders to blow up the walls of Heilbronn and ravage Würtemberg as far as the Danube (November and December, 1688). This order being executed he gave one to destroy the castle and town of Heidelberg; 432 houses, delivered over to the flames, were demolished or suffered enormous damage. Mannheim was likewise razed.

Devastation, savage and systematic, such as had not been seen even in the Thirty Years' War, was spread over the Palatinate and the territories of the three ecclesiastical electors. The sinister glow of conflagrations lighted the passage of the French troops. Trees and vines were cut down; palaces, temples, convents, and hospitals were destroyed. At Heidelberg the castle of the elector palatine, was destroyed like the rest. At Mannheim the very stones of the ruins were thrown into the Rhine. A crowd of unfortunates dying of cold and hunger and reduced to expatriating themselves streamed along the snow-covered roads. The greater part, refusing the shelter offered to them in Alsace or Lorraine, went to beg from the enemies of France and still further to raise their indignation against her. This treatment was meted out to the elector palatine without any scruple.

There was at first some hesitation to sacrifice Speier and Worms, but Duras and Chamlay represented that it was important not to spare them. In consequence Worms and Oppenheim were burned on the 31st of May, 1689, and Speier on the 1st of June. Bingen also had its turn. The fire spared neither churches nor palaces. All, say the memoirs of the times, was burned and reburned. The cathedral of Speier contained the tombs of eight

emperors; the tombs were burned and the ashes they enclosed thrown to the winds. Treves had been condemned; Louis XIV withdrew the order as though frightened at the general cry called forth by this work of destruction. A concert of recriminations rose against him. Whilst he accused the Catholic princes of supporting the Protestant states, Europe reproached him for allying himself with the Turks and carrying on a war more cruel and more barbarous than the Turks themselves. English caricatures called him the Most Christian Turk.<sup>3</sup>

The king's discontent with these actions might have been the prelude of a disgrace had not Louvois died of apoplexy in July, 1691. He was replaced by his son, Barbezieux, who, with many more deficiencies, had none of his good qualities. The duke de Lorges, Turenne's nephew, and successor to Marshal de Duras in 1691, contented himself with covering Alsace against the imperials, who finding themselves as in a desert in the Palatinate could not subsist there. Therefore the war remained defensive on the Rhine, and the great blows were struck elsewhere.

### *The War in Savoy and Piedmont (1689-1693 A.D.)*

Catinat was now commanding in Italy. This general, without birth, had raised himself by force of merit. Like Vauban, whose friend he was, he joined civic virtues to military qualities and by his wise and methodic tactics resembled, although slightly, Turenne. He was opposed by Victor Amadeus, duke of Savoy. In order to bring his adversary to decisive action before the arrival of the German troops, Catinat devastated the fields of Piedmont, cut the trees, tore up the vines, and burned the villages. Victor Amadeus could not contain himself in the face of these ravages, and gave battle at Staffarda near Saluzzo on August 18th, 1690. He lost 4,000 men while the French numbered scarcely 500 killed. Savoy, Nice, and the greater part of Piedmont found themselves in the power of the French. But a relative of the duke, Prince Eugene, whose services Louis XIV had refused and who then had offered them to Austria, arrived with strong reinforcements. The French returned to France, whither the Piedmontese followed them. Dauphiné suffered a cruel retaliation for the burning of the Palatinate and the ravages in Piedmont (1692). Catinat, however, recrossed the Alps and a second battle took place near Marsaglia, a few leagues from Staffarda, on October 4th, 1693. It was as disastrous for Victor Amadeus as the first had been. Nothing now remained to him but Turin, and Catinat would have taken this also if the ministry had not reduced his forces. All that he could do was to keep his conquests.

### *The War in the Netherlands (1690-1692 A.D.)*

Luxemburg, posthumous son of that count de Bouteville whom Richelieu had had decapitated, began his military career under the Great Condé, whom he resembled in boldness and accuracy of prompt decision. In 1690, he found himself near Fleurus in front of the prince of Waldeck. By a bold and skilful manœuvre he carried his right wing across a small stream which covered the hostile army. The prince suddenly attacked in his flank, made a backward movement. Luxemburg took advantage of this, came upon him suddenly in the midst of a disorderly march, killed 6,000 of his men, captured 100 flags, his guns, his baggage, and 8,000 prisoners. This was the first French victory of Fleurus, July 1st, 1690. Master of the region,

[1690-1693 A.D.]

Luxemburg invested Mons, the capital of Hainault. Louis XIV assisted at the siege.

William III, rid of James II, hastened thither with 80,000 men, but was unable to prevent the capitulation of the city in April, 1691, after nine days of entrenchment. The following year Luxemburg besieged Namur, the strongest place in the Netherlands and at the confluence of the Sambre and the Maas, and took it, again under the eyes of Louis XIV and the army of the enemy (June, 1692). This was one of the great sieges of the seventeenth century. Vauban's rival, Coehoorn, defended the place, a part of whose fortifications he had built. But William, always beaten, never gave in. On August 3rd, 1692, he surprised Luxemburg at Steenkerke (Steinkirk) in Hainault.<sup>c</sup>

*Steenkerke and Neerwinden (1692-1693 A.D.)*

A spy whom the French general had in William's ranks was discovered: he was forced, before being put to death, to write a false despatch to Marshal de Luxemburg.<sup>d</sup> The latter was thrown off his guard, persuaded by the false despatch that William had a totally different plan than to take the offensive on that day.<sup>e</sup>

The sleeping army was attacked at daybreak, and a brigade was already in flight before the general knew what was happening. Without an excess of diligence and bravery all would have been lost. Luxemburg was lying ill—a fatal circumstance at a moment demanding strong activity: but the danger gave him strength; prodigies were necessary to be kept from being beaten, and he performed them. To change his position, to give a battlefield to the army which had none, to re-form the right wing where all was confusion, to rally the troops three times, to charge three times at the head of the household cavalry, was the work of less than ten hours. Luxemburg had in his army Philip, duke de Chartres, the future duke of Orleans and regent, who was just eighteen years of age. He could not be useful in striking a decisive blow, but it was a great thing to spur the soldiers on that a grandson of France should be charging with the king's household troops, be wounded in the fight, and return again to the charge in spite of his wound.

A grandson and a grand-nephew of the Great Condé were both serving as lieutenant-generals—the one, Louis de Bourbon, commonly addressed as Monsieur le Duc, and the other François Louis, prince of Conti, his rival in courage, spirit, ambition, and reputation. The prince of Conti was the first to restore order, rallying some of the brigades and making others advance. M. le Duc accomplished the same manœuvre without need of emulation. The duke de Vendôme, grandson of Henry IV, was also lieutenant-general in the army, where he had been serving since the age of twelve, and although he was forty he had never been given a leading command. It was necessary for all these princes, with the duke de Choiseul, to put themselves at the head of the household troops, to drive off a body of English who were holding an advantageous position upon the possession of which the success of the battle depended.

The household troops and the English were the finest soldiers in the world and the carnage was great. The French, encouraged by the number of princes and young nobles who fought around their general, finally carried the position. The Champagne regiment routed King William's English guards, and when the English were beaten the rest had to give in. Boufflers, afterwards marshal of France, rushed up at this moment from another part of the battle-field with the dragoons and completed the victory. King William,



having lost about 7,000 men retreated in as fine order as he had attacked; and always beaten, though always to be feared, still kept up the campaign. The victory due to the valour of the young princes and the finest scions of the nobility created an effect at the court, in Paris, and in the provinces which no victory had ever done before.

M. le Duc, the prince of Conti, Vendôme, and their friends found, on returning, the roads lined with people; the acclamations and joy mounted to frenzy; all the women were eager to attract their glance. The men were wearing at that time lace cravats which were arranged at the expense of much time and trouble; but the princes, who had jumped into their clothes for the battle, twisted their cravats carelessly around their necks. Women now wore ornaments in imitation of this; they were called *Stein Kerques*. All novelties of ornament were *à la steinkerque*.<sup>d</sup>

The following year Louis XIV had a fine opportunity to conquer, perhaps, the Netherlands and make peace. William ventured close to Louvain with only 50,000 men. Louis was in the neighbourhood with more than 100,000. The whole army believed that a great blow would be struck; but it was represented to the king that he could not commit his person to the hazards of a battle, and in spite of Luxemburg, who, it is said, threw himself on his knees, he declared the campaign at an end and returned to Versailles. From that day he never appeared with the army. His reputation suffered much from this abroad; biting satires paraphrased Boileau's famous verses:

*Louis, les animant du feu de son courage,  
Se plaint de sa grandeur qui l'attache au rivage.*

Nevertheless it was not personal courage that was wanting. His conduct in camp was perfectly conventional—no particular recklessness, but no timidity. He exposed himself sufficiently. At the siege of Namur, if Dangeau is to be believed, men behind him were wounded. The victories of Namur and Steenkerke had delivered Hainault and the province of Namur into Luxemburg's hands; he penetrated into southern Brabant but found William, strongly entrenched in the village of Neerwinden between Liège and Louvain opposing him, July 29th, 1693. Few days were more murderous; Neerwinden was carried in two assaults by the infantry which, the first time, made a stout bayonet charge, an example which Catinat's regiments followed two months later at Marsaglia. For four hours the French cavalry were under the deluging fire of 80 pieces of cannon; and William, who observed them waver only to close up their ranks as the rows were mowed down, exclaimed in admiration and vexation, "Oh the insolent nation!"

There were about 20,000 dead, of which 12,000 were on the side of the allies. After this success it might have been possible to march upon Brussels and dictate terms of peace, but the French were content to besiege and take Charleroi. It is true that by doing this they held the important line of the Sambre, whence an army might dominate the Netherlands and make most perilous any attempt of the enemy against Flanders or Artois.

*Last Years of the War; Treaty with Savoy (1693-1696 A.D.)*

The victory of Neerwinden was the last triumph of Luxemburg, "the upholsterer of Notre Dame," as he was called by the prince of Conti on account of the many banners with which he had decorated that cathedral. The following campaign was uneventful, and he died in the month of January, 1695. His successor, the duke de Villeroy, did not accomplish very

[1695-1696 A.D.]

much, in spite of an army of 80,000 men; he did not even prevent the prince of Orange from retaking Namur (August, 1695). But in Spain Vendôme entered Barcelona (August, 1695), after a memorable siege and a victory over the army of relief. The year 1695 passed without any military events. The allies destroyed the French stores gathered together at Givet, and the two armies of the Netherlands had enough to do to exist, without thinking of attacking.

On the sea Fourville had avenged in 1693 the disaster of La Hogue, by a victory in the bay of Lagos near Cape St. Vincent. During the following years the great armaments were suspended, because Seignelay was dead; but the corsairs, Jean Bart, Duguay-Trouin, Pointis, Nesmond, destroyed the commerce of the English and the Dutch, who to revenge themselves attempted to land on the French coasts, and trained engines of war against St. Malo, Le Havre, Dieppe, Calais, and Dunkirk—vain and ruinous threats which terminated “in breaking windows with guineas.” Dieppe alone suffered from them. In America the count de Frontenac bravely defended Canada, by taking the offensive always, although the province had not above eleven or twelve thousand inhabitants and the English colonies had ten times as many. Hudson’s Bay, and nearly the whole of Newfoundland were conquered.

Meanwhile the war languished; everybody was exhausted. An attempted assassination of William, which would have been followed by a French invasion, having failed, Louis proposed peace. Charles II of Spain was near death, this time in real earnest; he was leaving no child, and the question of the Spanish succession began to be raised. It was important to the king that the European coalition should be dissolved before this great event. He showed an unaccustomed moderation; in the first place detaching from the league the duke of Savoy (1696), he gave back to him all his towns, not excepting Pinerolo, and proposed to him the marriage of his daughter with the young duke of Burgundy, son of the Grand Dauphin. In return the duke had to promise the neutrality of Italy, and in case of need to join his forces with those of France.<sup>c</sup>

After the treaty with Savoy Louis XIV made the concessions which had hitherto been most repugnant to his pride. He consented to accept the treaties of Westphalia and Nimeguen as bases of the negotiations, taking into consideration certain reservations with regard to Luxemburg and Strasbourg, and to recognise William III as king of England. Henceforth the war had no further object. Commerce between France and Holland was re-established October 1st, 1696. Preliminary *pourparlers* between France and the maritime powers took place at the Hague. Sweden obtained acceptance of the mediation she had proposed several years before and a congress



JEAN BART

(1651-1702)

was agreed upon which was to be held at Ryswick, a country house belonging to William and situated between the Hague and Delft. Caillères, Crécy, and Harlay were designated to represent France.

The king intended to bring pressure to bear on the deliberations of the congress of Ryswick, to render the empire and Spain more tractable and to bring the maritime powers to abandon them or force their hands. He counted the more on this since William III, a mark for the recriminations of his allies, was already replying to them with acrimony and a deserved haughtiness.

France made for the campaign of 1697 the same preparations as in other years. One hundred and fifty thousand men, forming three armies under the orders of Villeroi, Boufflers, and Catinat, entered Belgium, whilst two other armies under Choiseul and Vendôme were carrying on campaigns in Germany and Catalonia. All that was done in the Netherlands reduced itself to the taking of Ath which Catinat and Vauban forced to capitulate on June 7th; a demonstration was made against Brussels but William hurried up and covered the town. In Germany, the opposing armies contented themselves with watching one another. It was otherwise, in Catalonia. Louis XIV had long meditated the taking of Barcelona but he could only execute this project on condition of being master of the sea. He took advantage of the circumstance that this year the Anglo-Dutch fleet did not appear in the Mediterranean. The Toulon squadron, commanded by Vice-admiral D'Estrées and the bailli de Noailles, surrounded the harbour. Vendôme, who had 30,000 men, repulsed a relieving army and forced Barcelona to surrender, August 10th, fifty-two days after the trenches had been opened and after two assaults.

Shortly before, a squadron composed of ships belonging to the state but equipped at the expense of private persons and commanded by an experienced sailor, Pointis, had made a successful and brilliant cruise in America. Pointis attacked Cartagena de las Indias, in New Granada, the principal *entrepôt* of the trade of Spain with Peru. He took possession of the town and carried thence bullion to the value of nine millions, besides rich merchandise. He had the address to escape the enemy's fleets which set out in pursuit of him and to return safely to France with his prize.

#### THE TREATY OF RYSWICK (1697 A.D.)

The congress which had begun at Ryswick May 9th, 1697, proceeded with the usual slowness. On the 10th of September three treaties were signed with Holland, England, and Spain. By the first two France on the one side, Holland and England on the other mutually restored all that they had taken on the continent, on the seas, and in the colonies. The most important of these restitutions were that of Pondicherry, which the English had taken from France in 1693, and that of Orange which was surrendered to William. Liberty of trade was completely re-established. Louis XIV recognised William as king of England. A reciprocal amnesty was granted to the French and English who had borne arms against their own country, but Louis XIV refused to recall the banished Calvinists to France; he maintained that questions of religion were questions of the internal government of each state and he would not allow even a discussion of this point.

By the treaty with Spain France restored her conquests in Catalonia, the town and duchy of Luxemburg, with the county of Chiny, Charleroi, Mons, Ath, Courtrai, with their dependencies, and the dependencies of Namur. She surrendered Dinant to the bishop of Liège. She retained only a small number of towns or villages dependent on Charlemont and Maubeuge.



[1697 A.D.]

On the 30th of October a fourth treaty was signed between France and the empire and the emperor. Louis XIV surrendered all that he had occupied in Germany except Strasburg, which was ceded to him in full sovereignty. Kehl, Hüningen, and the forts of the Rhine were to be razed so as to secure the free navigation of the river which had now become a frontier from Hüningen to Landau. It was the same with Trarbach and Mont-Royal on the Moselle. Louis XIV restored Lorraine to Duke Leopold on the terms of the treaty of 1670, that is to say, while retaining Marsal and a right of passage, besides Longwy and Saarlouis. It was agreed that the duke should marry a daughter of Monsieur. Prince Clement of Bavaria remained in possession of the electorate of Cologne; but Cardinal von Fürstenberg recovered his titles and his confiscated property. The claims of Madame, duchess of Orleans, on the heritage of her father, the former elector palatine, were compounded for in money. The official gazettes and the panegyrics still vaunted the glory acquired by ten years of struggle against Europe in coalition, the brilliance of the captures of cities, and that of victories. But if these are noble subjects of pride or rather of consolation, the majesty with which Louis XIV effected to give peace rather than to submit to it created no more illusion in France than in the rest of Europe. No one could believe in his moderation or his generosity. Those most disposed to admire his policy imagined that he had had a deep laid scheme and a secret design.

In reality Louis XIV had been obliged to go back to the year 1679 or at least to 1681. The necessity for making restitutions had always been admitted but there was no idea that they would have to be so complete. On the whole, if the Peace of Ryswick saved the honour of the country, it was impossible not to see in it the final check and condemnation of the policy pursued since Nimeguen.<sup>b</sup>

#### LOUIS XIV AND THE POLISH THRONE (1697 A.D.)

While Louis was arranging the Peace of Ryswick, the throne of Poland became vacant. This was the only one in the world which at that time was elective—citizens and even foreigners might aspire to it.

The abbé de Polignac, afterwards cardinal, had the ability to incline the suffrage in favour of that prince of Conti, known for his valourous actions at Steenkerke and at Neerwinden. He balanced with eloquence and promises the money which Augustus, elector of Saxony, lavished for the same purpose.

The prince of Conti was elected king by a majority, June 27th, 1697, and proclaimed by the primate of the realm. Augustus was elected two hours later by a much smaller vote, but he was a sovereign and powerful prince, and had troops ready on the Polish frontier. The prince of Conti was absent, without money, without troops, and without power; he had nothing in his favour but his name and Polignac. It was necessary that Louis XIV should either prevent Conti from accepting the throne or provide him the means of taking it from his rival. The French ministry took the stand that they had already done too much in sending the prince of Conti, and too little in giving him only a feeble squadron and a few letters of credit with which he arrived in the harbour of Dantzic. The prince was not only not received at Dantzic, but his letters of credit were protested. The intrigues of the pope, those of the emperor, the money and troops of Saxony already assured the crown to his rival. Conti returned with the glory of having been elected. France had the mortification of letting it be seen that she had not enough strength to create a king of Poland.<sup>d</sup>

## THE QUESTION OF THE SPANISH SUCCESSION (1697-1700 A.D.)

Immediately the Peace of Ryswick was signed, the attention of the powers became fastened on the uncertainties of the Spanish succession. Charles II had, since his infancy, gone entirely against all the unfavourable prophecies inspired by his frail and sickly constitution. He had grown to manhood and even married. Louis XIV had made him, in 1679, wed, as we have seen, a daughter of the duke of Orleans in the hope of fortifying French influence at Madrid and circumventing the designs of Austria; for the emperor was leaving nothing undone to assure to himself the alliance of Spain for the present and the succession for the future. The indefinite treaty of partition, signed in 1669 between the courts of Versailles and Vienna, had been entirely abandoned. Leopold, uneasy at the thought of the influence a French queen might acquire, insisted that one of his own sons, the archduke Charles, be accorded the title of heir presumptive at Madrid as long as Charles II had no children; but France succeeded in preventing this.

Marie Louise of Orleans, queen of Spain, succumbed in 1689, like her mother, to a sudden illness and at the same age. Charles II remarried — this time a German princess, Maria Anna of Neuburg, the empress' sister. The new queen, vain, pretentious, and extremely hostile to France, never ceased to favour the wishes and schemes of Austria at Madrid.

Two things were very necessary to Spain — that the heir to the crown should be designated in advance, and that the already enfeebled monarchy should not be dismembered. Charles II adopted the electoral prince of Bavaria and by will declared him his heir.

It is necessary to enumerate here the claimants and give an idea of their relationship. Philip III had two daughters — Anne of Austria married to Louis XIII, and Maria Anna married to the emperor Ferdinand III. Philip IV had married his two daughters in the same fashion — Maria Theresa to Louis XIV and Margarita Theresa to the emperor Leopold. The Spanish princesses married in France were the elder in their generations, but had renounced the succession. The question was whether these renunciations were valid. Louis XIV claimed that they were not, at least as regards Maria Theresa. In this case the closest heirs to the Spanish crown were the dauphin and his three sons, the dukes of Burgundy, Anjou, and Berri. If, on the contrary, the French branch was outlawed, the succession passed to the German line. Leopold had had a single daughter by his marriage with Margarita Theresa, Maria Antonia-Josepha, the wife of the Bavarian elector; who in turn had one son, still a child, whom Charles II designated his heir.

But Leopold, although maternal grandfather of the young Bavarian prince, raised another claim. On marrying his daughter he had imposed a renunciation upon her, and henceforth he claimed that he himself was the nearest heir through his mother Maria Anna, daughter of Philip III; and his scheme was to transmit his personal rights to the sons of his second marriage with Elizabeth of Neuburg. As the elder of these princes, Joseph, elected king of the Romans in 1690, would succeed him in the empire, Leopold aspired to make the second, the archduke Charles, king of Spain — a combination which, without confounding the empire and Spain, would perpetuate the rule of both branches of the Austrian house in these two countries and recommence the work of Charles V.

Count von Harrach, Leopold's envoy at Madrid, obtained with the queen's aid the annulment of the will in favour of the Bavarian prince. But he

[1697-1700 A.D.]

wanted more, and insisted that the archduke Charles be declared heir presumptive. The unfortunate king, worn out with these insistances, and believing at moments that he had a new hold on life, announced that he would await the day when the viaticum should be brought him before again appointing his successor.

Louis XIV sent the marquis d'Harcourt to Madrid in the month of December, 1697, with instructions to keep watch on Charles' court and to obstruct the emperor's plots; but knowing that he would obtain nothing directly from the court of Madrid, he thought the surest and wisest plan was to negotiate the bases of a partition with England and Holland, which would be a means of proving his pacific disposition to Europe and would also bear upon the emperor and the empire. Consequently Pomponne, whom he had recalled to the head of foreign affairs, and Torcy, son of Colbert de Croissy, invested with the office of secretary of state since 1689, in March, 1699, made overtures to Lord Portland (Bentinck), English ambassador at Paris. Tallard was sent to London to come to an agreement with William III directly.

The negotiations, embarrassed by conflicting claims, lasted six months. Finally a first treaty of partition was signed at the Hague on October 11th by Tallard and Briord, ambassadors of France to England and Holland. It was agreed that the dauphin should have Naples, Sicily, the Spanish towns on the coasts of Tuscany, the marquisate of Finale and Guipuzcoa, that the archduke should have the Milanese, and that the electoral prince of Bavaria should reign over Spain, the Indies, and the Netherlands. As this last prince was only four years old and might die, it was decided that in that event the elector, his father, should succeed him.

Charles II was not long in hearing that the succession had been regulated without consulting him. He therefore convened an extraordinary council, and to prevent the dismemberment of his state he constituted the prince of Bavaria his sole heir (November, 1698) in spite of the fact that the elector, father of the young prince, had consented to the treaty of partition. This decision, in cutting short the dispute, was of a nature to satisfy neither France nor Austria, and the death of the young prince of Bavaria, which occurred unexpectedly at Brussels, on the 8th of February, 1699, reopened the question. It annulled not only the will of the king of Spain, but also the signed treaty of partition between France and the maritime powers.

Louis XIV immediately undertook negotiations for a second treaty with the powers, only more secretly, in order to be considerate of the last days of Charles II and not to wound the susceptibilities of the Spaniards. Tallard demanded that the Milanese should be added to the dauphin's portion, in consideration of which he offered to let the archduke rule over Spain and the Indies, and to allow England and Holland the choice of a sovereign for the Netherlands. Louis XIV hoped to attain with the help of the maritime power the adherence of the emperor, if necessary, by force, if Leopold made war.

Villars had left for Vienna in June, 1699, with the title of envoy extraordinary and a suite of unusual splendour. But to his vague overtures he received even more vague replies. Leopold had a rather undecided character, and he was convinced that he would obtain from Charles II a will in favour of the archduke Charles. He contested the fundamental principles of the arrangement proposed by France, and finally formally declined the acceptance of any treaty whatever (October, 1699).

Louis XIV then resolved to go further, and a second treaty was signed in London and at the Hague, the 13th and 25th of May, 1700. It was agreed that the dauphin should have all that had been assigned to him in the



partition treaty of 1698, plus the duchy of Lorraine ; that the duke of Lorraine should have the duchy of Milan, and that the remainder of the Spanish monarchy, comprising Spain, the Indies, and the Netherlands, should pass to the archduke Charles. Three months were given to the emperor to accept this arrangement ; if at the close of that time he had not consented, another prince was to be substituted for the archduke.

Rarely had Louis XIV shown himself as wise, as prudent, and as able, as in forming these last combinations. He restored Lorraine to the crown, with one stroke of the pen and without striking one blow — an important province, and one which had been French for a long time. As for Naples and Sicily, he offered them to Victor Amadeus in exchange for Nice and Savoy, which would procure for France the natural barrier of the Alps and repair the set-back of Ryswick.

In spite of the precautions which ought to have assured its secrecy, the second treaty of partition was known in Madrid as quickly as the first had been, and produced the same effect there. The king was much affected, the queen became so enraged that, according to one story, she broke the furniture of her apartment. The nation, wounded that the treaty should have been concluded without consulting it, burst into recriminations against the maritime powers ; the thought only of dismemberment aroused its pride.

The unhappy king then resolved to make a new will, the third. He consulted jurists, theologians, the pope himself — to quiet his conscience, alarmed by the thought of disinheriting the house of Austria. Restrained by his scruples, he again feared that Louis XIV would not accept a will made in favour of a French prince, and would prefer to hold to the treaty of partition. Finally, feeling the approach of death, he signed his third last will and testament, on the second of October. He could not have put it off much longer, for he died on the first of November.

The will was at once made public ; Charles II declared the Spanish monarchy to be indivisible. Recognising the rights of Maria Theresa and her children, he designated as his successor the second of the grandsons of Louis XIV, the duke of Anjou ; and pending the arrival of the young prince he confided the government to a junta, or council of regency, presided over by the queen his widow. In case of non-acceptance of the duke of Anjou, he substituted for him his brother the duke de Berri, third son of the dauphin, and the duke of Savoy successively.<sup>b</sup>

The only doubt now remaining was whether Louis XIV would accept the will of the late king of Spain in favour of his grandson, or whether he would adhere to the treaty of partition. There was a long debate respecting this in his council, which council consisted of but three ministers, the chancellor Pontchartrain, the duke de Beauvilliers, and Torcy. They were divided in opinion ; but the dauphin, “drowned as he habitually was in apathy and fat,” says Saint-Simon,<sup>b</sup> gathered warmth and energy on this occasion, and spoke eloquently in behalf of his son’s rights. Madame de Maintenon, who had also a voice in this council, adopted the same views ; and Louis decided.<sup>f</sup>

#### ACCESSION OF THE BOURBONS IN SPAIN

The duke of Anjou took the title of Philip V and left on the 4th of December to live among his new subjects. Louis XIV wished that the departure of his grandson should take place amid extraordinary solemnity. It is at this time the celebrated phrase, “There are no more Pyrenees,” is

[1700-1701 A.D.]

attributed to him.<sup>1</sup> The young prince travelled with the customary pomp and slowness of royal cortèges. On the 21st of April, 1701, he was received at Madrid, by the noisy acclamation of the Spaniards, who flattered themselves with having saved the integrity of their monarchy.

In the whole of Europe the surprise was the same. Holland and England believed that they had been duped, that Louis XIV had had an understanding with Charles II, and that for the last two years he had been playing a continuous comedy. However, they contained themselves and made no manifestations. William contented himself with saying to Tallard, "It is well. I recognise the loyalty of your master." In Austria, where until the last moment there was hope of a will in favour of the archduke, there was both despondency and irritation. The emperor protested against the will of Charles II, against its acceptance by France, and sent his agents in hot haste to the different courts in order to resuscitate the coalition; at the same time making preparations for a war of which he resolutely counted the duration and extent.<sup>b</sup>

France had two great interests. The first was that Spain should be her friend, to assure peace on the southern frontier; the second that the north-eastern frontier should be as far as possible from Paris and that the Netherlands should at least be her ally. The first point seemed gained by the advent to the throne of Charles V, of a Bourbon whom the people received with enthusiasm, and whom the other states recognised. The emperor protested and armed, but alone he could do nothing.

The second end was more difficult to attain, for neither England nor Holland was willing to see the French at the mouth of the Schelde. To get there much tact and prudence was necessary. The king unfortunately unmasked his plans too quickly and braved Europe as if it was his pleasure to do so. In spite of the formal clauses of Charles II's will, Louis did not exact from Philip V a renunciation of the French throne, and by letters patent issued in December, 1700, preserved to him his hereditary rank between the duke of Burgundy and the duke de Berri. This would make possible a union of the two monarchies and show an alarmed world France and Spain one day governed by the same king, which would not have been a good thing for either country, and still less so for Europe. A little later Louis drove the Dutch from the places they occupied in the Netherlands by virtue of the Treaty of Ryswick, and replaced them with French garrisons.<sup>2</sup> Finally on the death of James II he acknowledged the prince of Wales, his son, as king of England, Ireland, and Scotland, in spite of the advice of all his ministers. This insult to the English people and to William III made war inevitable.

#### THE GRAND ALLIANCE OR THIRD COALITION AGAINST FRANCE (1701 A.D.)

A third coalition was formed in September, 1701. This was the grand league of the Hague into which England, Holland, Austria, and the empire

[<sup>1</sup> As to the saying, "There are no more Pyrenees," its history is this. The ambassador to Spain, as reported by Dangeau, spoke these words: "The journey became easy and presently the Pyrenees melted away," which the *Mercure* on the following day rendered as follows: "What joy! There are no more Pyrenees, they are levelled, and we are one." However, the phrase well expresses the situation and the aim of Louis XIV. If it did not fall from his lips, it was in the minds of all.<sup>c</sup>]

[<sup>2</sup> This was done by Marshal de Boufflers in February, 1701, and effected with the help of the elector of Bavaria, governor of these provinces. Holland took fresh alarm at this act.]

entered, and a little later Portugal, which became an enemy of France<sup>1</sup> since a French prince was king of Spain, and especially since French ports had been closed to her products. No allies in the whole of Europe remained to Louis but the elector of Bavaria,<sup>2</sup> to whom the Netherlands were secretly promised, and the dukes of Modena and of Savoy, who were however soon to change sides. Spain was with him, but having no soldiers or money or ships was, as Torcy said, "A body without a soul whom France must nourish and sustain at her own expense."

William III scarcely saw the opening of the war. He died in the month of March, 1702, but his policy survived him because it was a national one.



CLAUDE LOUIS HECTOR, DUC DE VILLARS  
(1653-1734)

Three men, famous for their hatred of France, Heinsius, Marlborough, and Prince Eugene, replaced in close union the leader of the league. Heinsius was grand pensionary of Holland, and he directed the republic with the authority of a monarch when the stadholdership was abolished on the death of William.

Churchill, duke of Marlborough, received his first taste of war under Turenne. He governed Queen Anne through his wife, parliament through his friends, the ministry through his son-in-law Sunderland, secretary of state for war, and through the great treasurer Godolphin, father-in-law of one of his daughters. Prince Eugene, born in France about 1663, of the count de Soissons and a niece of Mazarin, that Olympe Mancini whom Louis had for one moment favoured, belonged to the house of Savoy. Destined to an ecclesiastical career he preferred the profession of arms, and, at the age of nineteen, de-

manded a regiment of Louis XIV, who refused to make a colonel of the "Savoyard abbé."<sup>c</sup> Disappointed in his hopes of obtaining a command in the armies of France, he turned to the Empire and became its greatest protector against the ambition of his former sovereign. During one campaign of 1692 he had foiled Catinat in Italy and by a bold raid from Piedmont into France had spread alarm far into the kingdom.<sup>a</sup> After the Peace of Ryswick he resisted the Turks who had invaded Hungary and won at Zenta, in 1697, a signal victory which placed him in the opinion of his contemporaries by the side of Sobieski, the saviour of Vienna. Now appointed presi-

[<sup>1</sup> Louis XIV at first won Portugal to his side, and, in return for certain advantages, a treaty was signed with France and Spain on June 18th, 1701. But the provisions were not kept. Dom Pedro entered the coalition in May, 1703.]

[<sup>2</sup> The elector Maximilian believed himself ill used by Austria, and deserted the allies he had supported in the League of Augsburg. The second treaty with France was signed March 9th, 1701. The elector of Cologne, in spite of the trouble of 1688, also treated with Louis, and threw open her territory to French troops. So did the bishop of Münster and three other powers of the empire.]



[1701-1702 A.D.]

dent of the council of war and planning as a minister the expeditions which he was to carry out as a general, he had a decisive influence on the events which were to follow. By his good understanding with Marlborough he was about to give the European coalition that thing which it had always lacked — union.

To triumph over such adversaries France would have had to have the great men of the preceding generation. But Louis had used them up. However, some of the leaders that France still had, Villars, Catinat, Boufflers, and Vendôme, deserved confidence and freedom. It is true that such as Villeroy, Tallard, Marchin, and La Feuillade had every need of good counsel and guidance, but it was not by holding these generals by the leash that they were prevented from inflicting irreparable disaster upon the French arms.

To Louis XIV's idea the war should be defensive at all points except in Germany, whither the elector of Bavaria summoned the French. Boufflers was sent to the Netherlands to oppose Marlborough, who commanded the Anglo-Batavian army; Catinat to Italy to shut the entrance to the Milanese upon Prince Eugene and the imperials; Villars to Germany to join the elector and march upon Vienna.<sup>1</sup>

#### WAR OF THE SPANISH SUCCESSION: THE FRENCH VICTORIES (1701-1704 A.D.)

For three years (1701-1704) the successes balanced each other. However, Marlborough penetrated, in 1702 into the Netherlands in spite of Boufflers, who with two armies on his hands did not know how to manœuvre between them and abandoned without combat the places on the Maas as far as Namur; at least he saved Antwerp the following year by the victory of Eeckeren over the Dutch. In 1701 Prince Eugene descended into Lombardy in spite of Catinat, who had a superior force, but who, badly obeyed and perhaps betrayed by some Spanish officers, did not prevent him swooping down from the Tyrol. Eugene threatened the whole line of the Adige, and crossed that river without resistance at Castelbaldo on the plain, while Catinat was waiting for him at Rivoli in the mountains. He forced the passage of the Blanc canal in a fight at Carpi, July 9th, when Catinat might again have stopped him; but the marshal, confused by manœuvres as bold as they were able, retired behind the Mincio and further still behind the Oglio which opened the Milanese to the enemy. The court degraded him and gave his army to Villeroy.

This protégé of Madame de Maintenon was a good courtier but a bad general. From the very first he wanted to take the offensive. He recrossed the Oglio hoping to surprise Eugene at Chiari, but the duke of Savoy kept the imperials informed of all his movements, and Villeroy, surprised himself, was beaten in 1701.

However, the enemy could advance no farther, so long as it did not have the stronghold of Mantua. Villeroy let the count de Tessé make a brilliant defense there and took up winter quarters in Cremona. Once while he was sleeping in supposed security he was awakened by sudden firing. He dressed in haste, rushed from his lodging, and fell among an Austrian squadron. It was Eugene, who was making a sudden attack on Cremona. He would have succeeded had it not been for a regiment which since four o'clock in the morning had been assembled for review by the colonel. The enemy,

[<sup>1</sup> Duclos calls the War of the Spanish Succession "The only *just* one that Louis ever undertook."]

arrived in the centre of the town, were driven back through the gates ; but they took the marshal with them (February, 1702). [Ballads were sung in the streets of Paris to celebrate the double stroke of fortune, — Cremona saved and Villeroi captured.] Vendôme replaced him and for two years carried on a successful warfare against the imperials. At first he forced them to retreat beyond the Mincio, which delivered Mantua, then by a rapid march he went to seize their stores at Luzzara, on the right bank of the Po (1702), so that he might approach the Tyrol. At this moment the concealed treasons of the duke of Savoy changed to open defection, the Bourbons having refused, very stupidly, to cede him the Milanese in exchange for Savoy (1703). It was necessary for Vendôme to turn against him to assure communication with France. He seized the greater part of Piedmont and threatened Turin, but he no longer threatened Austria.

The same success in Germany. Catinat, called to the Rhine, did not re-establish the reputation he compromised in Italy. He had allowed the prince of Baden to cross the river and take Landau, Weissenburg, and Hagenau. A diversion of the elector of Bavaria recalled the imperials to Germany. Catinat, urged to follow them, dare not do so ; but one of his lieutenants, Villars, did. He attacked the prince of Baden in the Black Forest near Friedlingen, and won his marshal's baton on the field of battle (October, 1702).<sup>c</sup> The victory was as absurd as that of Charles the Bold at Montchery. The French infantry drove back the German and then broke and fled in a panic. Villars was swept back with his men, and was in utter despair when an officer rode up to say that the cavalry had saved the day. It was not much to be proud of, for the German troops were still in good order as they withdrew, but it gave the court its chance to honour its favourite.<sup>a</sup>

The most decisive blow was struck at sea. Sir George Rooke and the duke of Ormond made amends for an unsuccessful attack upon Cadiz, by forcing the port of Vigo, and capturing and destroying the fleet of the enemy, together with the galleons containing the treasures from South America.

The year 1703 passed in Flanders without any action of importance. Marlborough took Bonn and Luxemburg, and manœuvred with a view to capture Antwerp and Ostend, without success. More important movements were taking place on the Rhine, where Villars commanded. The object of the French king's pushing the war into Germany, contrary to his usual practice, was to succour his ally, the elector of Bavaria, who was so sorely pressed by the imperialists that it was feared he would be obliged to abandon the alliance of France. Villars employed the winter months advantageously in making himself master of Kehl, opposite Strasburg. In the spring he succeeded fully in breaking through the imperialist lines, and joining the elector of Bavaria at Ratisbon ; thus transferring the seat of war from the Rhine to the Danube. If we are to credit Villars himself, he conceived the idea of marching by Passau upon Vienna. The elector, of a more sober school of tactics, could not share the French general's ardour. A difference of opinion, and subsequent coolness, sprang up betwixt them. Even the more sage advice of Villars, to pass the Danube and attack the imperialists before they could be joined by an approaching army, was but reluctantly followed. The marshal was obliged to shame his ally by threatening to make the attack alone. It took place near Donauwörth, between Höchstädt and Blenheim (September, 1703), and the French were here victorious on a field which was destined to be so fatal to them in the ensuing year. Unable

[1703-1704 A.D.]

to bring the elector into his designs, Villars agreed to a plan to invade the Tyrol, and open a communication through that country with the duke de Vendôme, who commanded in Italy. The scheme was unsuccessful. Vendôme was kept in check, not only by Prince Eugene, but by the duke of Savoy himself, and the Tyrolese drove the elector from their valley. He made loud complaints against Villars, and that able general in disgust threw up his command.<sup>f</sup>

In November, 1703, the imperialists suffered a bloody defeat near Speier, which gave Landau back to France. The victor was Tallard. He wrote to the king, "Sire : Your army has taken more standards and flags than it has lost common soldiers."

## THE CAMISARDS

This victory put an end to France's success. Louis XIV sent Villars against the revolting Protestants of the Cévennes, the *camisards*. These unfortunate people had just seen Pope Clement XI renew the preaching of a crusade against them (the bull of May 1st, 1703). Bewildered with terror they accepted the help of England and the duke of Savoy, who were anxious to foster civil war in the heart of France; and as they had been cruelly treated, they revenged themselves in turn with similar cruelties.

Villars had it at heart to save the province and bring back these exasperated men. "They are," he said, "Frenchmen, very brave and very strong — three qualities to be considered." He used force against those who persisted in fighting and was indulgent to those who put faith in his word. He won over one of their leaders, Cavalier, and one campaign was almost sufficient to re-establish peace in these provinces; but 100,000 men had perished in this horrible war.<sup>g</sup>

## WAR OF THE SPANISH SUCCESSION—FRENCH REVERSES (1704-1713 A.D.)

The elector of Bavaria, however, remained master of the whole course of the Danube as far as Passau. The small army of 20,000 men brought by Villars, but now commanded by Marshal de Marsin [Marsin], swelled his force, whilst Marshal Tallard, with 40,000 men on the Rhine, was ready to march in the spring of 1704 and join Marsin and the elector. These prospects made the court of Vienna tremble. That government was at the same time pressed by the Hungarian insurgents, so that even the recall of Prince Eugene from Italy with all the troops that could be spared from keeping the duke of Vendôme in check, might not prove sufficient for defending the Austrian capital — to such distress was the emperor reduced in the spring of the year 1704.

It was then that Marlborough conceived the bold and generous design of abandoning Flanders, that beaten field, so known and trodden by commanders, so thickly sown with fortresses and cut with lines of defence as to render decisive actions impracticable, and of marching on the Danube, to the relief of the empire. Concealing his intentions, the duke crossed the Rhine at Bonn, the Main near Frankfort, and marched towards Bavaria.<sup>f</sup> At Mondelsheim near Heilbronn he had a conference with Eugene and together they agreed upon the plan of campaign which was to bring the victory of Blenheim and one of the greatest epochs in English military history. The plan was Marlborough's; he had laid it before William III before his death and it had been rejected by the great Dutchman. Now he staked all upon it and executed it in the face of the opposition of England and



Holland. From this time on, the greatest triumvirate of Marlborough, Eugene and Heinsius direct the fortunes of the allies.<sup>a</sup>

The French had in the meantime mustered another army on the Rhine under Villeroi. Him Prince Eugene undertook to observe, whilst Marlborough, seconded by the prince of Baden, undertook to pass the Danube, penetrate into Bavaria, and either force the elector to abandon the French alliance, or punish him for his hostility to the empire. Marlborough lost no time in manœuvring or counter-marches, but advanced straight against the French and Bavarians, who were entrenched at Schellenberg, before Donauwörth, a town that commands a bridge on the Danube. Marlborough's attack was decisive. The entrenchments were forced, the enemy were defeated and fled, leaving many thousand men and several generals on the field, as well as the passage of the Danube free. The English and imperialists instantly poured over the river, crossed the Lech, and, whilst the elector took refuge in Augsburg, until Marshal de Tallard could reinforce him, Marlborough overran Bavaria to the gates of Munich, ravaging and punishing the country for the hostilities of its chief. This wretched and cruel system of warfare did not bring the elector to terms. It irritated him, however, and drove his temper to seek vengeance in a general engagement.

Unable to subsist south of the Danube in a country which he could not occupy, and which he purposely ravaged, Marlborough withdrew to the north of that river. Hoping to draw the enemy after him, he caused the prince of Baden to lay siege to Ingolstadt. What he sought, took place. The elector of Bavaria, anxious for revenge, and Tallard, who had joined him, sharing his ardour, they passed the Danube, and posted themselves at Höchstädt, on the very spot where Villars and the elector had in the last year been victorious. Prince Eugene at the same time contrived to deceive Villeroi, quitting his position, in front of that general, so as himself to arrive with his army in time to join in the action, whilst Villeroi remained perplexed or engaged in uncertain and tedious pursuit.

### *The Battle of Blenheim*

On the morning of the 13th of August, 1704, the French and Bavarians drew up before their camp. Their armies did not mingle, but remained separate, that of Tallard on the right touching the Danube, that of Marchin and the elector in continuance of the line on the left. Before the front of Tallard was the village of Blenheim, on a rising ground, occupied by his infantry. At some distance in advance of the French and Bavarians ran a rivulet with marshy banks, on the other side of which were drawn up the imperials, the Dutch and English; Marlborough commanding the latter next the Danube, Prince Eugene the former. The elector committed a capital fault in not posting his army near to the rivulet, so as either to dispute its passage or to attack the enemy when they had partially crossed it. But he did not suspect an intention to fight on the part of Marlborough. Eugene began the action by attacking the elector and Marchin, from whom he met with a stubborn resistance. Marlborough in the meantime crossed the rivulet, and formed a strong body of infantry opposite the centre of his antagonists. This centre was composed of cavalry; for Tallard and the elector, remaining separate, had each drawn up his army, according to rule, with its horse upon the wings.

But these wings, united, formed the centre of the combined army. And thus a body of cavalry, destined by its nature to act offensively, was posted

[1704-1706 A.D.]

in the principal, the central, the fixed position of the army. Tallard no doubt reckoned that Marlborough would attack Blenheim, and, as Condé would have done, spend a world of lives and heroic efforts to master the position. Tallard knew this would cost hours; and he accordingly rode off to the left to see how the elector was faring, whilst his antagonists were drawing up, after having crossed the rivulet. Marlborough in the meantime did despatch troops to attack Blenheim, with the view of distracting Tallard from the principal movement. This was his advance upon the centre, the weak, divided centre of cavalry. In fact it made no resistance. Marlborough rushed in betwixt the elector and Tallard, cutting the French and Bavarian line in two. This manœuvre decided the victory. The elector with Marchin, taken in flank, gave up the advantage they had gained over Eugene, wavered, retreated, fled; whilst Tallard, hemmed betwixt the English and the Danube, ended by laying down their arms and surrendering. As for the marshal himself, he was taken whilst endeavouring to return from the elector's division of the army to his own. The entire glory of this victory was Marlborough's; and he enhanced it by that modesty and those attentions towards the vanquished which had so redounded to the fame of the Black Prince after Poitiers. From French writers we learn that Marlborough first set the example of treating prisoners not only with clemency but with the politeness due to misfortune; a trait that redeems those ravages in Bavaria which the custom of war had unjustly sanctioned. The battle of Blenheim, in which about 60,000 French and Bavarians against 52,000 of the allies were engaged, cost to the vanquished 12,000 men killed, besides a greater number made prisoners. The quantity of cannon, colours, and other trophies, was immense. But its effects were greater than all. The French armies were obliged to evacuate Germany altogether, abandon Bavaria, and retire behind the Rhine. Marlborough proved to Vienna another Sobieski. His victory re-established the imperial throne; nor was the house of Austria ungrateful. [It created him a prince of the empire, while Queen Anne made him a duke.]

War was in the meantime raging in the Spanish peninsula. The arch-duke Charles had been enabled by England to land with a respectable force in that country, which he continued to dispute against Philip, the grandson of Louis. Portugal had been won over to the side of England and the arch-duke, and her aid proved of the greatest importance. It was singular to observe in this campaign the armies of France and Spain commanded by an Englishman, the duke of Berwick, while Ruvigny, created earl of Galway, a native of France and a Huguenot *émigré*, commanded the English forces. Sir George Rooke took Gibraltar in the same year in which the victory of Blenheim was won.

Marlborough had delivered Germany from the French, and driven them beyond the Rhine: he then turned his attention to the north, and aimed at expelling them from those provinces of Spanish Flanders which they had taken possession of in the beginning of the war. During the entire campaign of 1705, the duke manœuvred in vain to attain this object by bringing the French to action. A signal victory could alone enable him to reduce a host of strong towns by a single blow; long watching for this opportunity, it did not offer till the spring of the year 1706. Marshal de Villeroi took the command in Flanders, and with orders to give battle. Louis was weary of the tedious war, so many enemies besetting him; the mere expense of resisting on every side being sufficient to crush the monarchy. He was no longer in a condition to await the effect of Louvois' preparations, or Turenne's manœuvres. Experience, sagacity, skill no longer presided over

either his councils or his armies: Louis cried out for something decisive — for battle; like the gamester, whom prudence has deserted, and who is anxious to stake all in a decisive throw, which may relieve or ruin him. He bade Villeroi, therefore, give battle. Had he even selected Villars for the important task! But Villars was an indifferent courtier, being rude, independent, and proud. The “short-geniused and superb Villeroi” was preferred, and despatched on the difficult errand of giving battle to Marlborough.

### *The Battle of Ramillies, 1706*

The French army, of about 80,000 men, reached the banks of the Mehaigne near Ramillies, about half distance betwixt Namur and Tirlemont, on the 23rd of May, 1706. Despite the king's order and his own ardour to fight, it was Marlborough who marched to the attack. Villeroi was waiting to be joined by Marchin; but, knowing himself to have a force stronger than the English general, he resolved to await the attack, drawing up his army in the position that chance had placed it, at an acute angle with the Mehaigne. The French right wing was near this river, with the village of Ramillies on a rising ground in front of it, precisely as Blenheim had been with respect to the French army in the action called by that name. Villeroi's left was here covered by a little marshy river called the Gheete, which rendered it unsailable indeed, but also rendered it useless unless as supporting his right.

Marlborough did not arrive with his army till it was already past noon; he reconnoitred, drew up in line corresponding to the French, and the cannonade began. The duke in an instant had perceived that the Gheete covering the enemy's left rendered engagement on that side impossible; he therefore drew all his force from that side, and drafting it in the most concealed manner possible behind the troops about to attack Ramillies and the French right, he concentrated his force on this point. This manœuvre took a long time to execute, and yet Villeroi took no step to defeat it. When Marlborough advanced, the French household cavalry charged him with such impetuosity and valour as to break the attacking battalions, and to endanger the duke himself; but the English, rallying in front, and allowing these rash enemies to pass to the rear, where there was force enough to deal with them, pushed on both upon Ramillies and upon the French line behind it. The English, being in much superior numbers on this point, owing to the inactivity of the French right, formed in one unbroken line and charged, numbers breaking in between the intervals of the French, who were drawn up in separate battalions, and taking them in flank. Their rearguard failed to support those in front: the baggage, it was said, impeded them: at all events the battle, though begun late, proved ere sunset a decisive victory on one side and rout on the other. The pursuit lasted the whole night, the fugitives suffering greatly in their passage through the defile of Judoigne, which was blocked with cannon and wagons. Here the day of Blenheim was renewed, the loss of the French in killed and captive not being, however, so great. The consequences were not less important; being the loss to France of all the Spanish Netherlands, including Antwerp, Ghent, Bruges, Ostend, Brussels, Mechlin, and Louvain. The fortresses of Menin and Dendermonde surrendered also. Namur and Mons remained, the only towns unconquered.

The court was struck with consternation on learning of this second defeat, of which the details were for a long time unknown. No courier arrived, so that Louis was obliged to despatch Chamillart himself, his minister, to Flanders. Villeroi was distracted, and had lost all self-possession;



[1706-1707 A.D.]

everyone condemned a general whose imprudence had placed the kingdom "within two fingers of its ruin." Still Louis was generous to his unfortunate general, and wrote him to give in his resignation, in order to avoid the harshness of deprival. The duke de Vendôme was recalled from Italy to take the command in Flanders; and the duke of Orleans, the king's nephew, succeeded Vendôme. This last appointment surprised the court, which was aware of the extreme repugnance felt by Louis to employ any of the princes of the blood; but so unfortunate had proved his choice of late that the monarch resolved at last to trust the defence of the kingdom to the zeal of his family.<sup>f</sup>

Orleans found the army in Italy in great disorder, the generals divided and insubordinate; Turin was besieged according to the plans of La Fenillade [the most frivolous and incompetent of the favourites of Louis], contrary to the advice of Vauban; the prince in irritation turned over his powers to Marshal de Marchin. Prince Eugene, who had effected his junction with Victor Amadeus, encountered the French army between the Dora and Stura rivers. Orleans was seriously wounded at the battle of Turin, September 7th, 1706; Marchin was killed and discouragement seized the generals and the troops. The siege of Turin was raised and before the end of the year almost all the places were lost and Dauphiné threatened. Victor Amadeus refused to agree to a special peace and in March, 1707, the prince of Vaudemont, governor of the Milanese for the king of Spain, signed a capitulation at Mantua and sent back to France the troops that still remained there. The imperials were masters of Naples. Spain possessed nothing more in Italy.

Philip V had been threatened with the loss of Spain as of Italy. In the past two years the archduke Charles of Austria under the name of Charles III, with the support of England and Portugal, disputed the crown with the young king. Philip V had lost Catalonia and had just failed in an attempt to retake Barcelona, which had surrendered to Lord Peterborough. The road to Madrid was cut off; the army was obliged to pass through Roussillon and Béarn to resume the campaign. The king shut himself up in the capital whither he was conducted by Marshal Berwick, a natural son of James II; but Philip could not remain in Madrid, threatened by the enemy. He betook himself to Burgos. The English entered the capital and proclaimed Charles III.

But this was too much. The Spaniards could not allow an Austrian king to be imposed upon them by heretics and the Portuguese. The cities arose; a handful of cavalry was sufficient to enable Berwick to regain possession of Madrid, and the king returned on the 4th of October amid the acclamations of the people. Charles III now held only Aragon and Catalonia in Spain. The French garrison, unoccupied since the evacuation of Italy, came to the assistance of the Spaniards.

Louis XIV had made his grandson understand that a great sacrifice would be necessary to obtain the peace he believed would soon be due to their peoples. The Dutch refused their mediation. The campaign of 1707 was signalled in Spain by the victory of Almansa, won on the 15th of April by Marshal Berwick over the Anglo-Portuguese army and by the taking of Lerida which surrendered on November 11th to the duke of Orleans. In Germany Villars drove the enemy from the banks of the Rhine,<sup>1</sup> advanced

<sup>1</sup> Villars' achievements had been noteworthy for some time. In 1706 he raised the blockade of Fort Louis on the Rhine. In 1707 he forced the lines of Stollhofen which, extending from Philippsburg to the Black Forest, were regarded as the rampart of Germany.

into Swabia, and ravaged the Palatinate, levying contributions on the country of which he openly kept a part for himself.

The inexhaustible elasticity and marvellous resources of France had somewhat revived hopes in 1707. An invasion of Provence by Victor Amadeus and Prince Eugene, a check before Toulon and their retreat, precipitated by a rising of the peasants, had irritated the allies. Attempts at negotiation at the Hague undertaken by the king remained without result.<sup>i</sup>

But the emperor made a treaty of neutrality for Italy, and that brought to the Rhine frontier the soldiers in Italy.<sup>a</sup> The allies hoped to reduce the king lower; and certainly the prospects of France were never more gloomy. The finances were in the greatest disorder. Chamillart had the management of both war and finance departments: the exertion, united with ill success, was too much; it was killing him. He wrote a piteous letter to this effect, tendering his resignation to the king: Louis read it, and writing on the margin of the letter, "Well, we will perish together," sent it back to the minister. One active genius, nevertheless, was employed at this time to provide a remedy for the poverty of the government, and a reform in the financial system: this was Vauban, the celebrated engineer. The product of his labours was a plan for abolishing the numerous and intricate branches of taxation, and substituting in its place one uniform tax on property. He proposed to take a tenth of its yearly value, which he called a *dime royale*. This simple mode would have proved the ruin of the financiers, the farmers of the revenue, and the pensioners, that were paid out of divers intricate receipts ere they reached the treasury. The scheme of Vauban was set aside; and paper money now made its appearance in France for the first time.<sup>f</sup> The use of credit was not understood, however, in France as it was being learned in England. The establishment of the Bank of England, which enabled the small kingdom to use all her resources without undue strain or present exhaustion, had no parallel in France, where finances were managed in secret councils of the king, and the nearest approach to national banking was to anticipate future revenues to the utmost limit. To meet or guarantee these anticipations, more imposts must be levied; more distress and suffering resulted. In England the war furnished people with a safe and new means of investment. In France the absence of a regular institution of credit prevented that use of its resources which was to be the astounding achievement of the Bank of France two centuries and a half later.<sup>g</sup>

Despite his distresses, Louis was not inactive. He fitted out an expedition for the pretender to Scotland, which failed. Funds were wanting to supply the armies. Desmarets, who had succeeded Chamillart, told the monarch that it was impossible to obtain money, except from Samuel Bernard the banker. Louis saw Bernard, asked him to Marly, and showed him the wonders of the place with a condescension that made the courtiers stare. Bernard was so set beside himself by the honour, that he declared he would rather see himself ruined than the empire of so gracious a monarch in want; and the loan was instantly effected.

Villars commanded with his usual activity and success on the Rhine in 1708, whilst the duke of Burgundy, grandson to Louis, aided by Vendôme, commanded against Marlborough in Flanders. The allies had not troops sufficient to garrison the numerous towns which they had taken in Flanders, and which were far more inclined to French rule than to the Dutch and English. Ghent and Bruges were, owing to these causes, surprised. Emboldened by success, the French pushed across the Schelde towards Brussels

[1708-1709 A.D.]

with rather uncertain intentions. Hearing that Marlborough was approaching, they retired, and invested Oudenarde, which intercepted the passage on the Schelde betwixt the French towns and Ghent. They hoped to take it ere Marlborough could arrive. But that general making forced marches, the French at his approach decamped from before Oudenarde to retire to Ghent. The duke reached them on their retreat, and a partial action took place, in which the French were routed, and driven, with great loss, back to Ghent. The dukes of Vendôme and Burgundy had a serious difference and quarrel on the field. Whilst the commanders were squabbling, their army was beaten. The prince Eugene then invested Lille, a bulwark not yet reduced. Lille surrendered in October, 1708: with it fell Ghent and Bruges; and, with the exception of one or two towns, the frontier of France lay completely open. [This was the darkest hour for Louis XIV. Even the capital seemed no longer safe.]

The year 1709 commenced by one of the most rigorous winters ever known. The populace began to clamour under present sufferings, and with the prospects of still greater. Seeing the disastrous and disturbed state of the population, the parliament thought proper to assemble in the great chamber, to consider the state of things. It was proposed to appoint deputies to visit the provinces, buy corn, and watch over the public peace. It was a bold attempt under Louis XIV. He reprimanded the parliament, and told them that they had as little to do with corn as with taxation. The magistrates obeyed, and were silent.

In such a state of threatened famine, aggravated by the oppression of war, commerce remained at a stand: money was no longer forthcoming. Bernard, the great banker, became a bankrupt. Even the insufficient revenue could not be collected; and an adulteration of the coin was had recourse to as the only expedient. Louis despatched the president Rouillé to Holland to sue for peace; and soon after the marquis de Torcy, minister, he might be called, of foreign affairs, was sent on the same humiliating errand. The states of Holland, or their agents, here repaid the French king all his past insults and pride. His envoys and his offers were slighted, yet these last were sufficiently ample. Louis consented to abandon his grandson the king of Spain, reserving for him merely Naples. The states refused even Naples. Torcy offered them towns to form a barrier in the Netherlands. In this nothing less than Lille and Tournay would content them. They demanded Strasburg and Landau, tantamount to Alsace, and the demolition of Dunkirk. Louis consented to demolish the port of Dunkirk, as also the fortifications of Strasburg. In short, the demands of the allies went not only to reduce France to what it was at the accession of Louis, but prince Eugene claimed to keep possession of his conquests in Dauphiné. Moreover, the allies insisted not only upon the French king's abandoning his grandson, but upon his aiding to dethrone him. "If I am to continue warring," replied Louis, "I had rather fight my enemies than my children."

The negotiations were thus broken off. The monarch gained much by them. He showed his sincere desire for peace; and now making known, in a printed appeal to his subjects, the terms that he had offered and that had been rejected, the national feeling was roused to indignation. The rich sent their plate to the mint, the king and royal family not excepted; the poor hurried to the armies; and Louis was in a condition to face his inveterate foes. The obduracy of Marlborough, of Prince Eugene, and of the Dutch was certainly impolitic; for Spain might in one campaign have been reduced, the French remaining neutral. France, herself, offered to make every fair



concession ; and the commanders, in refusing, might well incur the reproach of being actuated by selfish views, if the state of distress in France had not warranted any hopes or pretensions on their part. A great portion of the court of Versailles itself was for abandoning Philip V, and withdrawing the troops from Spain ; a measure which did take place in part, owing, however, to a quarrel betwixt Madame de Maintenon and the princess Orsini.

Meantime the allies had entered the field, well supplied from the copious magazines of Holland. The French army, in a state of starvation and nudity, opposed them. Its commander was the marshal de Villars. He was indignant at the arrogance of the confederates, and the despondency of the court : it was he who roused the drooping spirits of Louis and of his ministers, and who alone preserved a confidence in the French soldiery and in the fate of arms. Villars appears to be one of the truest and finest specimens of the French soldier : he was ardent, bold, and valiant ; qualities which he enhanced by an air and habit of boasting. Full of resources, he never lost confidence in himself, firmly believing that neither Marlborough nor any other general could contend with him. At the same time he was blunt and rude ; could not brook to be commanded ; too independent to be a courtier, all ministers hated him and the butterflies of the court joined them. " I am going to fight your enemies," said he to the monarch, as he was departing for a campaign ; " I leave you amongst mine."

### *The Battle of Malplaquet (1709 A.D.)*

The duke of Marlborough and Prince Eugene had taken Tournay, and now menaced Mons. Villars advanced by the road from Valenciennes to succour it, and posted himself to the right of the road, in an interval betwixt two woods, near Malplaquet. By advancing, he might have routed Prince Eugene, who was at first inferior in numbers ; but Marlborough coming up, the two generals determined to attack Villars, who on his side, anxious to measure himself with them and secure an advantage, had covered his strong position by entrenchments and *abatis*, or trees felled and thrown with their branches towards the enemy. The envoys of the Dutch states dissuaded Marlborough from fighting ; and they were right. Mons was in the rear of the allied army, and Villars was in no condition to disturb its siege, without at least quitting his entrenchments. Marlborough, however, accustomed to conquer, somewhat undervalued his enemies, and resolved on the attack.

The battle of Malplaquet was fought on the 11th of September. Each wing of the French was in a wood, covered and entrenched, whilst the centre, occupying the interval, had taken scarcely less care to cover itself. Opposite the French centre, however, was a farm and a little wood, which Prince Eugene occupied, and filled with troops that did not appear. The action began on the wings, Marlborough charging Villars and driving him back after a struggle. To support himself, Villars drew reinforcements from the centre, and was making fresh head against the English, when a ball struck his knee, and incapacitated him from commanding. Prince Eugene, watching his opportunity, seized the moment that Villars had weakened his centre, and, leading his infantry from the farm and wood, rushed on the centre, and broke it, carrying their entrenchments. This was victory. In the meantime, the Dutch attack on the other wing, where Boufflers commanded, was defeated. Despite the valour of the young prince of Orange, he could not establish himself in the wood or within the entrenchment ; and he was driven back.

[1709-1711 A.D.]

But the success of Boufflers was to no purpose. The French left and centre were broken; and all that its victorious right could accomplish was to cover the retreat, and prevent Malplaquet from being converted into the same rout as Ramillies. The allies lost a prodigious number of men in the attack of the woods and entrenchments. The number of French slain was much less. Villars, in consequence, was as proud as if he had gained the battle. "If God should grant us another such defeat, our enemies would be destroyed," wrote he to Louis. He afterwards boasted that but for his wound he would have won the victory: Voltaire, who was present, remarks that few believed the boast. Mons surrendered immediately. This was the last victory of Marlborough.

In the next campaign, indeed, he showed his decided military superiority to Villars, by breaking through lines that the marshal had declared impregnable, and this without losing a man. But whilst France, with the languor of an exhausted but still valiant combatant, was warding off these blows, which the Dutch, in their anxiety for capturing towns and forming a barrier, prevented from being straightforward and vital, fortune was pleased to prostrate Marlborough, and rescue Louis from ruin by the means of a canting clergyman and an obscure woman, who rose to court favour. Sacheverell and Mrs. Masham effected what all the warriors and statesmen of Versailles despaired to do. Marlborough was overthrown, and with him England's inveteracy and force.

Previous to affairs taking this unexpected turn, the situation of Louis was desperate. Again he sent envoys to sue for peace, and they were treated with the same contempt. Sympathy is here excited for the monarch, struggling bravely not for his conquests but for his crown and country. Louis on this occasion showed a spirit that more entitled him to the name of Great, than all his early triumphs. What were his intentions, in case of the war's continuing, and of Marlborough's invading France? He has himself recorded them in a letter to Villars: "I reckoned," said he, "on going to Péronne or St. Quentin, gathering there every disposable troop, wherewith to make a last effort with you, that we might perish together; for never could I remain a witness of the enemy's approaching my capital." This, indeed, breathes the pride of Louis XIV, but at the same time his magnanimity and heroism. The battle of Villa-Viciosa, gained by the French over the Austrian party in Spain, revived his hopes; the disgrace of Marlborough, and the blunted hostilities of England, restored him to security and confidence.

Whilst the clouds in the political sky were thus clearing up for Louis, a mass of private misfortune, almost unexampled, fell upon him. His pride had been brought low. He was now stricken in his nearest affections: his only son, the dauphin, died of the smallpox, April 14th, 1711. The son of this prince became, in consequence, heir-apparent to the crown. The greatest hopes were entertained of this youth. He had been the pupil of Fénelon. Though naturally most violent and extreme in his passions and temper, a sense of religion had worked a reformation in him, and he became forbearing, pious, just. His reign promised to be a golden one for France. Such was the young duke of Burgundy. His duchess [Marie Adelaide of Savoy] was of a character as rare. With the most buoyant spirits and the aptest wit, she was the delight of her royal grandfather, who could not take a journey without her; and with him she took all kinds of liberties. It was she who remarked, on hearing him speak of the triumphs of Queen Anne's reign, that "queens reigned more prosperously than kings; because under a queen men governed, and women under a king."

[1711-1712 A.D.]

This prince and princess were both carried off suddenly by some unknown disease [the former on February 18th, the latter on February 12th, 1712] ; possibly by the smallpox, which was then universally prevalent and fatal : but none of the external marks of that malady appeared on them. The title of dauphin fell, within a very short time, upon a third head [the duke of Brittany] ; and it too was carried to the grave on March 8th. The second child of the late duke of Burgundy, the duke of Anjou, was then at nurse, and about two years old. The same malady seized it; and it was saved, probably, by its superintendent, who would not permit either bleeding or emetic to be employed — the favourite remedies of the time for every ailment. This infant lived, and soon after became Louis XV.

Popular belief could not assign so many deaths of such important personages to the cause of nature or disease. They were attributed to poison ; and the physicians, either through alarm and ignorance, or to excuse their want of skill, corroborated, all save one blunt man, the same opinion. Who could be guilty of such crimes ? All eyes turned towards the duke of Orleans, nephew of Louis. His life was profligate, his character reckless, and his pride seemed to be to brave public opinion. The king, with his wonted jealousy, had kept the prince from all high or martial employ, except on one or two occasions. In Italy he had shown courage. In Spain, contemning the dullness of Philip V, who at that time had meditated retiring to the Indies, he had intrigued, it was averred, to take his place. This put him in disgrace at court.

Even his studies gave handle to calumny. Chemistry was what he most delighted in, and in this pursuit he was said to be actuated by an unholy curiosity to read and influence his future destinies. Of a sarcastic spirit, that despised and mocked humanity, the duke perhaps encouraged these opinions of him in order to cater to his own amusement. The cry of suspicion was now serious. The court entertained it. The people clamoured about the Palais Royal, and were only prevented by the police from breaking in and tearing the "poisoner" in pieces. To such accusers the duke scorned to justify himself. He sought, however, an interview with the king, who, worn with sorrow and tormented with suspicion, granted it. Orleans demanded to be sent to the Bastille, confronted with witnesses, and tried. Louis for answer could but shrug his shoulders. The monarch's mind was paralysed with his misfortune. The duke's teacher of chemistry was arrested, and there the matter ended. Posterity seems to have acquitted Orleans of the crime ; but his contemporaries, more credulous, were far from resigning themselves to the same opinion. Some indeed accused the house of Austria ; and the absurdity of this supposition, upheld by many creditable persons, has the effect of invalidating the other. But none at that time dared to doubt the agency of poison.

#### *Battle of Denain (1712 A.D.)*

Conferences for peace had opened at Utrecht in the commencement of 1712. It was no longer Marlborough but the duke of Ormonde, who now commanded in Flanders. He concluded a suspension of hostilities with the French ; and Villars, delivered from the English, undertook to strike a blow against the prince Eugene. That commander besieged Landrecies, communicating with his magazines through the entrenched camp of Denain. Villars, pretending to assault the besieging army round Landrecies, made a side march suddenly, broke into the fortified lines, called arrogantly by the



[1712-1714 A.D.]

imperials the road to Paris, and advanced upon Denain. His officers cried for fascines to fill up the ditch. "Eugene will not allow you time," cried Villars, "the bodies of the first slain must be our fascines." They advanced, stormed the camp, which was commanded by Lord Albemarle, a Dutch general, and carried it ere the prince could arrive. This gallant action roused the spirits and fortunes of the French, and gave weight to their efforts at Utrecht. By their own writers Denain is almost swelled into comparison with Ramillies; its success is said to have saved the kingdom. The defection of the English, under their tory minister, from the grand alliance was, however, the true and only cause of their safety. Without it Villars could not have won the day of Denain, nor Louis made peace at Utrecht on any terms less than the abandonment of the crown of Spain by the house of Bourbon.

## TREATIES OF UTRECHT AND RASTATT (1713-1714 A.D.)

In April, 1713, the plenipotentiaries of France signed the Treaties of Utrecht with England, Holland, and Savoy. The former country was gratified by the demolition of the port of Dunkirk, the cession of Gibraltar and Minorca, together with Newfoundland, Hudson Bay, and the island of St. Christopher's. Spain remained to Philip V on his renouncing forever all right of succession to the crown of France. The English ministry endeavoured to render this unwelcome part of the treaty palatable to the parliament by a number of advantages stipulated in favour of British commerce, which, however, as savouring of free trade, and inimical to the connection with Portugal, failed of being well received. The duke of Savoy, in addition to his paternal dominions already recovered by him, had Sicily thrown into his lot.

The treaty with Holland was but provisional till the following year.<sup>f</sup> The emperor and the empire alone remained outside the general peace. War was resumed in Germany and on the Rhine. Villars seized Speier and Kaiserslautern, and laid siege to Landau. Landau capitulated August 20th, and on September 30th Villars entered Freiburg; the citadel surrendered November 13th. The imperials now began to make pacific overtures; Villars and Prince Eugene were charged with the negotiations. The peace was finally signed at Rastatt March 6th, 1714.<sup>i</sup> The Rhine was here acknowledged the frontier line on the side of Alsace. The elector of Bavaria was restored to his dominions. The emperor, in lieu of Spain, received Naples, Milan, and Sardinia, together with Spanish Flanders, in which, however, the Dutch retained the right of garrisoning the principal towns, forming, as it was called, the barrier against France. Namur, Tournay, Menin, and Ypres were amongst these. Lille and French Flanders remained to Louis. He retained this important conquest, as well as Alsace; advantages which the triumphs of Villars materially tended to gain. The title of the king of Prussia was acknowledged, and a certain accession of territory procured to him. The Protestant succession to the throne of England was also guaranteed by France.

One of the principal difficulties of the treaty was to procure from the kings of France and Spain a valid renunciation of their mutual rights to either crown, so as to obviate the possibility of their being united upon one head. The verbal renunciation, or even the oath of the monarch, was found insufficient, and not without reason, seeing how lightly the declaration of Louis XIV on his marriage had been set aside. The English required the guarantee of a national assembly corresponding to their parliament, that, in



[1715 A.D.]

Louis now began to feel his health seriously decay. The hour of his dissolution could not be distant. The future fate of his family and kingdom occupied his thoughts. Of his legitimate descendants but one feeble infant remained, with the exception of the king of Spain, who by his renunciation was set aside from inheriting the crown of France. The duke of Orleans thus filled the place of heir presumptive, and from his station aspired to the regency. Louis dreaded to trust the infant Louis XV to the keeping of this prince, who bore the worst of characters. Though unconvicted, suspicion still rested upon him of having poisoned his relatives. Louis did him more justice in calling him a *fanfaron de crimes*, a braggard of crimes. But still the objection in the royal breast was not removed. Actuated by these motives, as well as by tenderness for the children born to him of Madame de Montespan, Louis issued a decree, giving to the illegitimate princes the full rights of the legitimate blood, calling them in succession to the throne immediately after the young dauphin. Nothing marks the extreme submissiveness of the parliament more than their registry of this decree. But this obsequiousness was evidently owing to the inutility of disturbing the last moments of the monarch. Louis completed this attempt in favour of his illegitimate children by a testament which gave to the duke du Maine, the eldest of these princes, the command of the household troops and the chief power during the minority.<sup>f</sup>

## DEATH OF LOUIS XIV

Since the summer of 1714 Louis XIV, already cruelly shaken in health in 1712, had been gradually failing. His chief physician, Fagon, himself enfeebled by age, did not perceive in time the slow fever which was undermining the king's health and did not take advantage of the resources still offered by that powerful constitution. After the 11th of August, 1715, Louis XIV did not again leave the château of Versailles. The fever increased, sleep vanished. On the 24th one of the king's legs which had been causing him acute pain showed marks of gangrene. The next day Louis received the sacrament with calm and firmness. He manifested some scruples respecting what he had been made to do in regard to the bull *Unigenitus*.<sup>1</sup> He would have liked to see his archbishop, Noailles, once more, and to be reconciled to him; means were found to prevent this. On the 26th he bade farewell in moving terms to the principal personages of his court. He also took leave of the prince and princesses, addressed kindly words to the duke of Orleans as though to banish evil designs from his heart if he should have conceived any, and then sent for the dauphin, a beautiful child of five years of age, sole relic of all his legitimate line in France.

"My child," he said to him, "you will soon be the king of a great realm. Never forget your obligations towards God; remember that you owe him all that you are. Try to preserve peace with your neighbours. I have been too fond of war. Do not imitate me in that, nor in the too great expenditure which I have made. Lighten the burdens of your people as soon as you can and do that which I have had the misfortune not to do myself."

[<sup>1</sup> The enemies of the Jansenists obtained a decree from the king, interdicting a work entitled *Réflexions Morales sur le Nouveau Testament* by Father Quesnel, which Cardinal de Noailles had already approved of. Clement XI launched the bull *Unigenitus* condemning one hundred and one propositions extracted from the *Réflexions Morales*. Eight prelates headed by Noailles protested against the bull. The king's confessor, Le Tellier, urged the king to have Noailles deposed. The affair dragged a long time at Rome. The king was about to bring the affair to his bed of justice when he fell ill.]



Touching, but vain words! The successor of Louis XIV was not reserved for a work of reparation but for a work of dissolution and ruin. On the morning of the 28th the king said to Madame de Maintenon that in leaving her he was consoled by the hope that they would soon meet again. She did not respond to this idea of meeting in eternity and appeared to see in this sign of affection only a token of egoism. Thinking the end was near, she set out that very evening for St. Cyr; the next day Louis, being still fully conscious, asked for her; she returned, but only to leave again finally on the evening of the 30th, thus abandoning on his death-bed the man who had so constantly loved her. Her excuse was in her extreme weariness of the existence which Louis had imposed on her. He had overwhelmed her with his absorbing personality; for more than thirty years she had not had a single day to herself; the necessity of perpetually finding new resources to occupy and interest this active but infertile mind, accustomed to live, so to speak, on the substance of others, had exhausted and crushed her.

Louis was now only conscious at moments. The day of the 31st of August passed in this manner: the gangrene was gaining on him. In the night Louis revived to recite with the clergy the prayers for the dying. He repeated several times in a firm voice: "*Nunc et in hora mortis—Mon Dieu, aidez moi!*" then he entered on a long death-agony. On the 1st of September, at a quarter past eight in the morning, the king drew his last breath. He had lived seventy-seven years, reigned seventy-two, governed fifty-four. It was the longest as well as the greatest reign in the history of France. It was not one man, it was a world that was ended.

Before descending, in the train of feudalism, into that night of the past in which one after another the perishable forms of eternal society are plunged, the monarchy, that symbolic form of national unity, had been manifested in a supreme personification which will remain forever engraved in the memory of peoples. Louis XIV is, and will remain, the king, the royal type, for foreign nations as well as for France. All that monarchy, after having brought under one yoke the divergent elements of the multiplex world of the Middle Ages, succeeded in producing in the fullness of her power, she produced in Louis the Great. Flourishing in her prime with the Great King, she grew old with him. The signs of decay multiplied; the gangrene was manifested in her as in him and, if monarchy did not die the same day as the monarch, the silent work of decomposition was no longer to be arrested in her organs. We are about to watch the dissolution of that vast frame until the day in which the real unity, the sovereign nation, shall for the first time break through the worn-out covering in its own true essence, without figure and without symbol.

France prospered under Louis XIV so long as he continued in the ideas of Richelieu; she suffered, then declined, when she became unfaithful to them. He himself condemned the excess of his wars and expenditure; his expenditure on luxury and art, though doubtless very considerable, has been much exaggerated by tradition; as to his wars, they were, some justifiable, others excusable in their principle, but not in the inhuman character which he allowed to be imprinted on them, nor, at times, in the fashion in which they were conducted politically. France desired her natural completion, and, in the respective condition of the nations, the action of France to achieve her retransformation into the larger territory of Gaul was enough to overthrow the equilibrium of Europe and to provoke coalitions. Louis XIV committed the error of claiming to be able to do still more, and, above all, of making the claim believed. The two gravest charges which he merited are not those on

which he condemned himself; they were: in economics, that of having wrought harm and rejected the remedy, ruined the finances and refused the radical reform which might have restored them; in religion, that of having destroyed the great work of Henry IV which Richelieu had continued. But the responsibility of the revocation may well be divided: the revocation of the Edict of Nantes was the logical consequence of monarchy according to Bossuet, and this great crime against the state condemns the monarchy still more than the monarch. The more we blame the monarchical theory as contrary to the true ends of man and of the citizen, the more we are disposed to indulgence towards the prince who was carried away by this theory as by an almost irresistible fatality.

When the New Era, which opened amid the tempests [of the eighteenth century], shall have found its shape and position; when society, free and democratic, shall be definitely founded and recognised; when parties cease to seek weapons in history, the name of Louis XIV will no longer excite the anger of the French people, as the expression of a hostile principle; and his statue, alternately adored and broken, will finally repose amid the great images of the national Pantheon. If the French people do not forget the culpable and fatal errors of Louis, they will also remember that Louis has deserved to be identified with the most brilliant century yet seen in modern civilisation. France pardons willingly, too willingly perhaps, all those who have loved her, even with a selfish and tyrannical love—all those who have made her glorious, even at the expense of her happiness; she is only implacable towards the memory of those leaders who have degraded her.<sup>e</sup>



LOUIS XIV AT THE DEATH-BED OF JAMES II



## CHAPTER XXII

### THE AGE OF LOUIS XIV :<sup>1</sup> ASPECTS OF ITS CIVILISATION

[1610-1715 A.D.]

Augustus, Leo X, Louis XIV appear to us in the illumination of art and poetry. Alexander, Cæsar, and Napoleon are greater, but have they such a divine cortège? — ARSÈNE HOUSSAYE.

THAT development of French civilisation and letters which attained its apogee in the second half of the seventeenth century, the progress of science and the taste for art, was not the work of Louis XIV. The movement was begun; Louis XIV had only to support it and give it a particular direction.

In order to seek and determine the causes, it is necessary to go further back. They will be found in the language, which became polished through the aspiration of society, which was reformed after the religious wars, in a better education which had reacted on manners, in a more general education and one more appropriate to the time—in fact, in the development of all the moral energies of France since Henry IV and Richelieu. Those great and independent geniuses, Richelieu, Corneille, and Descartes, gave the impulse, aroused writers or thinkers, and inspired the best society with that love, that admiration of the beautiful, which elevates the soul of a nation.

The cares of war and of power were far from engrossing all the attention of Richelieu. He completed the construction of the Palais Cardinal, which was one of the most sumptuous dwellings ever seen, and which during his lifetime he bequeathed to the king, with the sole proviso that only a prince should ever inhabit it. He likewise embellished his house at Ruel, and his château at Richelieu in Touraine. He patronised Simon Vouet, recalled Poussin from Rome, bought paintings of Lesueur and Philippe de Champagne. He established the royal printing house, and tried, although with little success, to re-establish the royal manufactures established under the preceding reign and almost abandoned since then.

#### FOUNDATION OF THE FRENCH ACADEMY

In 1635 Richelieu conceived the idea of founding an association whose mission should be the perfecting of the language, and which should be the

<sup>1</sup> By this term is meant the period covering the reigns of Louis XIII and Louis XI<sup>1</sup> (1610-1715 A.D.).



highest authority in the criticism of literary works submitted by their authors. Boisrobert, Conrart, Chapelain, Rotrou, and the great Corneille are counted among the founders of this association, which was the Académie Française. The men of letters, until then placed only too often in the "domesticity" of the great—a name then far removed from the sense given to it to-day—by means of this association acquired more independence and influence. Formerly they had flattered the powerful; now they began to develop a power of their own and to be flattered in their turn. The parliament made some difficulty about the incorporation of the academy, because it had an invincible distrust of the cardinal's ideas, whose works seemed to it always despotic, and because it feared the new company might be invested with too great privileges and with jurisdiction. It was far from imagining that the academy was to become one of the glories of France, in a time when Corneille led the list of great French writers, when Descartes wrote the *Méthode*, when French society was the most polished in Europe, when Europe already borrowed the language of France, and took France for a model in everything.<sup>b</sup>

#### THE PATRONAGE SYSTEM

In the first thirty years of the seventeenth century royalty did not yet seek to exercise any influence in intellectual matters. Richelieu is the first to have had the idea of offering royal patronage to the "Nurselings of the Muses." He distributed a few pensions.<sup>c</sup>

Of all styles of literature the drama was most encouraged by Richelieu. Until then it had hardly been more than a popular amusement; it now became that of the most refined and most polished society. Doubtless, the talent of Rotrou and the genius of Corneille bore the principal part in this, but Richelieu aided them. His wish was to replace the ballets and other ordinary diversions of the court by amusements of a nobler sort, by tragedies and comedies of intrigue. He had a theatre in the Palais Cardinal and another in his mansion at Ruel. He often had plays represented there whose plan had been submitted to him. He gave advice to authors, worked with them, and even wrote himself.

His patronage extended also to tuition and studies. An important transformation was taking place in the schools. The reform of the university under Henry IV had had the effect of substituting the study of the great authors for that of scholasticism. Since then the teaching of theology had been renewed; it is well known what brilliancy it gave to the seventeenth century. The teaching of literature was not long delayed, and it is not to be doubted that a more healthful direction of men's minds had largely contributed to prepare the intellectual superiority of this century over those preceding it. Richelieu built the Sorbonne. He favoured competition between the university and the Jesuits and showed his usual superiority in discussing questions of education.

He thought moreover that liberal education was not for everybody, and that the greatest number of families ought to prepare their children for trade or for war. Therefore he founded at his own expense an academy,—a military college for the education of the young nobility.

However, until the end of the Fronde, the court, filled with soldiers, or given up to ambitious rivalries of the noble, full of intrigues with Marie de' Medici, of sadness with Louis XIII, of suspicions with Richelieu, of agitations under Anne of Austria, could not assume to be the supreme regulator of taste, the theatre of the arts, and impose rules or regulations upon genius.

After the Fronde it was different. The refined elegance and magnificence of Mazarin, the brilliant festivities of the first years of the personal reign of Louis XIV, the transformation of the great into courtiers, the spirit of subordination substituted for a spirit of independence, increased the importance of the court. Gradually one became accustomed to look to it alone. It surrounded royalty like a luminous circle, and its brilliancy made all else pale. It became even a means of government. It contributed by its preponderance to annul parliaments and other national bodies.

Louis XIV, who instinctively sought everywhere for aids to his grandeur, understood how to nourish the brilliant society which surrounded the persons and the works of the great writers and artists. He offered the latter a magnificent theatre and unparalleled publicity. He united the scattered forces into a mighty group, displaying their talents in a strong light, making of them a majestic whole. He had all the qualities necessary for this—disposition, taste, the feeling for the beautiful, and particularly the sense of rule and harmony. He established a sort of concert of the great writers, in the same manner as he put the great ministers in harmony with each other.

From this time, with the striking uniformity, regularity, and discipline which was the character of letters and arts under his reign, the men of genius had full sway, nothing held them back. But their place was determined in the great ensemble, and they felt they were obeying a law. A great and noble harmony was established among literary efforts of the most diverse character, as among the arts destined to compete in the grandeur of the same edifice.

Less spontaneous, less audacious, perhaps even less original than in the time of the preceding generation, literature attained a perfection under Louis XIV which it never had to such a degree in any other epoch. It attained this perfection because it addressed itself less to the king and sovereign than to the flower of society grouped around him. The highest society had never before formed such a public. Bred in a grand school of admiration and surrounded by masterpieces, it evinced the greatest interest in matters of intellect. Conversation was an art and a talent, the literary taste an affectation of fashion, in fact a point of honour. The women took part in the movement, and to such a degree that it is to one of them that we owe most of our appreciation of it. Madame de Sévigné<sup>b</sup> in her correspondence, so well named written conversation, immortalised the society of the great century in painting it from life.<sup>b</sup>

Colbert took up the idea of pensions with more liberality and amplitude than did Richelieu. He created the *feuille des pensions*, which was a sort of pendant to the *feuille des bénéfices*. It was started in 1663 partly on the suggestion of Chapelain. Among those on the list was Chapelain, who called himself "the greatest French poet that has ever lived, and the one with the soundest judgment," but whom Boileau simply characterises as "the wealthiest of all the *beaux esprits*"; also some of the great names of literature—Molière, the two Corneilles, Racine, Fléchier, Mézeray, Quinault, Charles Perrault, later Boileau himself, besides many mediocrities. Along with Frenchmen were foreigners—Graziani, the littérateur; the juriconsult Conring; Ferrari, professor of oratory at the University of Padua; the erudites Böklerus, Gevartius, Heinsius, and Vossius; mathematicians and astronomers, such as Cassini of Bologna, Viviani of Florence, Huygens of the Hague and Helvelius of Dantzic. Louis XIV did more than pension some of the artists. He ennobled Lully, Le Nôtre, Mansart, and Lebrun. To the savants Colbert gave not only money but means of

working; for them he created new chairs in the Jardin du Roi, built the Observatory of Paris, and subsidised missions and scientific expeditions. He was the founder of the *Journal des Savants* which exists to-day.<sup>1</sup>

The Renaissance was above all things a period of freedom. The age of Louis XIV is characterised by order and monarchical discipline. The historians soon perceived that the king was a more exacting protector than the lords of olden times. The latter, provided their families were eulogised, left their clients perfect liberty in other matters, but the history of Louis XIV's ancestors was the history of the whole country, and as his glory reached out in all directions, the historian was no longer free in anything. Colbert let Mézeray know that if he wished to keep his pension of 4,000 livres he would have to speak with more discretion of the *gabelle* and the *taille* and to abstain from too free reflections on the policies of former kings. Mézeray only half understood, and half his pension was suppressed.

Assuredly the royal protection had its good effect, but there was caprice in the king's favours. For a sovereign to control letters and art without making mistakes, he would have to be infallible and with a mind to embrace and understand everything. But Louis XIV did not understand everything and was often mistaken. When, in 1667, he forbade the funeral eulogy of Descartes did he know that the latter was the most eminent thinker of the age?

#### LITERARY CHARACTERISTICS

In the literary history of the seventeenth century a division must be noted. Voltaire<sup>i</sup> has neglected it when he introduces into what he calls the *Siècle de Louis XIV* such dissimilar geniuses as Corneille and Racine, Bossuet and Fénelon. But even while retaining this time-honoured expression, it should be applied only to that period during which Louis XIV's personality, the prestige of his glory and the action of his laws and institutions were predominant. Now during an entirely earlier period of more than sixty years a whole group of writers was absolutely outside his influence. Régnier, Rotrou, Corneille, Descartes, and Pascal, to speak only of the greatest ones, had accomplished their labours before the personal government of Louis XIV began. On the contrary Racine, Bossuet, La Fontaine, and Boileau, and for the greater part of his work Molière, belong to the generation which saw the splendour of Louis XIV, and which disappeared from the scene before the decadence of the monarchy had commenced. Finally La Bruyère, Fénelon, Vauban, and Bois-Guilbert, without mentioning the great Protestant writers of France, are the products of an entirely different period. In reality the true "century" of Louis XIV did not last more than a quarter of that time, from 1661 to 1685.

The seventeenth century may thus be divided into three periods which present certain common characteristics, and are also distinguished by special characteristics. All three are equally a continuation of the sixteenth-century Renaissance. The charm of antiquity revealed by the humanists is still felt. The gods of the *littérateur* are those of Greece, or rather Greek gods under Roman names. If the French literature of the seventeenth century had perished in some great cataclysm, and if after a score of centuries some erudite Australian or American had found some of its fragments, he might have believed that the contemporaries of Louis XIV worshipped the same gods as the Athenians and the Romans. However, the French, so smitten

[<sup>1</sup> Colbert's foundation of learned academies is described in chapter XIX.]



with antiquity, knew little about it. They were, after all, so original, so French, and so steeped in their own age that they showed a singular inability to imagine what was really the civilisation of Athens and of Rome. Louis XIV's contemporaries studied Demosthenes, Plato, and Plutarch to no purpose; they got from them nothing but a deification of the monarchy. They read the ancient authors with keen pleasure, but it did not occur to them to do so in the light of the conditions of ancient life, and they applied to them the same rules of criticism as to the authors of their own day. Since journeys to the East were at that time most infrequent, and no archæological research had yet been undertaken, the age had no idea as to what were the architecture, the furnishings, the costumes, and the manners of antiquity. The French dramatic poets give the title of "prince" to Agamemnon or Theseus, and addressed Phædra or Andromache as "madame," as though these personages had been their contemporaries.

In spite of the cult, well or ill understood, of pagan antiquity, no century was so profoundly Christian as the seventeenth. The absence of the marvellous, from a Christian point of view, in literary works is explained not by indifference for Christianity, but by respect and scruple. Corneille wrote *Polyeucte* and other sacred pieces; but let his *Cid* be compared with those of the Spaniards; all the supernatural is banished to such a degree that the type of the Castilian champion is transformed and almost mutilated. Santiago no longer appears on the battle-field to revive the hero's courage. One of the rules of taste in the seventeenth century is precisely to avoid a mixture of the sacred and the profane.

Seventeenth-century literature chose its subjects from antiquity, from contemporaneous society, from human psychology, but almost never from nature. The world of letters no longer lived in the field as in the sixteenth century; it lived in the cities, especially in Paris, or at the court. Malherbe boasts of going to learn the real French language on the place Maubert; Régnier, Chapelle, Bachaumont, and many others were habitués of the Parisian *cabarets*, and in the narrow streets of the capital formed, as we say nowadays, a literary Bohemia. Racan and some others claimed to have composed *idylles champêtres*, but what is their background? It is no more the French countryside than their shepherds and shepherdesses are French peasants.

A strophe of Malherbe on the banks of the Orne, a few laboured alexandrines of Boileau upon his country house and its trees; one fine page of Honoré d'Urfé upon a valley of Forez—this is almost all that Louis XIV's contemporaries have to say about nature. They looked too much into their ancient authors and too much at themselves to see it well. It is for the same reasons that Le Nôtre was able to create that strange and unreal nature in the gardens of Versailles, and that in painting the genre of pure landscape is almost unknown in the seventeenth century.

As for the special characteristics in the first period—an Italian and Spanish influence is perceptible. Corneille takes from Spanish history the story of the *Cid*, and Molière that of *Don Juan*. After Louis XIV assumed the government, the French borrowed almost nothing from their neighbours. French taste is formed; it is original; it is exquisite.

The first period is a period of freedom; it continues the sixteenth century. Literature has not yet felt the yoke of literary rules. All forms are attempted—tragedy, comedy, and burlesque, and the three are even combined without scruple.

The theatre, the Christian pulpit itself, have singular license. Descartes creates a philosophy and Pascal polemics. On the contrary the first twenty

years of Louis XIV's government are signalled at once by the domination of rules and by the apotheosis of the king. Parnassus has a legislator, Boileau, and a sort of Congregation of the Index, the French Academy.<sup>c</sup>

#### SCIENCE

The seventeenth century was one of the great scientific ages of humanity. It saw the birth of analytical geometry and of the infinitesimal calculus, the formulation of the astronomical laws of Kepler and Newton, and the workings of astronomical discovery. It witnessed the first great stride of physics, the progress of optics and acoustics, the invention of the barometer, the thermometer, the manometer, the air-pump, the electrical machine; the first rudiments of the steam-engine; the first researches on plant life, and the first attempt at botanical classification. Anatomy and physiology were revolutionised by the discovery of the circulation of the blood, of the chyloferous and lymphatic systems, by the beginning of histology and microscopic research. Medicine made progress in all its branches and was enriched by new medicaments.

But much of this was accomplished outside of France. In mathematics the French may place the names of Descartes, Pascal, and Fermat alongside of Kepler, Galileo, Newton, and Leibnitz; but the great Keplerian and Newtonian laws of universal gravitation; the great Leibnitzian theories on the formation of our globe; the astronomic discoveries of Galileo, Huygens, and Helvelius surpassed the work of Gassendi, Picard, Cassini, Bouillaud, and Cassegrain. In physics, Pascal, Descartes, Mariotte, and Denis Papin upheld the French name, but they have but one zoölogist<sup>1</sup> (Claude Perrault also a physician and architect) to place alongside with those of Italy, England, and especially Holland; in botany Tournefort let himself be outdistanced by the English; in geology the French had but Descartes and Maillet; in the medical sciences they had only Pacquet, Duverney, and a few skilful practitioners. This comparative inferiority of French science to art and letters proves that it needs an organisation for work, and a liberality on the part of the public powers which at that time it did not have. The yoke of authority, so harmful to free research, was heavier in France than in the Protestant countries, where scientific progress especially manifested itself. The French superiority in mathematics is due perhaps to the fact that mathematics never had and cannot have an Aristotle. Finally we must take into account the bent of the French mind in that period when the people were above all artists, orators, and moralists. "The physical sciences," said Dacier at a later date, "were little cultivated in an age which seems to find no charm but in literature." We might correct wherein this judgment goes perhaps too far by this appreciation of Cuvier: he says that Francis I was the first to make erudition flourish in France, Richelieu literature, and Louis XIV science.

René Descartes, descendant of a noble family, was born in La Haye, Touraine, in 1596. In 1612 he terminated his studies with the Jesuits at La

<sup>1</sup> An anecdote will show how much the science of zoölogy was still in its infancy. In 1613 some fossil bones, probably those of a mammoth or some other prehistoric quadruped, were exhumed near the Château of Langon in Dauphiné. A surgeon, Habicot by name, recognised them as the bones of the giant Teutobochus, king of the Teutons, and published a ridiculous poem entitled *Gigantéostologie*. A physician named Riolan suspected that they might be the bones of an elephant, but as that animal was then unknown in France he searched for a description of it in the Greek authors; then he abandoned this trail, which was the right one, and came to believe that these bones were simply stones to which a caprice of nature had given extraordinary forms. At that time the custom was to explain thus what could not be understood.

Flèche. The period between 1612 and 1629 was spent in travel, which was followed by his stay in Holland. Just one year after the appearance of the masterpiece of Corneille, *The Cid*, Descartes gave to the world, in 1637, the *Discourse on Method*. This and his *Metaphysical Meditations* (1641) are his two chief works. In 1644 appeared his third great work, *Principles of Philosophy*, in which is propounded his theory of the world and the doctrine of Vortices. Descartes never married. In 1647 the French court granted him a pension; and shortly after he went to the Swedish court, where he had been visited by Queen Christina.<sup>a</sup>

France held it an honour to have given birth to René Descartes. While still very young he solves certain famous mathematical problems; writes, under the name of D'Abrégé, a treatise on music; and shuts himself up for



RENÉ DESCARTES  
(1596-1650)

twenty years in a sort of retreat in Holland, where he devotes himself with admirable assiduity to the research of truth, and composes those works which are to have such an influence on the future progress, not alone of science, but of civilisation. In 1629 he promulgates the law of refraction, aspires to make clear the cause of celestial movements, already demonstrated by Copernicus, Galileo, and Kepler, by reducing them all to a mechanical system. He conceives the idea of whirling clouds of rarefied matter, in the centre of which he places the sun and planets, supposing that the movement of the planets carries around with them the satellites, and that planets and satellites are in turn swept in a circular orbit round the sun. His theories seize upon the popular imagination, and arouse keen enthusiasm; by what he calls his system of "methodical doubting" he points out to humanity the true road that leads to the intuitive perception of nature's laws, and succeeds in so impressing his lessons upon all minds that the absolute

empire given by the Arabs and their imitators to the theories of Aristotle — an empire that would have been disavowed by that immortal man himself — is completely destroyed. One of his aims is also to obtain command over the human heart, that he may thereby fortify the basis of morality all over the world, and to this end he gives forth his meditations on the existence of God and the immortality of the soul.<sup>7</sup>

Meanwhile the theories of Descartes were invading France and all Europe. In 1650, when occurred the death at Stockholm, at the age of fifty-four, of the man who had given back to the modern world Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato, victory was assured, the science of philosophy was founded. There are gaps and imperfections in the system which may expose it to temporary eclipse, but as a whole it will never perish.<sup>8</sup>

Of the fifty-four years which Descartes thus passed on earth, more than thirty were spent in a state of self-abnegation such as no anchorite has ever emulated. It was little that his sleep and diet and exercise were exactly regulated by the single purpose of securing, to the utmost possible extent,



the independence of his soul on his body. His mental appetites were subjugated to a still more rigid discipline. To secure to his reason an undisputed supremacy over all his other faculties, he laboured, not only to cast down every idol of the cavern, but to consign to oblivion all the interests, the sentiments, and the events with which either his heart or his imagination had ever been occupied. He even attempted to emancipate himself from the memory of those deceptive languages, Greek and Latin, in which such subtle disguises have been found for so many mental illusions. That he might ascend to the sanctuary of truth, he thus aspired to become a pure abstraction of defæcated intellect.

"*Cogito, ergo sum*" is the massive foundation stone of the colossal edifice erected by Descartes. That famous proposition, though really "the well-ripened fruit of long delay," may perhaps sound not only as a truism, but as of all truisms the most meagre. Such a judgment would, however, prove nothing except the ignorance and incompetency of the judge.

"I think, therefore I exist," is not the fragment of a syllogism which might be reconstructed thus: "Whatever thinks, exists. But I think. Therefore I exist." It is rather an enthymeme—that is, an immediate sequence of two propositions, of which the second is the necessary offspring of the first. "I think"—that is, I am conscious of the act of thinking. Myself and my thoughts are a plurality, not a unity. They are the objects of which I am the subject. My consciousness of them is my adjudication that such objects exist. Or suppose that I can doubt even the existence of my own thoughts. Well, even so; that very doubt is itself a thought of which I am conscious. Let my scepticism be so absolute, and so universal, as to involve in uncertainty every other conceivable position, yet that very scepticism is the affirmation of myself as a thinking being.

Here, then, the naked reason has at length set her foot upon one resting-place, narrow, if you will, but yet firm and immovable. Here is one truth which cannot be assailed, even by doubt itself; or, rather, here is a truth which doubt itself does but verify and confirm. Nor is this a barren position. It is rather a ground which, when duly cultivated, is prolific of results of the highest moment to every thinking being.

Francis Bacon was not more the founder of rationalism in England, than René Descartes was the founder of it in France. Nor was he content to vindicate the rights of reason. He laboured, also, to determine and enforce her obligations. In Descartes the characteristic logic of the French understanding attained its perfection, as, in his writings, it found its model.

Blaise Pascal was a Cartesian. Like Descartes he began with doubt, in order that he might end in certainty. Like him he renounced all allegiance to merely human authorities, however exalted, and however venerable. In the spirit of his master, he received what was passing in the microcosm of his own mind, as being, at least to himself, the primary and indispensable witness of truth. As a true disciple of that severe school, he not only revered his own reason as the supreme earthly judge of every question so brought under his cognisance, but conducted all such investigations by the aid of the same geometrical logic by which Descartes himself had been guided.

But here the similitude ended, and the divergence began. Descartes impersonated the "Pure reason," sojourning among men, to occupy herself, not with the business of their lives, but with the mysteries of their nature. Pascal impersonated human sympathy, yearning over the world from which he had withdrawn, and still responding to all the sorrows by which it was agitated. Lofty as was the range of his thoughts, they were never averted

from that great human family to which he belonged. Every afflicted member of it had in him a fellow-sufferer.<sup>s</sup>

Pascal was born at Clermont-Ferrand (1623), and died at Paris (1662). He was, like Descartes, a universal scientist. His health, naturally feeble, was still more injured by his intense thought. He was deeply religious, and saw Christianity in Jansenism. A carriage accident, which occurred



BLAISE PASCAL  
(1623-1662)

on the Neuilly bridge, and which endangered his life, caused him to become rigorously devout. He even became subject to visions and hallucinations, and finally withdrew to Port-Royal, where he lived in retirement. He devoted the last years of his life to collecting material for a great work, destined to prove the truth of the Christian religion. The fragments of this great work, notes, pieces of paper, strung together without order or system, were found after his death. His friends at Port-Royal made selections from these, and published them in 1670,—the first edition, very incomplete, of his *Thoughts (Pensées)*. This book of thoughts is above all a history of a great soul, tormented by doubt, terrified, at the same time attracted, by the mysteries of the faith.<sup>c</sup> *The Provincial Letters* (1656), considered by many his masterpiece, was a biting satire on the Jesuits. The greatest French critics, including Voltaire and D'Alembert, agree in the statement that this work contributed more than any other composition to form and polish the French language. His ascetic life

tended to shorten his life. He died in Paris, aged 39.<sup>a</sup> After his death, appeared also two other little tracts, one of which is *Equilibrium of Fluids*, the other *The Weight of the Mass of Air*. To err on the side of rigour, is not the usual fault of genius: but Pascal was in all respects singular, and differed, not only from ordinary men, but from other men of genius. With every deduction that can be made for a few errors arising out of his education, Pascal was undoubtedly one of the ornaments of human nature; and if a few have rivalled him in talents, no man of equal eminence, perhaps, can be found who lived so innocently as Pascal.<sup>r</sup>

#### POETRY : BOILEAU

The writings of Descartes and Pascal, the doctrines of the French Academy and of Port-Royal, had perfected the art of prose writing. This had not been done for poetry nor yet for the art of writing in verse, which constitutes the perfection of poetry. On this head much still remained to be done, after the time of Malherbe, to consolidate his work. This was the task of Boileau. To the glory of Port-Royal must be added that of having enlightened, both by precept and example in the art of writing in prose, the poet who best understood and perhaps best practised the art of writing in verse.

For two centuries Boileau has been a bugbear, whom all poets fear. All of them, in fact, find him on their road, threatening with innumerable

difficulties, with fatigue and labour, who so would aspire to the glory of verse. The dramatic poet, the lyrist, the elegist, the writer of comedies, and even the writer of sonnets, must take him into consideration. They are all tormented by the ideal of style which Boileau has set up, and by that other ideal of perfection of language — indispensable to all styles, and without which nothing lasting can be written.<sup>d</sup>

The taste of the great and the noble — in one word, the particular taste of Louis XIV — dominated everything. Gallic and burlesque literature disappeared. The admiration of Louis was universal, profound, and of such sincerity that it excluded, in the grossest flatteries, all reproach of flattery; love of the king was confused with love of the country, and one would not have been believed more of an adulator in glorifying the king than he would be to-day in glorifying France. The great care of writers was studied elegance and perfection of form. Never was literature so completely and exclusively literary and, with the exception of a few works, especially those of Molière, one might say that it was void of new ideas. The ideas which antiquity or Christian tradition furnished, the great general ideas which belong to all ages and all countries, the commonplaces of morality and human psychology were sufficient. It was on this foundation that Racine pushed the analysis of passion to perfection, that La Bruyère<sup>j</sup> struck off, as clean-cut and brilliant as medals from the mint, his *Caractères*, and La Rochefoucauld<sup>k</sup> his *Maximes*.<sup>c</sup>

#### ORATORY : BOSSUET

The moral and social side of this great literature showed itself above all in works of another kind. La Rochefoucauld wrote the thoughts of a courtier, Nicole those of a director of consciences. The Christian pulpit rose with Bossuet to an unparalleled greatness to keep with Bourdaloue in that middle course, calm and regular, where wisdom tempers strength, and dignity never lowers itself. Bourdaloue was the ordinary preacher of the king and the court, and made for his audience as his audience was made for him. In the pulpit he had the nobility and perfection of Racine. As to Bossuet, he is above all comparison. If he does not for one instant lose sight of rule and law, without which strength cannot be sure of itself, he obeyed less the spirit of his time than he dominated it. While leading the funeral cortège of all the grandeurs of the age, he surrounded it with an incomparable lustre, which still retains the illusion, by the majesty of his eloquence.

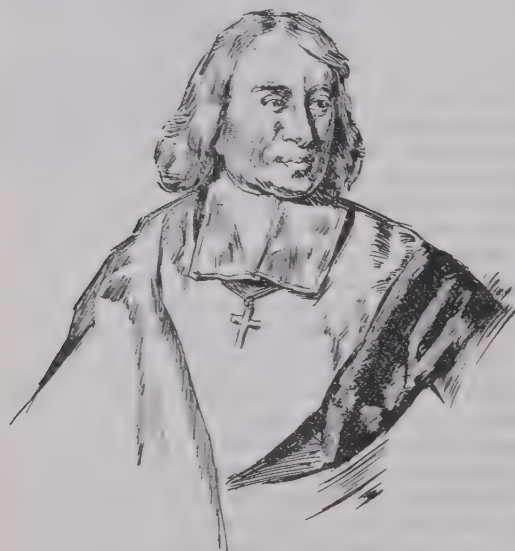
Bossuet has not treated of political subjects any more than Nicole or Bourdaloue. He viewed society only from the heights of Christianity. If he exalts the splendours of the court and the king, it is to humiliate them all the more profoundly under the hand of God. The root of his eloquence is in religion, as the form of it is in the Bible, the language of which he applied so marvellously to the things of his time. He touched on history and politics in only two works,<sup>l</sup> written for the dauphin. Even there it is the preacher who speaks. He unrolls before the dauphin the sequence of the purposes of God. He demonstrated to him according to the Bible the sacredness of royalty, and if he deduced from this sacredness the duty of obedience for subjects, he also deduced correlative duties for kings. He recognises the fundamental law that kings should be respected; he warns them against the danger of their passions, above all against the mania for conquests which ruin the people. The clergy of the seventeenth century ruled the court and the world because it was disinterested. It took the temporal government of France, such as Louis XIV had made it, and strove to raise it to a Christian ideal.



The government had a panegyrist of another disposition — Louis XIV himself. Louis XIV was not content to be the author or inspirator of the acts of his reign, he was also its first, one might say its only political writer. His *Mémoires*,<sup>m</sup> of which the basis belongs to him, and of which it matters little that the style has been polished by Périgny or Pellisson, explain his conduct admirably. It is drawn there with the fidelity which he himself admired and which he hoped would win so much public admiration, that there was nothing to hide.<sup>b</sup>

### THE THIRD PERIOD

The third period has an entirely different aspect. Royalty has so much abused its principle that it is being discussed. The Revocation, whose aim was to complete the reign of silence at home, caused an outbreak of a thousand rebellious voices beyond the frontiers which had its echoes in France. The war which Louis XIV waged for one idea brought back the reign of ideas. That confusion of king and country which hitherto had been complete suddenly ceased. Formerly everything was admired; everything was well. The complaints which arose from devastated fields and ruined industries dealt a blow to this optimism. La Bruyère in a few lines paints a terrifying picture



JACQUES BENIGNE BOSSUET

(1627-1704)

of the French peasant. Fénelon in a letter to Louis XIV judges with mournful severity both the government and the character of the king. Now everything is not all right and other things are sought for. Vauban proposes tax reform; Bois-Guilbert, a whole new economic system. To this desolate reality Fénelon opposes in his *Télémaque* a Utopia, an ideal city — the Salento of King Idomeneus. To the perpetual warfare the abbé de Saint-Pierre<sup>n</sup> would substitute his project for perpetual peace, which appeared in 1713, and to the government by one man a government by several. Finally in a room in his hôtel at Versailles a man, a duke and a peer, every evening — his day as a courtier over — shuts himself up and with what he has seen and heard still vivid

in his mind, adds a few pages to that colossal monument known as the *Mémoires de Saint-Simon*.<sup>o</sup> It is from this that posterity, disabused of eulogy and panegyric, will learn to know another king, another Versailles from those which Racine and Bossuet have shown it. In that period of French literature what is uppermost are new ideas. What matters it now whether the form be elegant and harmonious as with Fénelon, energetic and incorrect as with Saint-Simon, diffuse and dull as with the abbé de Saint-Pierre? The interest no longer lies here; the day of marvellous style and the time of art

for art's sake is past. Henceforth the great writers will write only to uphold a thesis, propose a reform, or prepare a revolution. Their greatness will be measured by their success. The eighteenth century has begun.

#### THE DRAMA : TRAGEDY

The sixteenth century handed down, in France, two forms of dramatic poetry, the mystery plays—that is to say, the religious drama—and the tragedy, a so-called imitation of the ancient form. Mystery plays were, in 1548, forbidden in Paris; the ancient tragedy had become sterile. The real French theatre remained to be founded.<sup>c</sup>

#### Corneille

At last Corneille appears. *Mélite* is the play given and the public applauds it with transports under which there seems to lurk premonition of the glory to which dramatic art is later to attain in France. Corneille surpasses rather than falls short of this expectation. Having made a deep study of the ancient tragic writers and the dramatic authors of modern times, he weighs carefully all the rules which he observes them to have used, and, while slavishly following none, adopts those which he finds most conformable to his own needs. With the ease of one who is their superior, or at least their equal, he reveals the inmost workings of the minds and hearts of the famous men whom he introduces on the stage; breathes into them, as it were, his own enthusiasms, raises them up to his own high stature. He presents his characters with the fidelity of history, but in proportions that would alone command admiration. He paints portraits of a resemblance so striking that they seem to have come from the hand of the subtlest of political writers, the most consummate of statesmen, or the greatest of military leaders. To his astonished and enraptured countrymen he gives *The Cid*, *Les Horaces*, *Cinna*, *Polyeucte*, *Pompée*, *Rodogune*, and *Héraclius*, and may be said to create French comedy when he writes *Le Menteur*. This genius seems the more sublime when it is compared with the simplicity and modesty of his private life. In his old age his head is crowned with laurels, and it is of him that the great Racine says, "It is not easy to find a poet who unites such a number of talents, so many excellent manifestations of art, force, judgment, wit. We cannot too greatly admire the nobility and economy of his subjects, the vehemence of his passion, the depth and gravity of his sentiments, and the dignity as well as the prodigious variety of his characters."<sup>7</sup> Pierre Corneille was born at Rouen, 1606, and according to a time-worn chronicle,<sup>1</sup> "of considerable parents, his father holding no small places under Louis XIII." He was brought up to the bar but soon deserted it. His great success brought upon him the enmity of his rivals, even Richelieu entering into this cabal. He was chosen a member of the French Academy. His private life was uneventful, due perhaps to the fact that his manners were simple and he was never successful in paying court to the great. He died in Paris in 1684, leaving several children. Corneille's works consist of thirty plays, tragedies and comedies.<sup>a</sup>

The drama of Corneille preserves a certain freedom of manner that is not found in the succeeding generation. Thus he chooses sacred as well as profane subjects; he restores Christianity to the theatre whence the prejudices

<sup>1</sup> *Biographical Dictionary*, London, 1798, 15 vols.

of a good society had banished it ; from the acts of the martyrs he borrowed the subject of *Polyeucte* and *Théodore*. In such works as *Nicomède* or *Don*



JEAN BAPTISTE RACINE  
(1639-1699)

Sanche the comic element mingles with the tragic. Above all he finds it difficult, to conform to the prescriptions of Aristotle's *Poetics* to the rule of the three unities. Now Chapelain had just discovered the *Poetics*; he had recommended its precepts to Mairet for his *Sophonisbe*. Leagued with the Academy against the success of the *Cid*, he tried to impose them on Corneille. Being commissioned to draw up "the sentiments of the Academy" concerning this play, he did not fail to denounce the author's violations of the unity of time and the unity of place. Corneille defended his tragedies. Finally, seized with scruples and intimidated by this phantom of a system of poetics made for a theatre wholly different from the French, Corneille submits. He writes plays following all the rules such as *Pertharite*, *Agésilas*, *Attila* ; but it is just these which are his weakest.

### Racine

Racine, who rose when Corneille declined, founded his dramas on a very different principle. With him the great motive is passion, and passion no longer

arrested by the conflict of duty. His characters are as though carried away by their frenzies. The type of Racine's tragedy is indeed the drama of passion. What he excels in painting is love, furious and cruel with Hermione, Roxane, Phædra ; plaintive and resigned with Iphigenia or Junia ; grave and ready for sacrifice with Monima ; full of tears and of gentle reproaches with Berenice.

This man, who divided with Corneille the glory of French classical tragedy, was born in Ferté-Milon (1639) of bourgeois parents. He received his education at the college of Beauvais and at Port-Royal. Becoming disgusted with theology, which study he had entered into, he went to Paris where he formed his friendships with Molière and Boileau. It was his ode on the marriage of Louis XIV, for which he received a pension, which first brought him into prominence. Of a sensitive disposition and inclined to melancholy, the criticisms and intrigues of the court made him renounce dramatic composition. However after his marriage in 1677 he became reconciled with the gentlemen of Port-Royal and was appointed historiographer by Louis XIV. At the suggestion of Madame de Maintenon he wrote *Esther* and afterward, *Athalie*. His tragedies are *Andromaque*, *Britannicus*, *Bérénice*, *Mithridate*, *Iphigénie*, and *Phèdre*. "I avow," says Voltaire, "that I regard *Iphigénie* as the chef-d'œuvre of the stage." Racine was admitted to the Academy in 1673. The ill reception of his *Athalie* caused him to entirely renounce poetry. Hurt by a disapproving criticism of the



king on a memorial he had written, "he conceived dreadful ideas of the king's displeasure : and indulging his chagrin and fears, brought on a fever, which surpassed the power of medicine, for he died of it, after being grievously afflicted with pains, in 1699."<sup>1 a</sup>

With Racine French classical tragedy is finally constituted. It is a quite peculiar species of literature, and one which could have arisen only at one particular period of French history. It differs from Greek tragedy for it dispenses with the accompaniment of music and does not admit choruses.<sup>2</sup> It is the antipodes of the Shakespearian drama. The latter journeys freely through time and space, multiplies characters, allows the interposition of the crowd, mingles the comic with the tragic, speaks alternately in the most poetic and the most trivial language, evokes spectres from the tomb, brings shipwrecks, battles, murders, executions on the scene. French tragedy makes the entire action take place in a period which, according to the precepts laid down, must not exceed twenty-four hours ; it never changes the scene and to avoid difficulties everything generally takes place in the vestibule of a palace or the square of a city ; it admits no more than three or at most four characters, to whom are added confidants whose mission is to listen to what the chief personages have to say to the public ; when a valiant army or an immense crowd is to be indicated an accessory character is made to follow the principal actor. It never unbends, never exhibits either a buffoon or a poltroon, it seldom takes its subjects from elsewhere than Greek and Roman antiquity ; it brings on the stage only noble personages, gods, demigods, heroes, emperors, kings, or princes, or servants who are not less dignified and who know how to keep their places. It speaks the noblest and purest language ; it leaves the spectres in their vaults, and reduces the fantastic element to the recital of some dream ; all murders, the assassination of Pyrrhus, the poisoning of Britannicus, the strangling of Monima, the execution of Haman or of Athaliah are relegated behind the scenes, out of sight of the spectator. If the actor cannot do otherwise than kill himself on the stage, he kills himself neatly with a poniard or sword of a temper peculiar to tragedy, for they do not draw blood. There is no action on the stage : we only see the impression which the action produces on the characters, and hear the reflections with which it inspires them.

This mould of classical tragedy maintained itself intact for nearly two centuries. It contented the contemporaries of Louis XIV, of Louis XV, of Robespierre and of Napoleon successively. The neighbouring nations hastened to adopt it : even England herself did so though she continued to play Shakespeare.

#### COMEDY

French comedy, during more than half the seventeenth century, was feeling her way. She was hesitating between two types — antique comedy, so difficult to transport to the French stage, and naturally cold because it represented manners so very different from those of France ; and Italian comedy, in which under the most diverse names there incessantly recur the old good-man who is deceived, the shrewd ward, the bold lover, the cunning valet, or the complaisant soubrette. Most of the comedies on which Corneille tried his hand and the first which came from Molière belong to the Italian type.

<sup>1</sup> *Biographical Dictionary*, London, 1798, 15 vols.

<sup>2</sup> Except in *Esther* and *Athalie* ; but these two sacred dramas are not, for Racine, dramas for the theatre.]

When, in 1659, Molière put the *Précieuses ridicules* on the stage, there was a surprise almost equal to that which had been occasioned by the *Cid*. After French tragedy, French comedy was now revealing itself. The comical element proceeded not from some flimsy plot, a hundred times repeated, but from the lively painting of contemporary manners. Molière was to rise higher still and to paint not the absurdities of a day but the eternal characters of humanity. Those whom he brings before us in his great comedies—the hypocrite and dupe of his *Tartuffe*, the Alceste, the Philinte and Célimène of his *Misanthrope*; the Harpagon of his *Avare*; the vain *roturier* of his *Bourgeois gentilhomme*, his *Femmes savantes*, his *Malade imaginaire*—are so far as concerns their main characteristics, of all times and all countries. Yet these personages, though they are universal types, are quite specially of the time and country in which Molière lived. Molière's destiny required that he should have to please three sorts of public: the court, the men of letters, and the people. For the king he wrote *Amphitryon* and the comic ballets; for the literary men he drew his immortal types; for the people he returned to the comic elements of the Italian theatre and the theatres at the fairs and he raised them to the level of high art. If any one of these three very diverse influences had been exercised alone upon the genius of Molière, it might have refined, or ennobled, or vulgarised him to excess; but by a happy combination he owed to the one that elegance and nobility, to one that depth and knowledge, to the third that overflowing *verve*, that power at once comic and dramatic, which are the characteristics of his genius. He was not exclusively either the poet of the court or of the Academy or of the crowd; this is why he has been and will remain the national poet *par excellence*.<sup>c</sup>

Molière, whose true name was Jean Baptiste Poquelin, was born at Paris about 1620. He was both son and grandson to *valets de chambres* on one side, and tapestry-makers on the other, to Louis XIII and was designed for the latter business, with a view of succeeding his father in that place. But the grandfather being very fond of the boy, and at the same time a great lover of plays, used to take him often with him to the hôtel de Bourgogne; which presently roused up Molière's natural genius and taste for dramatic representations, and created in him such a disgust to the trade of tapestry-making, that at last his father consented to let him go, and study under the Jesuits, at the college of Clermont. He finished his studies there in five years' time, in which he contracted an intimate friendship with Chapelle, Bernier, and Cyrano. Chapelle, with whom Bernier was an associate in his studies, had the famous Gassendi for his tutor, who willingly admitted Molière to his lectures, as he afterwards also admitted Cyrano. It was here that Molière deeply drank of that sound philosophy, and stored himself with those great principles of knowledge, which served as a foundation to all his comic productions. When Louis XIII went to Narbonne, in 1641, his studies were interrupted; for his father, who was grown infirm, not being able to attend the court, Molière was obliged to go there to supply his place. Upon his return to Paris, however, when his father was dead, his passion for the stage, which had induced him first to study, revived more strongly than ever; and if it be true, as some have said, that he, for a time studied the law, and was admitted an advocate, he soon yielded to the influence of his stars, which had destined him to be the restorer of comedy in France.

What became of him from 1648 to 1652 we know not, this interval being the time of the civil wars, which caused disturbances in Paris; but it is probable, that he was employed in composing some of those pieces which were

afterwards exhibited to the public. La Bédart, an actress of Champagne, waiting, as well as he, for a favourable time to display her talents, Molière was particularly kind to her; and as their interests became mutual, they formed a company together, and went to Lyons in 1653, where Molière produced his first play, called, *L'Étourdi*, or *The Blunderers*. In 1663, Molière obtained a pension of a thousand livres; and, in 1665, his company was altogether in his majesty's service.

His last comedy was *Le malade imaginaire*, or *The Hypochondriac*; and it was acted for the fourth time, February 17th, 1673. Upon this very day Molière died.

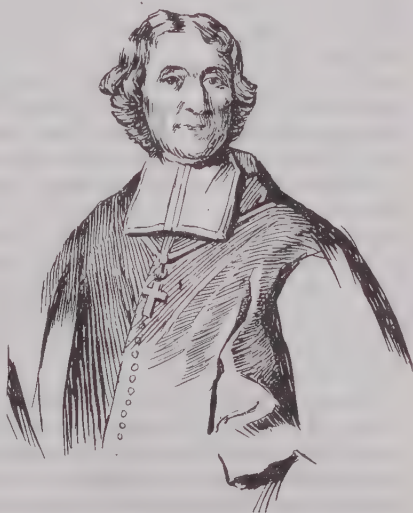
#### ARCHITECTURE

The fine arts, even more than literature, bear the impress of the period, because a government has more means to act on them. If it cannot create them, nor supply individual inspiration, it can at least impress a certain direction by the nature of the works it orders from artists, and the nature of the patronage which it affords them. For instance, Louis XIV had a passion for building. His architectural constructions are of a style apart, in harmony with his tastes, the needs of his court, and the characteristics of his royalty.<sup>b</sup>

The French architecture of the Renaissance happily blended the elements of ogival art and those of ancient art recovered in Italy. The seventeenth century broke more completely with the national past. One of the latest cathedrals is that of Orleans, constructed under Henry IV and his successors, but which had been designed in the sixteenth century. The ogival style was no longer in fashion; it was freely regarded as a relic of ancient barbarism, and it was branded with the epithet of "Gothic." Numerous acts of vandalism were committed on the most venerable monuments of the past. In 1699 Robert de Cotte, under the pretext of "restoring" the interior of Notre Dame de Paris, destroyed the close, pulled down the rood-loft, burned the wooden stalls, tore out the tombs and stone effigies, and broke the coloured glass windows.

The dominating influence of the age was that of the Italian monuments, not only of the first epoch of the Renaissance but also that of its decadence. However, French artists did not limit themselves to imitation; and under the inspiration of those ideas of grandeur and majesty which are the *cachet* of the seventeenth century, they created a truly original art, as characteristic of Louis XIV's reign as was its literature.

To obtain more imposing façades, instead of dividing them up as in the preceding epoch into almost equal stories, each distinguished by a different ornamentation, now only one principal story was admitted. Below, it rests on a ground floor which sometimes is almost a basement; above, it is



FRANÇOIS DE SALIGNAC DE LA MOTHE-  
FÉNELON  
(1651-1715)



surmounted by an attic which was only half or two-thirds the height of the principal story. Everything is sacrificed to the latter. To enhance still further the desired impression of unity and grandeur the ornamentation is greatly reduced. None of those architectural accidents, those happy caprices, or that ingenious variety which in sixteenth century monuments interested the eye and the mind—nothing but great sober lines severe to monotony. This is what is called the colossal style and what might be called the Louis XIV style.<sup>c</sup>

Versailles is the indestructible monument of the royalty of Louis XIV. One is struck at first by its large proportions; it is above all its majestic regularity which produces such imposing effects. All is in harmony with the habits of the court of the great king. One may criticise the arrangements, and Saint-Simon<sup>d</sup> without being an artist has done so with humour, sometimes with truth. But the ensemble leaves a profound impression of admiration, almost of respect. One feels that Versailles, to-day a vast solitude, was built to be peopled by an immense court, where Louis XIV lived in the midst of a France made in his image. Versailles, with its grandeur, its regularity, its majestic and classic ornamentation, merits to be the type of an architecture truly royal. If nobility is one of the principal conceptions of the ideal of beauty, this ideal has never been attained in an equal degree. Also, even as the court of Louis XIV gave the tone to the greater part of European courts, Versailles has become the type and model of the greater part of royal and foreign châteaux and gardens.

Other châteaux, like those of St. Cloud and Marly, were built almost in the same style by Mansart and Le Nôtre, the one the architect of the palace, and the other of the gardens of Versailles. St. Cloud was the residence of Monsieur, brother of the king. Marly, which was begun after Nimeguen, could offer a sort of retreat to the court fatigued by magnificence. Meudon, Sceaux, Choisy, built for princes, princesses, or ministers, produced in their more restricted proportions the essential characteristics of this royal architecture.

Paris has kept fewer traces of Louis XIV; he rarely made long sojourns there. The principal monuments he raised there were the triumphal arches at the portes du Trône, St. Antoine, St. Bernard, St. Denis, and St. Martin, monuments erected to celebrate his re-entry into Paris after the Peace of the Pyrenees, or his victories during the war with Holland. Meanwhile he also joined the Louvre to the Tuileries by means of the magnificent colonnade designed by Perrault. To this reign also belongs the northern boulevards arranged as great avenues, the Champs-Élysées, and finally the garden of the Tuileries.<sup>b</sup>

#### SCULPTURE AND PAINTING

The taste for statuary did not revive until the time of the Italian regent Marie de' Medici. Puget (1622-1694) was an independent. The other sculptors of the time bent themselves to monarchical discipline. They entered academies of sculpture and painting and placed themselves under the direction of Lebrun, for at that time it seemed natural to subordinate sculpture to painting. The sculpture of the great epoch of Louis XIV shows the influence of the vigorous studies the artists made from the antique. It is a diversified sculpture, but skilful and strong.

The Renaissance had been in France more brilliant for architecture and even sculpture than for painting. The French had still much to learn from the Italians and the Flemish. They had a few painters, but they had no French

school. Besides it was in Italy that the first generation of French artists of the seventeenth century was formed. Lesueur is perhaps the sole great painter who did not leave France. Of these illustrious travellers, some preferred to apply themselves to imitation of the severe design of the Roman school; others stopped in the Venetian cities and sought to worm from the canvases of Titian and Paul Veronese the secret of their admirable colouring and obtain a knowledge of the science of composition on a large scale. Whence comes the great variety in the French school. But all got the feeling of classical beauty, from the brilliant sky, the living types, and the magnificent antiquities of Italy. Moreover the French artists found a hospitable welcome in the peninsula; at a time when their kings were not rich enough to furnish artists means of support, work was ordered of them by the popes, cardinals, sovereigns, and great lords of Italy. Colbert's foundation of the Academy of Rome was to assure the education of French genius, for centuries, by the genius of antiquity and of Italy.

In France the painters were organised as a corporation which was known as the Academy of St. Luke, and into which no one was received, as in the corporation of joiners or hatters, until he had served an apprenticeship or had produced a masterpiece. The academy was all powerful in the art-world until in 1648 it was confronted with a rival that eclipsed it—the Academy of Painting and Sculpture. We must not forget that in 1673 the first exhibition of painting took place in the court of the Palais Royal. Hitherto there had been open-air exhibitions—a kind of picture fairs, as for example that held in the place Dauphine. In 1699 the exposition was held in the Apollo Gallery of the Louvre.

As in political and literary history, the history of painting in the seventeenth century may be divided into three periods. The first sixty years are years of artistic freedom; with the personal government of the king the rule of Lebrun over the fine arts was established. At the latter's death a transformation took place. When the regent Marie de' Medici wished to decorate the vast galleries of the Luxembourg palace, she believed that she could not do better than to summon the great Flemish painter, Peter Paul Rubens. But she soon became better acquainted with the artistic resources of France, and sent for a number of Frenchmen to collaborate in the decoration of the Luxembourg. Among them were Simon Vouet (1590–1649), Nicolas Poussin (1594–1665), and Philippe de Champagne (1602–1674). If we examine the dates of the deaths of these artists and others, such as Claude Lorraine (1600–1682), Lesueur (1616–1655), or better, perhaps, the most brilliant period of their productiveness it will be admitted that Louis XIV and Lebrun had no influence over them whatever.

In the second period, Charles Lebrun of Paris (1619–1690) was the leader of the French school. He might have, as has been said, paraphrased the saying attributed to the king and have said "*L'Art, c'est moi.*" He was the Louis XIV of the fine arts. The artist, whose genius sympathised so completely with that of his sovereign, was nevertheless a very great painter. He possessed the sacred fire; at the age of fifteen he had produced two paintings that attracted attention, and he developed his natural gift by arduous labour and incessant study. He went to Rome and received instruction from Poussin. He painted for Louis XIV those immense canvases representing the exploits of Alexander—the *Crossing the Granicus*, the *Battle of Arbela*, the *Defeat of Porus*, and the *Entrance into Babylon*—which form an epic series. Lebrun pushed perfection of detail so far as to have horses sketched in Syria, so that they would be typically Asiatic.

## MUSIC AND THE OPERA

It is easy to count the musicians that France produced in the sixteenth century; the true home of their art was then in Italy. Nevertheless the French court acquired a taste for lyric representations, and the kings, to free the art from religious domination, founded troops of lay artists, and at the head of their singers and instrumentalists they placed a superintendent of music.

These representations which the French called *ballets* or *mascarades* were an incoherent mixture of the three arts of poetry, music, and dancing which the modern opera has brought into harmony. A ballet was divided into *parties* or acts, and the *parties* into *entrées* or scenes, both of variable number. There was no fixed plan for the composition—or rather there was no composition. In front of a great canvas the king and the nobles who were taking part in the *divertissement* composed or had composed the words at their fancy, accommodated them to or made them accommodate familiar airs, putting the words into the hands of the ladies, in order that they might follow the piece, abandoning themselves in the end to the *boutade*, that is to say to the inspiration.

Music was considered such an inferior art that the instrumentalists were recruited from among the lackeys, and to be a violin player was almost a sign of servitude. The airs were vulgar; the instruments were reduced to lutes and viols, the dances were slow and monotonous like the *bourrée* of the peasant of central France. Such was the court ballet, such, for example, the ballet of the *Délivrance de Renaud* danced by Louis XIII and his courtiers in 1614. The court was lost in admiration and it was declared that Europe had never heard anything so ravishing.

Mazarin tried to revive the fashion by bringing dancers, singers, and musicians from Italy, obtaining the libretti and the music from composers of the same country. The courtiers admired in order to please the cardinal and the queen-regent, but Madame de Motteville<sup>n</sup> admits in all frankness that these representations seemed to her mortally long and tiresome. It is probable that French ears were not yet trained to Italian music and that Madame de Motteville, like Molière's Alceste, would have given all the operas for one of the old popular airs like "*J'aime mieux ma mie, au gué.*"

The taste of the court was too frivolous, the actors in their quality of king or noble too unruly for opera thus conceived to raise itself to the level of a serious art. Therefore the public but privileged theatres succeeded to the aristocratic or court theatre. The abbé Perrin, a prolific writer of *livrets*, although a most mediocre poet, associated himself with Cambert, the most distinguished of French composers and with the marquis de Sourdéac, who understood scenery and stage mechanism. He obtained letters patent on June 28th, 1669. Thus was founded the Royal Academy of Music, which has nothing in common with the learned academies of the age; for the Italian word *accademia* signifies simply concert. The first result of this association was the representation of *Pomone*, in 1671, words by Perrin; music by Cambert. The associates were preparing to mount another opera when misunderstandings broke out among them. Lully took advantage of this and through Madame de Montespan's influence was given the privilege. Cambert in vexation went to England where, although he was well received by Charles II, he died of chagrin. Lully [himself an Italian], who had claimed that it was impossible to write an elegant score to French words, now became director of the first French National Theatre of Music (1672).



Lully created a music distinctly French in spirit and his influence extended over his contemporaries and successors, but his was the only original work that appeared at the Academy. Its organisation was too authoritative to lend itself easily to innovations. A large portion of the public was not interested in that solemn monotonous music which only concerned itself with mythological tragedies. Already in the seventeenth century (1640) the *Comédie des Chansons*, sometimes attributed to Timothy de Chillac and sometimes to Charles Beys, had furnished the type of a kind that resembles both vaudeville and the French *opéra-comique*. It was called the *comédie à ariettes* and became universally popular. In 1678 at the St. Laurent fair Allard and Maurice Vanderberg presented the *Forces of Love and Magic*, which had a great success. This irritated Lully, and invoking the privilege of the Academy he had an order served upon these two itinerant directors to reduce their orchestra to four violins and one oboe. The Academy decided however to sign a contract with Catherine Vanderberg, permitting her to give pieces with song, orchestra, and dance. Such was the origin of the *opéra-comique*, a term first employed by Le Sage, in 1715.

#### RAPID DECLINE OF THE AGE OF LOUIS XIV

One characteristic of this age was that the efflorescence of arts and letters was of short duration. The age was great so long as Louis was surrounded by men whose talent had already seen the light when he began to protect them; but new geniuses were not born and when that generation was exhausted another did not arise to replace it.

The personal government presents but a single and very short period of literary and artistic splendour. The last great work of secular literature, *Athalie*, dates from 1691. If Bossuet, Fénelon, Bourdaloue, and Massillon — that is to say the group of churchmen were not there; if Saint-Simon were not secretly writing his accusing *Mémoires*, one might say that not a single work of high literary value was written in France after the Peace of Ryswick (1697). The same observation may be made of the arts. Many of the great painters of the seventeenth century owed nothing to Louis XIV, for Le Valentin died in 1632, Lesueur in 1655, Laurent de Lahire in 1656, Poussin in 1665. Claude Lorraine and Philippe de Champagne, who died, the one in 1682, the other in 1674, were already in the fullness of their genius when the king began to govern. Of the four great architects of the age, Mansart, Claude Perrault, Blondel, and Bruant, none lived to see the year 1697. Puget, the great sculptor, died in 1694, Lully in 1687. The poet Quinault, who usually furnished the latter the libretto of his operas, died the following year. After these there is certainly a wide gap in the history of French art.<sup>c</sup> Indeed, as Buckle says: "At the moment when Louis XIV died, there was scarcely a writer or an artist in France who enjoyed European reputation."<sup>e</sup>

#### A FRENCH VIEW OF THE EFFECT OF THE AGE

But it had been a royal epoch! Louis XIV had the rôle of a demi-god. His Olympus was only a theatre, his *fêtes* were only fairy-like scenes and masquerades, but all was on a grandiose scale. Before his time the king of France lived in a strong castle. He was, even after the time of Francis I, a mighty baron shut up behind his battlements, his thick walls, his deep moats. One can see the gloomy shadow of the monarch flitting from window to window in the vast halls of the Château de Blois, isolated, cold, imprisoned, anx

ious. Spies, guards, armed men ; courts where echoed the tread of sentinels ; secret staircases where men charged with dark errands mounted and descended — all proclaimed a shadowy king watching with his hand upon his sword, spying out all, sharing the fear which he inspired in others. But under Louis XIV all was changed. The staircases widened, air and light circulated in the royal house ; *fêtes* replaced the gloomy official receptions ; courtiers succeeded soldiers. This time royalty was sure of victory. It trod on laurels, as half a century later it walked on roses, without dreaming that either the laurel- or the rose-strewn path would lead to the scaffold.<sup>f</sup> On that splendid horizon of the seventeenth century great storm clouds appeared one by one, lightning still unaccompanied by thunder flashed through space ; but the eyes of the multitude, blinded by the royal sun, did not perceive these threatening gleams. Intoxicated France abandoned herself to the contemplation of her present glory, without thinking to seize or to understand the true reasons of that glory, and did not realise that she was being dragged to a yawning chasm.

Never was error more excusable. How resist that seduction which all realised, but which all contributed to exercise ? Society is like an immense concert all of whose parts mingle together to form, by their divers accents, a universal harmony. Every class, every man, gave all that he had to give to the work of common grandeur. The mass of the people, confident in the good intentions of their prince, comforted by the good order of the administration, bore their burden the more lightly, and patiently awaited from the future a still greater relief. The clergy, more worthy and more enlightened than in any other epoch of French history, instructed and guided the society it no longer governed. The nobility, which had gained in discipline not less than in polish what it had lost in independence, furnished the majority of the warriors ; the third estate furnished almost all the rest, especially the great administration and the great writers. By means of intellectual and moral energy, of practical sense, of inventive and active force, the French bourgeoisie reached the highest degree of its development — what a bourgeoisie, to have produced within a half century Colbert, Corneille, Pascal, Molière, Racine, La Fontaine, Boileau, Bossuet, Bourdaloue, Arnauld, Nicole, Domat, Fabert, Poussin, Lesueur, Lorraine, Lebrun, the Perraults, and Puget, without counting those men as powerful and more for evil than for good — Fouquet and Louvois !

Marvellous assemblage of the most highly developed and complete society that has appeared in the world since ancient times ; vast and living picture whose aspect produced on those who regarded it an enduring fascination ! All peoples admired and imitated it. The language, the fashions, the ideas of France invaded Europe. Literary styles, like the styles of costume, like the styles of objects of art and of luxury, like the habits of life, formed themselves, at least in the upper classes, and for long, after the French. It was not the breath of a momentary fancy, but it was an atmosphere which enveloped little by little all objects and all beings, a medium outside of which it became impossible for man to live.<sup>g</sup>

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GIRONDIS ON THE WAY TO THE GUILLOTINE

*From the painting by Karl von Piloty*

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BY

HENRY SMITH WILLIAMS, LL.D.



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## BOOK II

### FRANCE FROM 1715 TO 1815

PERIOD I. THE FALL OF THE OLD RÉGIME. [1715 1789 A.D.]

(Comprising Chapters I-VI)

#### A PREFATORY CHARACTERISATION OF THE PERIOD

WRITTEN SPECIALLY FOR THE PRESENT WORK

By ALFRED RAMBAUD

Member of the Institute

#### POLITICAL CONDITIONS <sup>1</sup>

IN 1789, before the meeting of the states-general, the absolute monarchy moulded into shape by Richelieu and brought to perfection by Louis XIV was still erect in all the integrity of its power.

The successive struggles sustained by France through nine centuries against the various social forces — struggles that continually changed their face according to the causes from which they sprang, now some obnoxious form of feudalism or church organisation, now some fresh manifestation of energy on the part of the people — tended unswervingly towards a single end. The kings themselves might lose sight of this end, incapable or demented rulers might occupy the throne; but through all revolts and complications, in spite of feudal rebellions and English invasions, the pure doctrine of absolute monarchy was steadfastly preserved. Fierce might be the hate that burned between the Armagnacs and the Burgundians, furious the spirit that gave rise to the *Praguerie* and the league of the public weal, bitter the religious wars, the revolts of the nobles under Louis XIII and the Fronde, which filled young Louis XIV with rancour and ripened him for the rôle of despot he was to play; but after each reverse the monarchy, strong in the devotion of its citizens and peasantry that had been trampled under foot during the preceding combat, rose in renewed might, materially and morally more firmly established than before.

During past centuries it had been obliged to see limits set to its power by rival forces; now it had grown sufficiently robust to break down all opposition. Resolved to accept no counsels, to endure neither contradiction nor remonstrance, the monarchy set itself up before its former adversaries, the nobility, the clergy, the parliament, the bourgeoisie, as an object of wor-

<sup>1</sup> To be consulted: A. de Tocqueville, *L'ancien Régime et la Révolution*. H. Taine, *Les origines de la France contemporaines, L'ancien Régime*. A. Chérest, *La chute de l'ancien Régime*.



ship, a divinity that would not tolerate atheism. It was not satisfied to be free from the necessity of struggling—it determined to be adored; and the temple of the new religion was that palace of Versailles where the descendants of the noblest families, forgetting their pride, came to beg a favourable glance from the king; where even the “great Condé became a picture of baseness and servility in the presence of the ministers” (Saint-Simon).

There were at court great names that had come down from feudal times, borne by families that were branches of the royal house; Louis XIV admitted no hierarchy among the noble, save that created by his own caprice; the simple gentleman who obtained from him the right to wear the *justaucorps à brevet*, or to hold the candle during the royal process of disrobing was more to be envied than a prince or duke. Peers of the realm indeed there were in plenty under Louis XIV, who sold thousands of patents of nobility toward the close of his reign, and his example was followed all through the eighteenth century.

So absolute was the power of Louis XIV that by the declaration of 1682 he caused to be consecrated by Bossuet a Gallican church, which venerated the pope but rendered obedience to no power save that of the king. Even the Jesuits in France affected Gallicanism, although nothing could be further removed from the principles of their institutions. It is also well known to what length the king went in restricting the right of worship of his subjects, whether they adhered to the Protestant faith, or were Catholics tinged with Jansenism.

Before Louis XIV certain provinces had been called to distinguish them from others, “state provinces,” because each was a state within itself, consisting of nobility, clergy, magistracy and bourgeoisie, without whose consent the king had no power to levy taxes. Louis XIV suppressed some of these “state provinces” altogether, and reduced others to submission by the menace of dissolution.

Municipal liberties flourished to a certain extent; but in 1692 the king substituted for magistrates appointed by election others to whom he had sold a hereditary right to sit in judgment on their fellow-citizens. The offices of mayor and sheriff in the north, consul and *capitoul* in the south, were literally knocked down to the highest bidder. Occasionally the monarchy received pay for restoring to office the elected candidates that had been ejected; but in that case the post was immediately put up at auction again. Several times the supreme power descended to this debasing practice, which exposed the full extent of its disloyalty, and revealed at the same time the decadence of that municipal liberty that had attained its brightest glory in the heroic age of France.

The king could make war or peace exactly as he pleased, could pass laws, being himself the “living law,” could impose new taxes as he would; for example the *capitation* in 1695, and the *vingtièmes* (twentieths) that followed a short time after. He crushed the people that concessions might be accorded to the *fermiers généraux* and special privileges granted them (salt, liquors, customs-duties, tobacco). He expended the state revenues as though they had been his own personal wealth, looking upon himself as not only the ruler of his subjects but the owner of their property, as indeed he was of their liberty and life by virtue of his arbitrary warrants (*lettres de cachet*) and “exceptional justice.” In his *mémoires* Louis XIV wrote: “Kings are absolute masters and as such have a natural right to dispose of everything belonging to their subjects, whether they are members of the church or not.”

The character of the kings of France underwent modification : to the proud, unyielding Louis XIV succeeded Louis XV, the indolent, and the easy-tempered Louis XVI ; but through all these surface permutations the nature of royalty itself remained unchanged. On his death-bed Louis XIV could still assert : " I am the state " ; when Louis XV had occasion to express regret at having given offence to his people he saw fit to close with the words, " Although a king is accountable for his conduct only to God " ; and on the eve of the Revolution Louis XVI made reply to certain representations of the duc d'Orléans : " It is legal because I wish it."

Nor was this royal absolutism a mere abstraction ; by means of centralisation and an official organisation that was a complete hierarchy in itself the king was able to make his power felt in the remotest corners of his kingdom. Immediately about him were the ministers, chosen from the " low bourgeoisie " (Saint-Simon) that they might be the more completely under control ; and in each province was an intendant as omnipotent as the ministers, having under him sub-delegates whom he himself appointed, and who filled a position similar to that of sub-prefect. In cities the municipal authorities either purchased their office direct from the king or, in case they were appointed by election, submitted themselves entirely to the will of his agents. In the rural districts where there were as yet no municipal councils the *syndic* or mayor was chosen by general assembly of the people ; but in no case would the general assembly venture to elect another candidate than the one offered by the sub-delegate, nor would the syndic, once in office, dare take a single step unapproved by his redoubtable chief. Indeed there was no end to the annoyances to which cities and villages were alike subjected under such a system of " administrative tutelage." Before a church roof could be repaired or a damaged fountain be restored, before even so insignificant a sum as twenty-five francs could be expended for the public good it was necessary to obtain the authorisation of the intendant of the province. Elevation to municipal authority in villages, that is to the post of syndic or tax-collector, came to be regarded as a calamity by the peasants rather than as a blessing. In 1702 the king conceived the idea of creating in each provincial parish an office of permanent syndic that he might derive profit from its sale to the highest bidder ; but so few purchasers presented themselves that it was necessary to return to the system of so-called elections. In this manner the monarch had contrived by means of agents—less numerous than to-day but still present in every part of the realm—sent out from the seat of power, to obliterate all influences handed down from a former age, to substitute his own authority for that of any surviving remnant of the past.

#### SOCIAL CONDITIONS<sup>1</sup>

It was in the life of the rural populations that the substitution just referred to wrought the most momentous effects.

[<sup>1</sup> To be consulted : Arthur Young, *Travels in France* (1787–1789). Rougier de la Bergerie, *Recherches sur les principaux abus qui s'opposent au progrès de l'agriculture* (1788) and *Histoire de l'agriculture française* (1815), *Mémoire publiée par la société de l'agriculture à l'assemblée nationale*. Dareste de la Chavanne, *Histoire des classes agricoles en France*. H. Doniol, *Histoire des classes rurales en France, and La Révolution et la Féodalité*. Chassin, *L'Eglise et les derniers serfs*. Babeau, *Le Village sous l'ancien régime* and *La vie rurale dans l'ancienne France*. Koréief, *Les paysans et la question paysanne en France au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (in Russian). Moscow, 1789. L'abbé (now cardinal) Mathieu, *L'Ancien régime en Lorraine*, Paris, 1878. Levasseur, *Histoire des classes ouvrières en France*, 4 vols., 1867. A. Franklin, *Les corporations ouvrières, et comment on devenait patron*. Babeau, *La ville sous l'ancien régime*, and *Les artisans et les domestiques d'autrefois*.]

One thing must not be forgotten : France was at that time an essentially rural country, and agriculture was the occupation of three-fourths of the population. That the Revolution struck such deep root all over the land was due not so much to the political changes it brought about as to the fact that it modified the social condition of twenty millions of peasants ; it reached far and lasted long because it was above all an agrarian revolution.

According to a document published in 1790 by the national assembly the population of France was divided at that time into two unequal parts ; 20,521,000 inhabitants lived, or rather existed, by agriculture, and 5,709,000 were occupied in industry, commerce, the so-called liberal professions, or the performance of public functions. The agriculturists composed 78.24 per cent. of the whole, as against 21.76 per cent. attributed to the urban classes. A single example will illustrate the relative inferiority of France's industrial population, however real had been the progress made.<sup>1</sup> In 1789 French industries combined did not consume more than 250,000 tons of coal, and in 1815, twenty-six years later, that amount had only been quadrupled.

Given the relatively slow progress of French industry and the limited number of industrial working-people in France, is it to be wondered at that during the revolutionary period there was not, properly speaking, any social question that had labour for its basis ? Yet there was a decided agrarian-social question, and this formed the groundwork of the Revolution. It was a question that interested nearly the whole of the population ; some, the nobles, in their capacity of property-owners, others as occupying the land under various titles.

The maxim "No land without a lord" had in the eleventh century become a reality. The *alleu*, or piece of ground owned by an independent proprietor, had almost entirely disappeared, every division of land being the property of some noble who allowed it to be held by a tenant. To the noble belonged the fields and woods, the mountains and rivers ; and the *villains*, those at least who were *serfs*, were also his property. Towards the close of the fourteenth century and in the beginning of the fifteenth had occurred that process of evolution which transformed — with a few exceptions that were apparent up to the time of the Revolution — the villain who was a serf into the villain who could call himself a free man. In 1789 there were still serfs in the church (for example, those of the St. Claude chapter in the

[<sup>1</sup> At the end of the eighteenth century there were in France six hundred great forges which produced 196 million pounds of cast-iron yearly. In 1742 the factory of Creuzot made a modest start. In 1767 Frédéric Japy founded the great watch-making establishment of Beaucourt, and in 1781 a certain Martin imported from England a machine for spinning flax invented by Arkwright. As was the case everywhere the lower classes at first showed great hostility to the introduction of machines (examples Jacquard, Vaucanson). The weaving industry had already attained a certain development ; St. Quentin, in the manufacture of fine cloths, employed 60,000 spinners, 6,000 weavers, and exported 20 millions' worth of goods annually. The silk industry in Lyons counted 15,000 looms and 30,000 workers, while for the manufacture of silk stockings Lyons had 2,000 looms, Paris nearly as many, and Nîmes 3,000. At Wesserling and Mülhausen in Alsace, even at Jouy, near Paris, was started the manufacture of printed calicoes and chintzes.

In many branches of industry, especially the manufacture of pins, the machinery used, according to the *Encyclopédie*, was very primitive. France was enormously behind Great Britain in most respects and did not make any considerable progress until the time of Napoleon I.

In 1722 Bielefeld, a German, wrote : "The industries of the country are admirable, every article it sends forth is finished and complete, and charms by the merit of its invention and the perfection of its workmanship. It is these qualities that give to French manufactures their enormous sale, and the rumour is current that the nation realises from its foreign trade in fashionable stuffs alone 14 millions of livres." These indications certainly announced bright prospects for French industries, but what were they compared to the future that stretched before agricultural France ?]



Jura) and a few in the possession of nobles; these serfs were held in mortmain, that is, they had no power to will away either the lands they occupied or their personal belongings, because all they owned was the property of the nobles.

Those of the peasants who had remained free, had mostly all become proprietors in their own right. There were, according to Necker, when he entered upon office, "an immense number of small properties in France." How had the French peasant who, in addition to bearing practically the whole burden of royal taxation, was obliged to pay ground-rent to the lord and tithes to the church, to render statute labour to the crown and support the passage of troops through his farms, to endure wars, famine, scant crops, and disease, contrived through it all to add constantly to his possessions of land? The answer is mainly to be found in a study of the traits that made up his character at that time and that still distinguish him in certain provinces to-day, namely: his wonderful ability to save, his greed for gain, his talent at concealing the true condition of his affairs, his passionate love for the soil; but the reason for the phenomenon also lies in the very nature of things themselves.

Now the natural laws that govern such conditions decreed then as they do to-day that the proprietor who does not cultivate his land shall derive from it but little profit, also that the proprietor who does not live upon his land shall obtain from it virtually nothing. At that epoch if the proprietor of an estate happened to belong to the lesser provincial nobility, the chances were that he was ruining himself trying to keep in repair a château, often immensely large, that was little more than a monument of past opulence and power; he was not in his own person a source of riches since he held it beneath him to live otherwise than "nobly"; that is, to pass his days in any other occupation than that of the hunt. Should he, however, belong to the court nobility, unless he was fortunate enough to secure some remunerative post, he was certain to ruin himself all the more speedily in splendid attire and extravagant living, at play at the king's table where enormous sums were lost, and in all the wild and wasteful follies that had their origin at Versailles.

The noble, great or lesser, who sees his resources dwindle to a point where they are insufficient to meet all his demands, makes up his mind to part with a portion of his ancestral estates; not the château, ornamented with coats-of-arms and crowned with weather-cocks, but some little piece of the land that lies about it. Even then, after he has gone so far, pride steps in and prevents his making a definite transaction of the sale; consequently all purchasers of his own rank or of the bourgeoisie withdraw leaving only the peasant, who alone is willing to accede to terms whereby the former owner reserves a "superior proprietary right," or a "right of repurchase." The peasant knows by experience that the noble will never be in a position to buy back what he has sold; nevertheless he faces with a courage that is truly admirable the necessity of paying this same noble his claim of *lods et ventes*, which are recurrent taxes and will be put into effect at every death on one side or the other, and has also the full knowledge that his position as an independent proprietor will be a far more difficult one to support than that of the farmer on the estate, whom the noble feels himself in a measure bound to uphold in time of trouble. Some writers have even declared his condition to be worse than that of the negro slave in our colonies whom the master at least feeds and clothes. But what of all that? The French peasant is determined to be a proprietor in his own right, to expend the labour of his hands on soil

that belongs to him. Hence it was found, after 1760, that one-third of the national territory, according to the estimation of Young, had passed into the hands of the peasants, who would not have been content to rest there if the vastest domains in France, those belonging to the clergy, had not come under the law of mortmain, that is, had not been inalienable.

Thus on the one side is the noble who has sold everything salable that he possesses except his château, but still retains superior rights over his former property, and on the other the peasant who gradually, bit by bit, has become the real proprietor. The one grew steadily poorer though he was practically exempt from the payment of taxes, while the other grew constantly richer though bearing the whole burden of state taxation, and paying certain dues to the noble besides.

In most cases the noble retained a right of sovereignty over his former estate which gave him the exclusive privilege of hunting and fishing within its boundaries. After his pigeons (right to maintain a *colombier*, pigeon-house) had done damage to the newly sown seed, his hunting packs would devastate the crops; and all the year around depredations were committed by the rabbits of his warren and the wild beasts of his forests. Occasionally he could constrain the later owner to make exclusive use of his wine-press, mill, and ovens, against the payment of rent (right of *banalités*), and also claimed the right to demand hours of service, toll on all merchandise that crossed the bridge or any part of the lands, and a certain percentage of profit (right of *potage* and of *boucherie*) on all the wine and animals that were sold, and a guard-right in return for freedom from duty of guarding the castle; and this even where the castle had not been in existence for centuries.

Sometimes the noble counts, among the appurtenances of his estate, a prison, a pillory and, should he possess power of life or death, a gallows (*potence*). The meaning of the word *potence*, according to its etymology, is power). In the neighbourhood of certain villages there are to-day places designated by the name of "Justice," or "*Fourches*" (forks), which indicate the precise spot on which a gallows formerly stood.

After his duty to the noble has been fulfilled the peasant still owes a debt to the church—the tithe; and to the king he is obliged to pay talliage, capitation and the *vingtièmes* (twentieths). He is bothered by agents on account of his salt, his wine and other liquors, and in rendering his enforced service it is always upon the king's highways, never upon his own roads that he is obliged to work. He must further assist in the erection of barracks, in the deportation of beggars, galley-slaves, exiles, military baggage and ammunition.

If he has occasion to draw up a legal document there are the registry-clerks with whom he has to deal and the stamp-tax that he has to pay; but last and heaviest burden of all, it was the peasant who took part almost alone in the drawing of lots for the militia—a system for which the modern one of conscription offers an equivalent.

There was another thing which added to the French peasant's distress; he felt himself stranded and alone in the midst of his difficulties, the old seignorial hierarchy having completely broken up, and his natural protectors no longer offering him protection. The noble took to being absent most of the time, living at court, or with the regiment; or, in case he still resided in the village, he interested himself in nothing but his own affairs. Had he chosen to oversee the election of the syndic and the assessment of taxes, to regulate the hours of statute-labour and the drawing of lots for the militia, he could have rendered great service to his former dependents by prevent-

ing much injustice ; but the fallen petty sovereign regarded all such tasks as beneath him. When the peasant became rich he sent his sons to school with the intention of making them bourgeois, or of buying for them a small office of the king ; thus a force native to the village became lost to it in after years. The peasant could of course betake himself with his troubles to the curé, who was a man of far higher culture than himself ; but the curé, while he usually remained as poor as the man who labours with his hands was yet the church-official to whom was paid the tithe. In this fashion the peasant found himself caught in a circle formed of employés, minor functionaries, and the syndic of the village, who were by no means his natural chiefs. After having been “devoured for centuries by wolves,” as he complained, he was now to be “devoured by insects.”

In England the true protector of the peasant against arbitrary taxation, the exactions of fiscal agents, and the insolence of royal functionaries was the proprietary-lord, the landlord.

Between the French *seigneur* and the *landlord*, between the *fief* and the *manor*, the lapse of several centuries had created a vast difference. The English lord, not deeming it beneath his dignity to perform useful service, and refusing to ruin himself in court living, or to be cheated out of his substance at cards with the king, had found means to grow rich, instead of constantly poorer as had been the case with the French nobility, by taking advantage of all the new ideas introduced into a system of agriculture far in advance ; but more especially by raising cattle, an industry that had rapidly developed in England, bestowing upon its inhabitants their classic name of “beef-eaters.” Far from allowing his domains to crumble away from him bit by bit, he kept constantly widening their confines ; and the rights he retained for himself were only those which offered some solid advantage, the purely vexatious claims he willingly relinquished.

As early as the reign of Charles VII the French nobility had begun to accept and profit by a system that relieved its members of all necessity of paying taxes, allowing the whole weight of the public burden to fall upon the shoulders of the people ; whereas in England nobility and commons stood united against royal despotism, ready to share all public charges provided they were given equal recognition by the representatives of the nation. The English agriculturist had no causes of complaint against his landlord ; side by side with him he grew in wealth, suffering no extortions such as oppressed the peasant of France, and knowing not the hate and rancour with which the latter's heart was filled. If in certain respects he still depended on his landlord, he could always be sure of finding in him a strong support. While the French noble, when he did not vegetate in idleness, was occupied in seeking adventures in the army, or his fortune at court, the landlord lived quietly in his own house, on his own estates, happy to feel himself master in his home, and indifferent to the royal favour ; quite content with the distinction of having the finest breed of cattle in his stables, and the latest pattern of machines in his sheds. He was the recognised chief, acknowledged even by the king, of the community in which he lived ; was president of the Factory Council, commandant of the militia — even justice of the peace when occasion arose.

The French noble, on the other hand, had ceased to be treated as a person of any consequence by the royal administration ; in official language he was merely “first citizen” of the village to which he belonged. If he happened to reside in the village he enjoyed the proud distinction of occupying the bench of honour (*banc d'œuvre*, so called because it was elaborately



sculptured) at mass, of being named in the prayers of the Sunday service, of having holy water presented to him, and of possessing the right of family sepulture in the church. There is nothing, can be nothing in common (save in a few exceptional cases), between him and the peasant; and indeed were it otherwise, would the sub-delegate permit him to mingle in the affairs of the parish?

The landlord, on the contrary, takes part in all the public affairs and elections possible; he often either actively supports a candidate of his own choosing or becomes a candidate himself. In order to engage in politics with efficacy and success he finds it necessary to become allied with the farmers, to exchange with them friendly hand-clasps, to invite them to his board where his lady presides—to enter into close relations with them in a word, that the propaganda may be properly furthered.

Certain words have been endowed with great significance in themselves; in France the distinction was always maintained between a *gentilhomme* (gentleman) and a *roturier* (man of low birth), even though the latter were a very pattern of refinement and good breeding; in England the term “gentleman” embraced both the noble by birth and the individual, whoever he might be, who was able to rise above the crowd by reason of superior fortune, education, or talents.



## CHAPTER I

### THE EARLY YEARS OF LOUIS XV

[1715–1748 A. D.]

Starting from the reign of Louis XV the nation has no longer a head, history no longer a centre ; at the same time with a master of the higher order, great servants also fail the French monarchy ; it all at once collapses, betraying the exhaustion of Louis XIV's latter years ; decadence is no longer veiled by the remnants of the splendour which was still reflected from the great king and his great reign ; the glory of olden France descends slowly to its grave.— Guizot.<sup>b</sup>

IN the last years of his life, Louis XIV had indeed dazzled the world by the splendour of his government and the theatrical pomp of his court ; but he had outlived his renown. A universal feeling had grown up against the oppression of an arbitrary military dominion, springing from the will of a bigoted man, who looked upon everything as subject to his control, and who was surrounded and misled by flatterers and priests, and a change was earnestly desired. This extensive and sullen discontent arose from the general decay, the impositions and oppression of the numerous farmers and undertakers of the public taxes (*traitans*), from the impossibility of maintaining the credit of the nation any longer, of meeting the current expenditure, or even paying the interest of the debt. This feeling sprang up in spite of the police and the bastilles, and took the deeper root because no man dared to utter a murmur of discontent, and such expressions could only find a vent in the most private and confidential circles.

All historical documents agree in expressing the conviction that the government and administration could no longer have been carried on as had been done under Louis XIV, and the integrity and peace of the kingdom be maintained. The king however wished to prolong his reign beyond the period of life, and conceived that he had provided for the carrying out of his plans by his will and codicils. It soon appeared, however, after his death, in 1715, that all dispositions are utterly inefficient which cannot be maintained by the bayonet when power has usurped dominion of right.

Louis XIV had adopted his illegitimate children into the number of the princes of the blood ; the count of Toulouse and the duke of Maine, born without talents, were made completely unfit for any useful service by the

misfortune of a court education. The king nevertheless had appointed the latter to be guardian of his eldest great-grandson Louis XV, who was then five years of age, and committed the government to a regency during his minority. Marshal Villeroy was appointed to maintain the directions of the king's will by military measures.

But neither Villeroy nor the duke of Maine was at all a match for the duke of Orleans in the determination to use either cunning or force. He laid claim to the regency as the eldest legitimate prince of the blood. Philip of Orleans was the son of an original and vigorous-minded German princess [Elisabeth Charlotte of Bavaria<sup>d</sup>], whose scandalous memoirs have been sought out and printed; he combined talents, resolution, and skill, with a reckless contempt for all the principles of morality and religion.

The parliament was to be used as an instrument for annulling the will. Philip of Orleans therefore flattered its councillors by the assurance that he would again restore the parliament to that degree of influence and importance of which it had been deprived under the reign of Louis XIV. The people were consoled by the empty hope of being delivered from the intolerable oppression and torturing want under which they were suffering. He gained a powerful influence, from the same cause which made Robespierre so strong in 1793. The people entertained the expectation of being cruelly avenged on the blood-suckers and favourites of the previous reign through his instrumentality; this indeed was a degrading and inhuman joy, but it nevertheless had a great effect in the times of the Revolution. The humbled and slavish aristocracy, whose power had been almost annihilated by the monarch, were allured by the promise that all questions under the regency should be determined by plurality of votes, and that the different branches of the government would be intrusted to bodies of commissioners (*conseils*) formed from members of the aristocracy.

By the aid of the parliament the will was set aside, and the duke of Orleans (nephew of Louis XIV) was acknowledged as regent. The regent found the kingdom in desperate circumstances; and although he possessed abilities and skill, eloquence and wit, together with some degree of kindness and magnanimity, yet his devoted attachment to sin, his wilful contempt for virtue, honour, and truth, as things only fit for tradesmen and peasants, his extravagance and habitual indulgence in the grossest sensualities, to which he devoted night and day, and all founded upon a species of hellish philosophy, made him wholly incapable of undertaking any good designs.

When Louis died, the treasury was not only completely exhausted, there not only existed universal want and misery, but the credit of the nation was utterly gone, and the whole income of the country was pledged for two years to come. It appears from the autograph letters of the regent, preserved in the French archives, that a very few days after assuming the government, he found it quite impossible to obtain means of paying or maintaining the troops even for the next month. There was a universal cry for the punishment of those much-envied cheats who had subjected themselves to no legal penalties. The regent was impelled to the appointment of a most unjust tribunal by the expectation that he might be able to extort a sum of 200,000,000 livres from the guilty, after investigation of all the frauds which had been perpetrated under the former government. In the next year, this court of pains and penalties (*chambre ardente*) was instituted. The tribunal carried on its investigations through the whole of the year 1716, by means of terror, torture, and imprisonment. The first roll, which is followed by nineteen others, contains nineteen pages filled with the names of those



[1716-1717 A.D.]

who were subjected to the inquisition, together with all the various documents connected with the process: the sum extorted amounted to 31,000,000 livres [£1,220,000 or \$6,200,000]. In the year 1717, this court became completely a means of terror. The number of persons from whom money was demanded reached 4,470, and it was estimated that they would yield 220,000,000 livres [£8,800,000 or \$41,000,000]. [The sum actually extorted, however, was 70,000,000 livres, of which the state treasury saw only 15,000,000.] The regent and the dissolute and ruined men whom he favoured shared the remainder. A universal feeling of indignation arose; but the regent read with complete indifference the most vehement attacks, which were full of well-merited reproaches, and even allowed them to be preserved among his papers, where they have since been found.

The brothers Paris deserve to be particularly mentioned amongst the number of those whom the regent used as instruments, though they did not exactly belong to the utterly depraved society with which he associated: they undertook the character of auxiliaries. This character they maintained under the regent, and afterwards under the duke de Bourbon, and ruled the whole state. They were born in the neighbourhood of the Piedmontese Alps, afterwards became distinguished as bankers in Paris, and at this time suggested various financial measures to the regent. Their advice sufficed to meet the demands of the moment, but its adoption afterwards became more ruinous to the nation than plague, starvation, or war could possibly have been. They discovered the most wicked means of defrauding



*Louis*

LOUIS XV

the honourable and simple-minded of their hard-earned money, and of enriching the sensual and ostentatious with the possessions of the honest.

The melting-down of the coin gave occasion to innumerable frauds; for sterling money, which was either concealed or exported, became rare, whilst everyone was obliged to pay a higher price for all articles of necessity and ordinary wares, not only on account of the relation of the new money to the old, but to fill the pockets of the usurers as the price of their speculation. Lemontey<sup>e</sup> states the advantage which the regent derived from debasing the money at 72,000,000 livres; and the nation was obliged to pay this trifling gain at a loss which it is impossible to calculate. In order to compel the people to deliver up their hard cash for the purpose of being melted down, the government one while gave permission to export the precious metals and then suddenly prohibited exportation, and carried their severity even to search. The *visa* (an examination of the justice of the demand or

debt, and an arbitrary diminution of claims) affected the national debt and the holders of national paper in the same manner as the melting-down of the coin affected the possessors of cash. A sum of six hundred millions of debt was wiped out by national paper (*billets d'état*) which was not quite worth two millions. Before mentioning these measures, which led to a formal bankruptcy, in its nature altogether fraudulent, we may observe that the blame of these arbitrary proceedings is not to be thrown wholly upon the regent, but rather upon those councils by whose establishment he at first flattered the aristocracy, and made a pretence of softening and ameliorating the despotism of the last autocratic government.<sup>1</sup> The regent, however, by no means intended to concede unconditional powers to these boards, but reserved to himself the distribution of the business.

The abbé Dubois, who had been his tutor and led him into everything that was evil and wicked, afterwards worked for him as his private secretary. From this time all hope of a council of regency disappeared, which the duke had before promised to appoint, and in the following year Dubois alone, although privately, conducted the whole affairs of the state.

The two measures which had served to raise money for immediate necessities speedily increased the difficulties of the government and nation. The melting-down of the old coinage lessened the amount of sterling money and the mass of the precious metals which were in circulation, and the depreciation of the national debt annihilated the public credit. It was now proposed to meet these difficulties by the establishment of a bank, which was to increase the circulating medium and to sustain the national credit. This proposal was made by a Scotch speculator named Law, a man of great experience in money affairs and in trade, who proposed to the regent to effect by artificial means what it seemed impossible to accomplish in a natural way.<sup>f</sup>

#### JOHN LAW AND THE "MISSISSIPPI BUBBLE"

The duke of Noailles had shown great energy and had set in motion all the resources of finance. But he had made no innovations, and according to his plans, he required not less than eleven years to restore the balance between revenue and expenditure. The regent wished more expeditious measures to be adopted. There was at the court a man, who, while all the other financiers, now at their wits' end, could talk of nothing but bankruptcy, proposed what he said was an infallible means not only of preventing any catastrophe and of paying the debts of the state, but of raising France to a degree of prosperity never before attained by her or any other nation. This man was a bold speculator and a brilliant man, whose glowing and confident expositions of his plans could not fail to be well received at the Palais Royal.

John Law was born in Edinburgh in April, 1671. His mother, Jane Campbell, was a descendant of the ancient and illustrious family of the duke of Argyle. His father was a rich banker and Edinburgh goldsmith. When the son came of age and found himself master of his father's fortune, he hastened to leave Edinburgh for London. His love affairs led to a duel, he killed his adversary and was condemned to death. A pardon was obtained, but he was very soon imprisoned again in the Tower of London. He succeeded in making his escape, and took refuge in Holland, where he

[<sup>1</sup> These councils were six in number, each composed of ten members, chiefly of the feudal nobility: the councils were those of Finance, Foreign Affairs, War, Navy, "Despatches" (internal affairs), and "Conscience" (church affairs).]

[1694-1715 A.D.]

became secretary to the English banker at Amsterdam. He also came to understand the fecundity of money at interest, thought he had discovered the secret of national wealth, and conceived a plan of a bank on a much vaster scale than anything he had seen. He visited successively Genoa, Venice, Florence, Rome, Naples, and Brussels, rendering his systematic knowledge more complete and gaining money by speculation. But he was anxious to make practical application of his ideas, and proposed to the Scotch that he should open a national bank. The plan, however, was rejected.

He next addressed himself to the king of Sardinia, who replied that he was not sufficiently wealthy to run the risk of ruining himself. Next, he went to Paris. This was in 1708, during the ministry of Desmaretz, a time when the finances of France were at their lowest ebb. Law first became known as a daring gambler. The duke of Orleans, who had frequently met him, was attracted by Law's fine manners, and soon became very friendly. But the head of the police ordered Law to leave Paris on the pretext that he knew too much about the games he had introduced into the capital. He continued to enrich himself by gambling and by speculations in the public funds. But as soon as he heard of the death of Louis XIV he hurried back to Paris, taking with him his fortune, which amounted to 1,500,000 francs. Before long he had regained the confidence with which he had inspired the duke of Orleans by his theories.

Law wished to create a bank, to be the universal regulator of credit, associating its interests with those of the state, and constituting it the depository of all the money belonging to private individuals, cashier to the king, and the greatest financial monopolist in the kingdom. All enterprise and activity were to proceed from the bank, all wealth was to flow into it; it would prevent either scarcity or superfluity of money, and would, in some ways, fulfil the functions of the heart in the social organism. He defines it "as a general fund which provides conveniences and advantages for every class in the state"; and as it had for a long time been observed that a well directed commercial house could enjoy credit amounting to ten times its capital, he claimed that by getting all the money of the kingdom into his bank, he would be enabled to place notes amounting to ten times its value in circulation. Thus he would, by the actual increase of the currency, and by the numerous advantages afforded by the new money, increase the wealth of France to almost ten times its former value.

What a splendid prospect! Had not such a man a right to say that there are financial combinations which are of more importance to a nation than a victory in warfare? In seven years his bank would raise the national revenue to three billions, and that of the king to three hundred millions. The immense quantity of money that would be put into circulation would do away with usury, and would make the interest on money fall to three per cent. It would considerably increase the value of landed property, so that land-owners would be able to pay off the principal of their debts, and the state to diminish the interest on its own. Commerce, free from discredit, and the thousand other fetters which still bound her, would become more flourishing than ever.

The financier was so blinded by belief in his system that he did not perceive what great principle he was tampering with. Law thought the future too full of promise to be hindered by temporary obstacles. If the nation were compelled to accept the system at first, people would soon be eagerly crowding round the gates of the bank, when they had seen the system fully



developed and enclosing the whole of France in its gigantic net. For as yet he had only divulged part of his ideas. "The bank," he said, "is not the only enterprise nor the greatest that I have in my mind. I will produce a work which will surprise Europe by the changes it will effect in favour of France — greater changes than any which have been produced by the discovery of India or the introduction of credit." This great work, of which he prophesied such marvels without revealing its nature, was a commercial company the idea of which had been suggested to him by the English East India Company.

The company would support the bank by making use of its money; the first would provide commerce without means for carrying on trade, with funds; the second would provide an investment which would be always ready for money that was lying idle. Supported thus by each other, nothing could shake their stability. The whole nation would be formed into a body of merchants whose cashier would be the bank, and who would consequently enjoy all the advantages of commerce both in money and in goods.

What was the use of grinding the people down by the imposition of taxes to obtain from them money with great difficulty which the king could create at will? The payment of taxes would be less a subsidy furnished to the king by his subjects than a greater activity given to the circulation of money. The bank would supply all state necessities, and would run no risk in doing this because it would have as a foundation the enormous profits of the company, which would embrace within itself all the national commerce, all the profits of former companies, of tax farmers, of royal officials, and private individuals. It would absorb into its vast entity, the navy, the colonies, manufactures, the coining of money, and the collection of taxes. The result would be a shower of gold and bank-notes on a nation become energetic, business-like, and rich.

In short, the miserable kingdom left by Louis XIV, so crushed by debt that it seemed almost impossible to restore her solvency, would suddenly develop into a state more flourishing and happy than any of those whose prosperity and happiness had become proverbial.

Unfortunately this miracle was never to exist except in Law's own imagination. He was misled by a principle which he had so much exaggerated that it ceased to be true. It is true that the introduction of money into a kingdom facilitates trade and gives an impetus to commerce. This he understood. What he had not grasped was that this favourable influence has its limits, and that in the relations which exist amongst civilised people a nation must of necessity soon reach them. When the quantity of money increases without such increase being the fruit of a larger national industry, is the nation richer? And were it possible suddenly to increase the money in France to tenfold its value, would the wealth of France be augmented in the same proportion? No! Money and capital are two distinctly different things.

In the sixteenth century, Spain possessed more gold than all the rest of Europe put together, but this money did not make her rich because money could not remain in a country where there were no manufactures, but was absorbed by the commercial nations as surely as steel is attracted by a magnet. This was the capital error of the author of the system. He thought he could force circulation and increase wealth by the abundance of money he was about to create, thus mistaking effect for cause. As soon as this money had been put into circulation, it would have decreased in value, just as merchandise does when the markets are glutted. Law ought to have aimed at increasing

[1715-1719 A.D.]

products, not money. But the revival of commerce, manufactures, and agriculture, which are the true sources of all wealth, cannot be brought about in a day, on a banker's order, in an unprosperous country.

Thus the system rested on two false principles; Law had failed to grasp two truths: (1) an increase of money is not an unfailing sign of a proportionate increase in the wealth of any country; (2) money is not simply an arbitrary sign of value. This accounts for his failure as financier. In the practical application of his ideas, his want of political experience led him into two mistakes even more fatal to his success than his economic errors: he thought that the prince would never be mad enough to ruin his bank by overstepping his credit; he considered that violence might successfully be employed to compel the nation to accept his system. Of these mistakes the first exhausted the bank and precipitated bankruptcy; the second caused the greatest suffering in France, and brought about terrible poverty.

In spite of its inconsistencies and mistakes, however, the system was, nevertheless, the most remarkable economic work which had appeared up to that time, and its author has been placed in the front rank of reformers. There were banks before his time; but he was the first to see the full extent of their utility, and to realise the importance of credit. It is easy to criticise his theories and to point out the weak points in his schemes now that society has for a long time practised credit. But at that time everything connected with the subject was new, and had to be worked out amidst obscurity and contradiction. The mere fact that Law raised such questions and gave up whole years of his life to demonstrating his theories and forming a regular system; that he risked his life and fortune to put it into practice, shows that he was a man of superior genius.

But meanwhile the regent was tempted, and in spite of the opposition of part of his council, a bank was established May 22nd, 1716. The bankers and tax receivers protested; but commercial men eagerly accepted this convenience; bank-notes and money circulated; manufactures were revived. The new institution, having successfully overcome all obstacles, was united with the state, which had not dared to adopt it before. On the 10th of April, 1717, the tax receivers were instructed to honour the bank-notes at sight, and on the 4th of December, 1718, the name of The Royal Bank was assumed.

Success emboldened the innovator. He added to the bank a commercial company, thus making sure of an investment for the money he had just created. This company was established in the month of August, 1717, under the name of *Compagnie d'Occident*.<sup>1</sup> After having languished for a year, it suddenly became very flourishing, by means of one or two strokes of luck. On the 4th of September, 1718, it acquired a tobacco monopoly and on the 20th of July, 1719, that of coinage, while under the new name of the *Compagnie des Indes*, it united all the privileges and all the business of the old French maritime companies. The number of its shares, first fixed at two hundred thousand, was augmented by fifty thousand in May, and again by fifty thousand in July, 1719. In September of the same year, having obtained the lease of the monopolies and promised the king a loan of 1,500,000,000 francs, they were finally increased by four consecutive issues to 624,000.

These shares, issued originally at 500 livres, were worth 18,000 on the exchange, and were much in demand. Those who had opposed the new institutions felt themselves in the wrong and were silent; the king's debts

[<sup>1</sup> It was popularly known as the Mississippi Company, its object being the development of the trade in the valley of this river. Tales of vast imaginary gold and silver mines in this region excited the populace to a frenzy of speculation. The 500-livre shares touched 22,000.]

were paid, pensions were redeemed; taxes were diminished; favours were lavished on the courtiers; manufactures were encouraged, marvellous fortunes were made in a miraculously short time, and the nation, thinking itself enriched by ten billions, plunged into luxury and self-indulgence.

But this wealth was imaginary, and the very magnitude of it ought to have shown people that it must be so. When the first enthusiasm had passed away, everyone flew to the bank or to the company to change his note or sell his share. In vain did the bank try to prove how much more valuable the notes were than hard cash, because of the royal privileges attached; in

vain did the bank turn for support to the company with which it had been united on the 23rd of February, 1720. People would have none of its paper money, and violent measures were resorted to, in order to compel them to continue to accept, which increased the bank's discredit. Parliament, which had opposed the system from the first, did all it could to hasten its ruin; and the bank was obliged to keep on incessantly issuing fresh notes whose value fell lower and lower as they increased in number. However, in the hope of preventing a greater depreciation, the bank itself, on the 21st of May, ordered that the value of notes and shares should be legally diminished by one-half. After this, confidence in the bank was at an end, and henceforth every effort was made to abolish a system utterly rejected by France.

The bank stopped payment. Starving people crowded round its doors, howling their execration on the authors of their misery. The company tried to redeem the notes by creating pensions, current accounts, and shares. These expedients failed. The bank was suppressed on the 10th of October, 1720, and on the 28th of the same month the shareholders were obliged to withdraw any claims. Law left



A COURTIER OF THE TIME OF LOUIS XV

France, and his enemy, D'Aguesseau, who undertook the liquidation of his debts, sequestrated all the assets of the company, and did not free them again until he had, by numerous high-handed actions, reduced the remains of the system to the sum of 1,700,000,000.

In the midst of these vicissitudes Law, in good as in bad fortune, remained always the same. He was inflexible in his theories and persisted obstinately in trying to realise the work he had planned. He acted with the impetuosity and violence of a man who, implicitly believing in his own ideas, does not trouble himself as to whether the crowd has understood or follows him; who feels quite indignant with unforeseen hindrances which nature places in his path.

He persisted in the belief that he had found the true secret of the wealth of nations, and to the end of his life he firmly asserted the power of credit. After the fall of the system, he wrote these words in far-off exile: "Do not



[1720-1729 A.D.]

forget that the introduction of credit has brought about more changes amongst the powers of Europe than the discovery of the Indies, and that it is for the sovereign to give and not to receive, and that the people are in such need of it that they will come back to it in spite of themselves, and however much they may mistrust it."

We must do this man justice. He was not, as some have asserted, a mere adventurer who came to France to take advantage of the regent's weakness. He was the first financier who carefully studied the phenomena and causes of wealth production. If he was wanting in that politic prudence which was necessary for a successful guidance of the people, and if he was mistaken in his theories, his principles were at any rate clearly defined; and he devoted his life, not to making his fortune, but to trying to secure the triumph of his ideas.

"When I entered the service of the king," he wrote to the duke of Orleans, "I had as much property as I wanted, I owed nothing, I had credit; I leave his service without property of any kind. Those who placed their confidence in me have been obliged to become bankrupt and I have nothing to pay them with."

He was right: France let him die a poor man; yet, if the memory of the ruin he had caused had not been too recent to yield to gratitude, France ought to have been grateful to him for the generous ideas he had propagated. He had tried to extend commerce; to restore the navy; to found colonies; he abolished burdensome taxes, and tried to abolish a corrupt magistracy, to create a simpler and less arbitrary system of taxation; finally, he established a bank which, had it continued, would have been of the greatest service to commerce, and would really have increased the wealth of the country. He made serious mistakes in his economic theories, and these mistakes had most terrible consequences; they threw the finances of the country into the greatest confusion and ruined innumerable families. But he was inspired by a desire to do good, was firm in principles which he thought true, and honest in his conduct.<sup>1</sup> His system was founded on a false principle which was but the exaggeration of a truth.<sup>h</sup>

Before proceeding with the history of the political period, it is desirable to quote the characters of the two chief figures of the time, from the immortal memoirs of the duke de Saint-Simon, who was in a sense the Pepys of France.<sup>a</sup>

#### SAINT-SIMON'S PORTRAITS OF THE REGENT AND HIS MINISTER

In relating occurrences where he had played a large part, the duke of Orleans always gave the praise to others and never spoke of himself; but it was difficult for him not to criticise those who were not "true blue," as he called them, and one could feel that he had a scorn and natural repugnance for those whom he had occasion to believe were not so. He also had the weakness to believe himself exactly similar to Henry IV in everything, to affect him in his manners, in his repartees, to persuade himself that he looked like him, even to his figure and face; and no other praise or flattery touched him or went to his heart so much as that. That was a complaisance to which I

[<sup>1</sup> Saint-Simon, who did not approve of Law's schemes, yet said of his character: "There was neither avarice nor roguery in his composition. He was a gentle, good, respectable man whom excess of fortune had not spoiled and whose deportment, equipages, table, and furniture could not scandalise anyone. He suffered with singular patience and constancy all the vexations excited by his operations until towards the last."]

could never bring myself. I felt too strongly that he looked for this resemblance just as much in the vices of this great prince as in his virtues, and that the one gave him quite as much pleasure as the other. Like Henry IV he was naturally good, humane, compassionate, and I have never known anyone more naturally opposed to the crime of destroying others or more sincerely removed from the thought, even, of hurting anyone, than this man, who has been accused of the blackest and most inhuman crimes. It might even be said that his gentleness, his humaneness, his kindness went to the extent of becoming a fault, and I would not hesitate to say that he made a vice of the supreme virtue of pardoning one's enemies. His prodigality, without cause or selection in the exercise of this virtue, came too near being senseless, and caused him many troublesome inconveniences and evils. He loved liberty as much for others as for himself. He praised England to me one day in this respect, as being a land where there were neither exiles nor *lettres de cachet* and where the king could forbid nothing but entrance into his palace and could keep no one in prison.

This prince, born to become the honour and masterpiece of education, was not fortunate in his teachers. Saint-Laurent was the first person to whose charge the boy was confided. He was the man in all Europe best suited for the education of kings. He died, however, before his pupil had outgrown the rod. It was the abbé Dubois who first insinuated himself into the friendship and confidence of a child who knew no one, and he made enormous use of it to scheme for fortune and gain his bread. He has played so important a part since the death of the king that his character should be made known.

The abbé Dubois was a little, thin man, a slender, pitiful object, with a light wig, a face like a beach martin's—yet with some intelligence of countenance. All the vices fought within him as to which should gain the mastery. There was continual noise and combat between them. Avarice, debauchery, ambition were his gods; perfidy, flattery, servility his means; complete impiety his repose; and the opinion that probity and honesty are chimeras on which people plume themselves but which actually exist in no one, was the principle of his conduct, in accordance with which all means were good to him. He excelled in low intrigues, he lived on them, could not get along without them; but they always had one end on which all his labours were concentrated with a patience which was terminated only by success or by the repeated demonstration that he could not get what he wanted, or unless groping thus in the depths of darkness he found he could see light better by boring a new hole. Thus he spent his life in underground passages. The boldest lies had become second nature with him, and were covered by a simple, straightforward, sincere, often a bashful manner. He would have conversed with ease and grace, had not his desire to see through others while speaking and the fear of going further than he wished developed in him a habit of stuttering which was a serious defect, and which, redoubled when he came to mix in important matters, became insupportable and sometimes unintelligible. Malicious, treacherous, and thankless, an expert master in the blackest deeds, terribly brazen when caught in the act, desiring everything, envying everything, wanting all the spoils, he was selfish, debauched, inconsistent, ignorant of all business, always passionate, carried away by rage, a blasphemer, and a fool. He publicly disdained his master and the state, business and the world in general, being ready to sacrifice everybody and everything to his credit, to his power, to his absolute authority, to his grandeur, to his avarice, to his threats, to his vengeance.

[1715-1722 A.D.]

Such was the sage to whom Monsieur had intrusted his only son to form his habits, being advised to do so by two men, whose own were no better.

Such a good master lost no time with his new pupil, in whom the excellent principles of Saint-Laurent had not had time to take deep root. I will confess here with bitterness—since everything should be sacrificed to the truth—that M. le duc d'Orléans brought into the world with him a facility, or, to call things by their right names, a weakness which continually spoiled his talents, and which was of marvellous service to his preceptor throughout his life. Dubois flattered him from the side of manners, to lead him into debauchery and make him believe that to be the principle of a good worldly position, even making him despise all duty and decency, since this would make him more easy to be managed by the king than a well regulated conduct; he flattered him from the side of his intelligence, persuading him that he was too wise to be the dupe of a religion which in his opinion was only an invention of state policy to frighten ordinary minds and keep the people in subjection. Furthermore he instilled into him his favourite principle that probity in men and virtue in women are only chimeras with no real existence except in some fools who have let such bonds as those of religion be put upon them.

Unfortunately everything conspired in the duke of Orleans to open his heart and mind to this execrable poison. He became accustomed to debauchery, still more to the noise of debauchery, until he could not get on without it and was entertained only by noise, tumult, and excess. This it was which led him to commit the strangest and most scandalous deeds and, as he wished to surpass all his comrades, to mix with his pleasure parties the most impious speeches, which made him find a special pleasure in having the most outrageous debauches on the holiest days. Thus several times during his regency he chose Good Friday and other holy days for such performances. The more consistent and excessive a man was in his impiety and debauchery the more he respected him, and I have often seen him in a state of admiration verging on veneration for the grand prior because for forty years he had not gone to bed without being drunk, had not ceased to support mistresses publicly and to continually indulge in impious and irreligious remarks. Brought up among the intrigues of the Palais Royal, the duke had acquired the detestable taste and habit, even to the point of making it a principle, to embroil everybody with everybody else, and then to profit by it by making people talk against each other. That was one of his principal occupations during all the time he was at the head of affairs, and the one out of which he got the most pleasure, but which made him odious, and threw him into a thousand tiresome inconveniences. He was born bored, and he was so accustomed to living outside of himself that he found it unsupportable to return and was incapable of finding means to occupy himself. He could



A FRENCH NOBLEMAN, TIME OF  
LOUIS XV



live only in the movement and torrent of affairs, as at the head of an army, in the care of providing everything necessary for a campaign, or in the tumult and excitement of a debauch. This last also bored him as soon as it was without noise and excess. He threw himself into painting as soon as his liking for chemistry had passed. Afterwards he amused himself with making combinations of stones and sealing-wax by means of charcoal, the smell of which often drove me from him, and also with compounds of the strongest perfumes, of which he was always fond, and from which I deterred him because the king was very much afraid of them and almost always detected them.

In short, there never was a man born with so many different kinds of talents and so much ability to make use of them, and never was the life of an individual so unoccupied, or so given up to nothingness and ennui. Madame said the fairies had all been invited to his birth, that all had come and that each had endowed her son with a talent, so that he had them all; but that, unfortunately, one old fairy, who had disappeared so long before that no one remembered her, had been forgotten and she, angry at the neglect, had revenged herself by making absolutely useless all the talents he had received from the other fairies. It must be admitted that on the whole this portrait is a speaking one.

He was timid to excess, he realised it and was so ashamed of it that he affected the contrary, even priding himself upon his boldness. But the truth was, as became apparent afterwards, nothing could be obtained from him, either favours or justice, except by working on his fears, to which he was very susceptible, or by tiring him with importunity. He tried to escape by words, by making promises, of which his ability made him prodigal, but which only those who had firm claws could make him keep. Thus he broke so many promises that the most positive ones were counted for nothing, and he gave so many more to so many different people for the same thing which could belong only to one person, that this was a fruitful source of discredit to himself and caused much discontent.

Nothing deceived him or injured him more than his idea that he knew how to deceive everybody. His distrust of everyone without exception was also disgusting in him. This fault came from his timidity, which made him fear his most certain enemies and treat them with more distinction than he did his friends; from his natural facility, from a false imitation of Henry IV in whom this trait was neither the best nor most admirable. It is hard to understand how he was the only man whom Dubois succeeded in deceiving. Dubois had obtained influence over him when a child, while acting as his preceptor; he increased this power when the prince was a young man. It was his dearest care in every way to preserve his position with his master, since all his benefits came from him. They were not great at that time, but such as they were, they were very considerable for the valet of the curé de Saint-Eustache. His whole energy was devoted to not letting his master escape him. All his days were occupied by this watch; it regulated all his movements. His one desire was to have the whole world in his hand, business, favours, even the smallest bagatelles, to shipwreck anything that tried to slip through his fingers, and not to pardon those who attempted anything without him. Such persons he pursued with implacable hatred. This application and certain indispensable orders he had to give consumed all his time, so that he became inaccessible except for certain public audiences or for audiences to foreign ministers. Even the majority of the latter could not reach him and were reduced to waiting in the halls, on the stairs, and in other places where

[1722-1723 A.D.]

they might catch him, where he was not expecting to meet them. At one time he threw into the fire a prodigious number of unopened letters, which had come from various parts of the world, and then exclaimed with satisfaction at having caught up with his business. At his death thousands of letters were found still sealed.

The public follies of Dubois, especially after he became supreme and did not control himself any longer, would fill a book. His frenzy sometimes led him to run all around the room twice, stepping only on the chairs and tables without touching the floor. The duke of Orleans has told me that he has seen him do this on many occasions.

Dubois died on the 10th of August, 1723, grinding his teeth against Chirac and his surgeons, whom he had never ceased to revile. They brought him extreme unction nevertheless. Of communion nothing was said, nor of having a priest near him, and he finished his life thus in the greatest despair and in a rage at leaving it. Thus fortune had made sport of him: she let herself be dearly bought at the expense of long years of all sorts of pain, cares, projects, devices, anxieties, toils, and torments of mind, and finally lavished on him whole torrents of grandeur, power, of immeasurable wealth only to let him enjoy it for four years—the period during which he was secretary of state, or only two years if we count the time when he was cardinal and prime minister—before she snatched him away in the very midst of its enjoyment, at the age of sixty-six.

At the time of his death he was absolute master of his master, being less prime minister than absolute ruler, having full power to exercise all the power and authority of the king. He was superintendent of the post, cardinal, archbishop of Cambrai, with seven abbeys, for which he had an insatiable thirst clear to the end and had even commenced overtures for getting possession of those of Cîteaux, Prémontré, and of others. It was stated afterwards that he also had a pension from England of £40,000. I had the curiosity to investigate his revenues and I thought it might be interesting to insert here what I found, even diminishing the sum of his benefices in order to avoid all exaggeration:

*Detail of the Annual Income of Dubois*

Cambray . . . . .	120,000 livres
Nogent-sous-Coucy . . . . .	10,000
Saint-Just . . . . .	10,000
Airvault . . . . .	12,000
Bourgueil . . . . .	12,000
Bergues St. Winoc . . . . .	60,000
Saint-Bertin . . . . .	80,000
Cercamps . . . . .	20,000
	<hr/> 324,000

Prime minister . . . . .	150,000
The post . . . . .	100,000
	<hr/> 250,000

Pension from England at 24 liv. to a pound ster. . 960,000

## TOTAL

In benefices . . . . .	324,000
Prime minister and the post . . . . .	250,000
English pension . . . . .	960,000
	<hr/> 1,534,000 livres (£63,916 or \$319 580)

I have reduced his income from the port and from the office of prime minister ; I believe also that he had 20,000 livres from the clergy as cardinal but could not ascertain the fact with certitude. What he had received and realised from law was immense. He had made lavish use of it at Rome for his cardinalship, but he still had a prodigious amount of it in cash.

He had a great quantity of the most beautiful silver and enamel plate, most admirably worked ; the richest furniture, the rarest jewels of every kind, most beautiful and rare horses from every country and the most sumptuous equipages. His table was superb and exquisite in every respect and he did the honours of it very well, although he was very temperate both by nature and by habit. His position as preceptor to the duke of Orleans had procured for him the abbey of Nogent-sous-Coucy ; the marriage of this prince, that of Saint-Just ; his first journeys to Hanover and England, those of Airvault and Bourgueil ; and three others he got through his supreme power. What a monster of fortune and of party influence ! And how quickly precipitated !

“ But one passed by, and, lo, he was not ;  
Yea I sought him, but he could not be found.”

This passage from the Psalm would apply literally to Dubois.

#### FOREIGN AFFAIRS ; FREE THOUGHT

Whilst at home everyone had been engrossed in Law's system, French affairs abroad were being skilfully conducted by the minister Dubois. Despite all the virulence of Saint-Simon, who hated him like a snake, Dubois was a man of skill, if not of virtue. Following the regent's prejudices, he turned against Spain, and—a rare thing in French politics—towards England, from which he is believed to have had a salary of £40,000 a year. Louis XIV's fond hope, that the fact of his grandson being on the throne of Spain would insure alliance between the two countries, was not realised.<sup>1</sup>

Spain and France were proved even then to be more divided by the barrier mountains, than united by the relationship of their kings. The Spanish minister, Alberoni, had reduced the expenditure of his country, and had filled the treasury. Great things entered his mind as soon as he found himself freed from debt, and he proposed to enlist the military services of the famous Charles XII of Sweden, in restoring the exiled monarch of England, James III [the Old Pretender], to his throne. He proposed also to encourage the Turks to attack the emperor ; and he tried to create a civil war in France. When the Christian prelate had completed the plan of these benevolent measures, he despatched a Spanish expedition to seize Sardinia, and an army at the same time to take possession of the island of Sicily. All nations were roused at the sight of so much insolence and injustice : and the first spectacle which the promoters of the Spanish accession of Philip V and the restoration of the Stuarts saw, after the death of Louis XIV, was a combination against Spain, of France under the regent Orleans, and England under George I. To complete the amazing contrast between the two periods, Marshal the duke of Berwick,<sup>1</sup> son of James II, was sent into Spain at the head of a French army to overthrow Philip V, the grandson of

[<sup>1</sup> It was the same Berwick whose splendid military ability had seated him there. See the history of Spain.]



[1718-1723 A.D.]

Louis XIV. Towns were taken, and provinces seized, England regained her old supremacy on the sea, and Admiral Byng exterminated the fleets of Spain in the straits of Messina. Alberoni saw the badness of the move he had made, and patched up a dishonourable peace.<sup>i</sup>

The French fleets had also taken a large share in the ruin of Spanish naval power, but peace was accepted and this which Kitchin<sup>e</sup> calls a brief splash of European war was ended by the Treaty of London, 1720.<sup>a</sup>

Dubois did not long enjoy the dignities that his baseness had earned. Cardinal and minister in 1722, he expired in the following year. When on his bed of death, a curate advanced in haste to administer the sacrament to the dying man: Dubois repelled him. "What! administer the *viaticum* with so little ceremony as that to a cardinal; go, and consult as to the necessary forms." Ere the forms could be ascertained, the cardinal had died, as he had lived, not in the odour of sanctity. In a few months after, the regent was struck with apoplexy in the apartments of Madame de Phalain, his mistress, in the palace of Versailles: she cried for aid, but it did not come till the duke was cold. He expired in December, 1723, leaving three daughters, all notorious for extreme dissoluteness, and a son remarked for his piety and narrow intellect. The following satirical epitaph was inscribed upon the tomb of the duchess dowager of Orleans: "Here lies Idleness, the mother of all vice."

"The regent," says the duke of Saint-Simon<sup>g</sup> whose incomparable memoirs conclude with this epoch, "was far more regretted abroad than at home." The English especially had cause to be grateful to a prince, the first wielding the sovereignty of France who had sympathised or joined with them in amity. The great majority of the French, however, accused this policy of selfishness and baseness; and were indignant at beholding their country acting, as it seemed, a part subordinate to English views. The duke of Orleans had moreover betrayed all parties in the state. The very Jesuits were dissatisfied at not obtaining complete predominance. The parliament felt itself juggled; although its resentments were not so profound, or did not proceed from views so exaggerated as Saint-Simon<sup>g</sup> lends to them. "The parliament," says he, "could not console itself for not having changed its simple nature as a court of justice into that of the parliament of England,



FRENCH GALLANT OF THE TIME OF LOUIS XV

holding, however, the house of lords under the yoke." The general cause of complaint was the enormous increase of price in every article, first brought about by the depreciation of Law's paper, but which by no means subsided to its ancient level as soon as the crisis was past. The nobles acquired little increase of influence. Pensions certainly were heaped upon them; and not content with their hereditary domains, they shared with the sovereign the contributions levied on the inferior classes. But this indefinite and unearned resource proved but a temptation to extravagance and to an oblivion of all economy. Habits of expense and luxury increased in a ten-fold proportion; and the reign of Louis XV, which showered pensions, and aids, and employments on the noblesse, had the effect of impoverishing that order much more than Louis XIV had done; who indeed gave them naught, but who asked naught of them save obedience.

The splendid literature of the last reign was but the gilding, the precious ornament, of the stately edifice. Its tragedies and odes, its satires, sermons, fables, were written for the perusal or the audience of court. They were not born of popular feeling, and neither propagated nor influenced opinions deeper than taste. They are the domain of criticism, not of history. With the regency, however, French literature, though of a lower grade in genius and perfection, begins to assume much more importance. It was then that the great mass of the public, freed of the prestige, the moral ascendancy, of a court which could excite nothing save contempt, arrived at the hardihood of having ideas and opinions of its own, not only in religious but on political and philosophical subjects.

Writers began to sow the seeds of thought, no longer on the narrow enclosure of the court and aristocracy, but in the open field of the public mind. Books that had hitherto never raised discord, except upon abstruse points of faith, amongst learned doctors, began in the regency to have general influence. A libel became a weapon as common and as poignant as the sword. The duchess du Maine employed men of letters in her husband's cause, and the regent employed others, Fontenelle for example, to draw up his manifestoes. No sooner did men capable of wielding the pen become conscious of their force, than they hastened to employ it. They were chiefly of the lower and degraded class, and felt sensibly the heavy oppression that weighed even less on personal than upon mental freedom. Not daring to affront the immediate instruments of this oppression, writers attacked or sapped the principles on which they were supported. Bayle had already assailed religion with his army of doubts and questions. The meekly forward Fénelon had dared, in his *Télémaque*, to define and criticise the duties of royalty. Voltaire and Montesquieu now followed in the track. The former, ridiculing intolerance, found wit so powerful and successful in his hands, that he was carried forwards to attack religion itself; an attack, however, that must have redounded to its triumph, had the national church not disgraced its creed by corruption, and betrayed it by ignorance. Montesquieu at the same time carried his inquiries into the unexplored regions of political philosophy. He was moderate, sage, shrank from revealing abuses, and often, when in his researches he has undermined or discovered the weak foundations of monarchic bulwarks, we find him instantly set to work to prop the tottering wall. But to counteract his own exertion was impossible. He excited inquiry; and when the curiosity of man is awake on such points, it must be satisfied by experience or demonstration. The latter is not to be met with in political theory; and the former is most often to be purchased at no less a price than revolution, anarchy, and crime.

[1723-1725 A.D.]

## THE MAJORITY OF LOUIS XV AND MINISTRY OF BOURBON

Whatever were the faults or crimes of the regent, he had at least acted an honourable part by his royal ward. He intrusted young Louis to the care of Villeroy, the attached friend of Louis XIV, and, consequently, the regent's personal opponent, if not enemy. For confessor and instructor, Fleury<sup>1</sup> was chosen, "because he was neither Jansenist, nor Molinist, nor Jesuit." Fleury was one of those mild personages to whom extremes are repugnant, and who prefer the middle course in all circumstances. A more fitting tutor could not have been selected to form a monarch's principles; but, unfortunately, he communicated to Louis much of the timidity and meekness of his own character.

The young king became sincerely attached to his kind and indulgent tutor, who, on his side, was not blind to the advantages of such influence. He refused an archbishopric, that would have removed him from court. On the occasion of a quarrel between Villeroy and Cardinal Dubois, the marshal was arrested; Fleury took fright, and retired also. The young king no sooner missed his tutor, than he gave way to the most noisy grief; wept, lamented, and was not to be pacified. Fleury was sought out, brought back, and the joy of Louis was extreme. The future influence of the instructor might be augured from this: but his meekness, and also his extreme age, disarmed all envy.

When the death of the duke of Orleans was known, the duke de Bourbon, lineal heir of the house of Condé, and first prince of the blood, aspired to be minister. The name of regent was extinct, Louis being now of age. The duke got the patent of prime minister drawn up, went with it to the king, and asked him boldly for the place. The young monarch looked at Fleury, who made a sign of assent, and the duke de Bourbon had the appointment.

Monsieur le duc, as the prime minister was universally called, had hitherto distinguished himself by meddling in the affair of Law, and by his inveteracy against the duke du Maine. He was thus a political Jansenist. One of the first acts of the duke de Bourbon was to display his zeal for orthodoxy; and, at the same time, be avenged on the partisans of the duke du Maine, by a fulminating edict against the Protestants, renewing all the barbarities of the year 1685. England and Holland interfered, however, in behalf of their persecuted brethren, and the edict was modified.

Bourbon was governed by a mistress, the marquise de Prie, daughter of a financier, and an adept in the mystery of jobbing in the public funds. She introduced to the duke four brothers of the name of Paris, who had been in favour with the regent, and afterwards exiled by him. These were his finance ministers and counsellors. The marriage of the king was the most important point to be considered. He was betrothed to the infanta then educating at the French court: but the duke de Bourbon had his old political dislike to Spain. At length it was recollected that Stanislaus, the exiled king of Poland, had a daughter, who now shared his wanderings and misfortunes. A creature thus raised from distress to the throne of France could not but be grateful to those who elevated her. Thus reasoned Madame de Prie. Moreover, Maria Leczinska was mild, humble, pious. The daughter of the fugitive king of Poland became queen of France.

Relying on the attachment of the young queen, the duke de Bourbon became less scrupulous in his plans of administration. An edict was

[<sup>1</sup> This André Hercules de Fleury, bishop of Fréjus, must not be confused with the abbé Claude Fleury.]



prepared for a new tax, called a fiftieth, but which, from its arbitrary valuation, was likely to prove a tenth. It was to last twelve years. The noblesse, who were not exempt from this tax, protested. The parliaments of the kingdom poured in remonstrances; and a scarcity of corn happening at the same time, raised the popular voice, in unison with that of the court and judicial body, against the minister. At such an unpropitious moment did the duke de Bourbon think proper to affront Fleury; wishing to bar him of his privilege of being present during the minister's consultations with the king. The monarch, who did not suspect any affront to Fleury, consented; and the latter, finding himself excluded, took the resolution of leaving Paris, and retiring to Issy: he, at the same time, wrote a pathetic and meek letter of resignation and farewell. Louis, on reading it, burst into tears, as of old. Fleury was recalled. An order, written by the monarch, commanded the duke to retire to Chantilly. Madame de Prie, who was with the queen when she heard of the duke's arrest, exhorted that princess to interfere. But it was too late: a letter from Louis desired even her to obey Fleury, who assumed the functions of prime minister, although, with characteristic humility, he declined the honours and the name.<sup>1</sup>

#### DE TOCQUEVILLE'S PORTRAIT OF FLEURY

In 1726 France required quietude and repose to enable her to regain her prosperity. She found both under the ministry of Fleury. Economical, disinterested, simple in his manners, unostentatious, desiring the reality of power but indifferent to its outward pomp, the bishop of Fréjus was the right man for the time. Under his auspices, confidence was restored both at home and abroad, and commerce was extended, because the moderation of the minister came to be regarded as a pledge of security.

This same moderation gave a weight to French diplomacy which it had never before possessed. Under Louis XIV it had ruled by fear; but Fleury's policy was to do everything possible to promote peace. His administration was the most fortunate period of the reign of Louis XV. He was one of the few ministers whose memory was honoured by the people, because he loved the state, and tried to lighten its burdens without compromising the honour of France. Nevertheless, though history truly records the good that he did, it has some serious charges to bring against him.

Fleury's cunning and subtlety were often akin to knavery. His economy sometimes degenerated into a stinginess injurious to financial interests. He never forgot an offence; his resentment was implacable. Those who had served in the government of the duke de Bourbon were always in disgrace with him. The queen was never forgiven for having taken part in the plot which Madame de Prie had formed against him. He constantly prevented her from taking any share in what was going on, and he thus helped to destroy intimacy and confidence in the royal household. Favours asked by the queen were always refused; if she complained to the king he would reply coldly, "Do as I do, madame, do not ask him for anything." On another occasion, when, at the instigation of Fleury, the king had banished the duke de Bourbon and the marquis of Prie, he wrote to the queen, their protectress: "I pray you, madame, and if necessary I order you, to do all that the bishop of Fréjus tells you, regarding him as my representative." It is difficult also to forgive this minister for having prolonged the minority of Louis XV and for having encouraged in him natural indolence and lack of self-confidence, for the purpose of directing him.

[1725-1726 A.D.]

Fleury, priest, bishop, and cardinal, had no true understanding of the real interests of religion. He treated the Jansenists with severity, because they differed from him on several points, but was indulgent towards the men who had no faith and who were beginning to spread unbelief. The quarrel about Jansenism, which had remained in abeyance owing to the indifference of the duke of Orleans and the duke de Bourbon, was reawakened by persecution. We see quarrels arising between clergy and parliament, the king interfering without success, and scandal carried to an excess which became ridiculous. All this furnished weapons for the philosophers, and in the midst of these pitiful disputes, faith became gradually weaker.

Fleury did not wish to be prime minister. Dubois had dishonoured this title. He assumed the more modest one of minister of state. What, after all, is the name, if one possess real power? The king announced that the office of prime minister was suppressed, and that henceforth, like his great-grandfather, he intended to govern for himself. In order to complete this mystification, they dared to give it the stamp of religion.

The people rejoiced. They thought themselves safe in future from ministerial despotism. Therefore great satisfaction was shown. But prayers addressed to heaven were powerless as opposed to vices engendered by the early training of the young king.

If the bishop of Fréjus disdained the empty title of prime minister, he nevertheless aspired to that high ecclesiastical dignity which every priest, however spiritual he may be, looks upon as the goal of ambition. He wished to be a cardinal. On the 11th of September, 1726, the king kissed him publicly when giving him the hat. "If ever there was a fortunate man in the world," says Anquetil,<sup>k</sup> "it was Cardinal Fleury. He was looked upon as the most delightful companion up to the age of seventy-three; and even then, at an age when so many are forced to retire into private life, he took on himself the management of the kingdom. He was also considered one of the wisest of men."

The cardinal's first aim was to reduce expenses to the level of receipts. His favourite maxim was "peace abroad, economy at home." He looked on the state as a healthy body only requiring rest and wholesome diet to restore its strength. His administration was signalled by reforms, and ably resisted courtier's greed and the exactions of the court. Eager to reduce the burden of taxation, he abolished "the fiftieth" which had caused such bitter complaints, and granted a respite on payments in arrear. A wise measure filled up the deficiency caused by these munificent acts. Taxes on goods consumed were managed by government agents.<sup>j</sup>

#### WAR FOR THE POLISH CROWN (1733-1735 A.D.)

When the duke de Bourbon had sent back to Spain the infanta, who had been betrothed to Louis XV, and to whom Maria Leczinska had been preferred, Philip V was mortally offended at the insult to his daughter. It precipitated him into a treaty of alliance with Austria, the ancient rival and enemy of Philip. France and England naturally took alarm at a reconciliation so little to be expected. Horatio Walpole, ambassador at Paris, had imitated the sagacity of his predecessor, Lord Stair, by attaching himself and paying court to Fleury. The friendship that sprang up betwixt Fleury and the Walpoles, ministers of congenial feeling and pacific inclinations, contributed strongly to preserve the bonds of amity unbroken betwixt the two nations; these were now drawn closer by a treaty concluded at

Hanover, in opposition to that betwixt Spain and Austria. At the same time the duke de Richelieu, a brilliant young noble, was despatched to Vienna to endeavour to accommodate differences. He succeeded.

In the meantime the jealousies between Spain and England produced open war. The fleets of the latter scoured the West Indian seas and the Mediterranean: the Spaniards laid siege to Gibraltar. But the belligerents had scarcely more than time to put themselves in the attitude of war, when Cardinal Fleury interposed as mediator and restored peace in 1729. The pacific policy of the French minister thus imposed tranquillity upon Europe, until the death of the king of Poland, in 1733, and his disputed succession raised a flame that no efforts of mere negotiation could smother. Stanislaus, father of Louis XV's queen, had been elected king of Poland through the influence of the celebrated Charles XII of Sweden, then a conqueror and the arbiter of kingdoms. His fortune had fallen at Pultowa, and Russia had taken advantage of her ascendancy, dethroned Stanislaus, and caused Augustus of Saxony to be elected in his stead. Augustus died in 1733, and France instantly turned her views to reinstate Stanislaus. Even Fleury dared not be indifferent to the father-in-law of his monarch. The cardinal forgot at the call not only his indolence but his economy, and transmitted large sums to influence the Polish diet. They were scarcely needed. Stanislaus, who had penetrated into Poland and showed himself in its diet, was elected king.



LOUIS XV

Russia and Austria declared against him, in favour of the late king Augustus, who was allied by marriage to the emperor. They supported the rights of their candidate by numerous armies, which overran and devastated Poland. Warsaw could make no resistance; and Stanislaus shut himself up in Dantzic. Fleury, in the meantime, dragged into a war for a quarrel which he imagined ample bribes and negotiations would decide, began operations on a pitiful scale. He sent one ship and fifteen hundred men by the Baltic to the relief of Dantzic — a mockery of support. In vain the Polish followers of Stanislaus displayed the utmost heroism in behalf of their sovereign. The monarch made his escape through the army of besiegers, after perils and sufferings that alone might arm a host of warriors in his cause.

Poland was too distant from France to receive effectual aid. Armies however were raised: one under Marshal Berwick, destined to act on the Rhine; the other, commanded by the veteran Villars, crossed the Alps, and in conjunction with the duke of Savoy invaded Milan. These old generals of Louis XIV's wars won merely the honour of dying in arms. Villars overran the duchy of Milan, the conquest of which satisfied his ally of Savoy, and the Austrians, unmolested, were enabled to rally and return to the offensive. Villars, struck with mortification as well as with years and fatigue, was confined to his couch, when tidings reached him that the duke of



[1734-1738 A.D.]

Berwick, having formed the siege of Philippsburg, was cut in two by a cannon-ball: <sup>1</sup> "Ah!" said the dying Villars, "that man was always more fortunate than I." The capture of Philippsburg was the limit of French conquest on the Rhine. Prince Eugene was their antagonist, and, although weak in numbers, Austria having Spain and Turkey as well as France to contend with, he succeeded in checking all their attempts to advance.

The most important achievement of the war was effected with least forces and in an unexpected region. Don Charles, that son of Philip V by his second queen, who had already succeeded to Parma, marched with a small army of Spaniards against Naples. The Austrians were little liked in this country, and a conspiracy in the capital opened the way for invasion. Visconti, the imperial viceroy, in vain endeavoured to make a stand at the head of the militia of the kingdom, which refused to second him. In a short time both Naples and Sicily passed from the power of the emperor into that of Don Charles. In the north of Italy the struggle was more obstinate and less decisive. A battle took place near Parma, in June, 1734, betwixt the French, under the marshals De Coigny and De Broglie, and the Austrians under Mercy. The latter was slain leading his troops to the charge; his army was worsted but not routed. The prince of Würtemberg took the command, and was able to give battle again in September at Guastalla. It was contested with equal fierceness and similar fortune. Würtemberg was slain in the action. The French had the honour of the victory, but none of the fruits. The resistance of the vanquished paralysed the success of the victors.

Cardinal Fleury now seized the first opportunity to treat. Austria found herself overmatched. In order to give Poland a king, she had exposed herself to the attacks of France and Spain, and had lost Naples and Milan, with little hope of recovering either. Still Russia promised effectual aid in the ensuing campaign, and England, despite of Walpole's pacific views, was shaken by the solicitation of her old ally, the emperor, by seeing Naples fallen as well as Spain to a Bourbon prince. The mutual jealousies of France and England were rising; but they were for the moment quelled.<sup>2</sup>

Paris became gay once more as in the first glorious years of Louis XIV, and Notre-Dame again showed her walls hung with captured flags. But flags and gaiety do not constitute the strength of a nation; and three years of victories and disappointments reduced all the contending parties to a thirst for peace, which it was impossible to satisfy too soon. Spain was the principal gainer here. She began the war to restore Stanislaus to the crown of Poland, and ended by placing her king's second son on the throne of the Two Sicilies, by the Treaty of Vienna, October 3rd, 1735. France accepted the Pragmatic of the emperor, and guaranteed Maria Theresa's rights. Stanislaus himself was contented with the title of king, and the possession of the duchy of Lorraine, which he obtained in 1738, and which after his death was to lapse to the French crown.

And here let us say, in passing, that no dethroned sovereign ever took such ample revenge upon fortune for her enmity, by showing what royal qualities of goodness, justice, and munificence he possessed. For eighteen years the one bright spot in Europe, where gentleness and peace established

[<sup>1</sup> "So passed away one of the last of the great generals of Louis XIV: France never again," says Kitchin,<sup>c</sup> "saw his like till the genius of the Revolution evoked a new race of heroes." It is not known whether he was killed by the enemy or by his own soldiers. Just as he mounted the trenches, a battery on each side fired, and he fell. Martin<sup>m</sup> says, "a ball, perhaps from the French side, took off his head."<sup>2</sup>]

their undisturbed reign, was the dukedom of Lorraine, where Stanislaus gave to all his people the example of a useful and virtuous life. His former oppressors, his rivals, his successors on the uneasy throne of Poland, all wrote of him and to him with the respect and affection his Christian qualities deserved; and when he died, loaded with years and benedictions, in 1766, it was felt that royalty had lost its brightest representative, and humanity itself one of the fairest of its examples. It is a pity that the narrowness of the scene on which his actions were performed circumscribed his fame within such contracted limits; but even the foolish vanity which has been called the dignity of history has not disdained to commemorate that a grateful people knew this powerless but delightful potentate by no other name than that of Stanislaus the Beneficent.

During the whole of the war, from 1733 to the preliminaries of peace in 1735, France had held the dignified place of righter of wrong and vindicator of her national honour. She had no hidden purpose of aggrandisement at the expense either of her friends or enemies, and Cardinal Fleury and Sir Robert Walpole had such confidence in each other's honesty that each was left to pursue his own course of policy untouched by the other. Europe seemed at last to have achieved a solid foundation for peace. It had arranged for the present, and made preparation for the future, particularly by guarding against any complication which might arise at the death of the emperor. The Pragmatic Sanction, securing the succession of the Austrian monarchies to his daughter, had been signed by France and Spain, the Two Sicilies, and Russia, and peaceably accepted by England and Holland.

#### THE DEGENERACY OF THE COURT

France sighed for repose, and found none. The king and courtiers were regardless of the national poverty and the commonest rules of decency. Shocking equally the reflecting by their manners and the impoverished by their extravagance, they seemed to exult in their exemption from the restraints of law or reason. An endless succession of unprincipled and designing women, not taken, as in the haughtier days of preceding sovereigns, from the ranks of the aristocracy, but from the lowest born of the people, governed the brutalised and voluptuous king. The nobility, instead of joining in a feeling of disgust at the proceedings of the court, were only embittered with the commonalty for interfering with their monopoly of royal favour. There was as violent a rivalry between titled and illustrious fathers for the disgraceful elevation of their daughters to the position of king's favourites as for the highest offices of the state.

Louis XV is saved, indeed, from a close inquiry into the particulars of his private life, as some noxious and unsavoury animals are defended from capture by the odour they spread. But it needs to be remembered that the reign of this man was the turning-point of aristocratic debauchery and degradation. Lower the upper ranks could not go, and a rebound was inevitable. Peace under such auspices might have been more injurious to greatness than the struggles of a disastrous war.<sup>1</sup>

Louis had never been devoted to his wife. Fleury himself, fearing her influence over the king, had helped to prejudice him against her; though Louis appears to have been substantially faithful during a number of years, signalised by the birth of two sons and several daughters. A court without intrigue, a king without passions—here was no paradise for courtiers. A general conspiracy was formed to rouse the sleeper—at the head the duke

[1732-1739 A.D.]

of Richelieu, seduction personified, vice made man. The plotters first urged Louis to gluttony : the taste for wine led to a love of gaming and the chase ; these to experimental gallantries. At last an adroit and cynical valet succeeded in throwing into his arms a lady of the court who was taken with his appearance and who made all the advances — the countess of Mailly.

Fleury was suspected of having a hand in the affair. For his plans La Mailly would serve better than any other mistress — since the time of mistresses was come. The queen, it must be remembered, had rendered this development almost inevitable, even had no courtesan conspired against the fidelity of her husband. The most upright of women, Maria Leczinska was also the most unattractive ; grave and austere, rigidly and tactlessly religious, she could not fail to be distasteful to a husband younger than herself, whose barren mind needed constant entertainment and distraction and who, while he had a cold heart, had hot enough blood. Louis no longer bore the mark of his weakly childhood. A domestic quarrel growing out of the indifference of his wife precipitated the crisis desired among the intriguers of the court. Madame de Mailly became the acknowledged mistress of the king. Fleury, who had easily tolerated the fact, would have liked to prevent or smother the scandal ; but he now perceived that his power, hitherto absolute, had reached its limit, and he forebore to insist.

The curb was snapped : Louis had been restrained only by a sort of physical timidity, to which was joined the dread of hell ; but all inherent sense of integrity, all gentleness of heart was absent from his unfortunate character. He proved not more faithful to his mistress than to his wife ; and he was not long in exceeding the bounds of ordinary libertinism and presenting to the eyes of France a spectacle unprecedented. Madame de Mailly was the eldest of five daughters of the house of Nesle, all remarkable either for beauty or grace of mind. The second sister, at the time a *pensionnaire* in a convent, was called to Versailles by Madame de Mailly with the fixed purpose of presenting her to the king, that in her turn she might amuse him, dominate him, and adopt the political rôle for which the mild La Mailly had no desire. Mlle. de Nesle succeeded in part : she captivated the king. She did not banish her sister ; worse, she shared the king with her. When she became pregnant the king married her, for form's sake, to the marquis of Vintimille, grandnephew of the archbishop of Paris ; the successor of the upright Noailles blessed the marriage without scruple. A third demoiselle de Nesle, married to the duke of Lauraguais, was added to the two elder. It seemed that Louis could relish no pleasure unseasoned by incest.

The regency had returned to Versailles — minus the life and gaiety. The moral effect of these examples is easily understood ; as for the political consequences, they were not immediately obvious. Fleury had surrendered as to morals, but not as to expenditure : he defended, with great dexterity, his



COSTUME AT THE BEGINNING  
OF THE REIGN OF LOUIS XV



authority and his treasury against the audacious Vintimille; and Louis, satisfied so long as his old preceptor spared him remonstrances concerning his debaucheries, turned a deaf ear to the insinuations of his mistress.

### PROSPERITY IN THE COLONIES

Industry flourished in the cities, in spite of obstructive regulations. Commerce, scarcely retarded for a moment by a war without serious danger and wholly continental, pursued its way in the Mediterranean and the Levant, where France maintained a decided supremacy,<sup>1</sup> and took towards the Indies a flight which the government had not instigated, and which promptly filled it with apprehension. France executed spontaneously the designs of Colbert and of Law, and developed too maritime a spirit for the taste of Fleury, who wished to keep her hidden within her own frontiers. The events of this part of the eighteenth century are the best refutation of the melancholy presumption, born of her misfortunes, that France is not adapted for maritime commerce, the only commerce which extends indefinitely as well the power of a nation as its field of activity.

The enormous machine of the *Compagnie des Indes*, disentangled from the débris of Law's "System," of 1717, was again put forcibly in motion. The organic centre of this vast body was the new Breton city of Lorient (*L'Orient*); this home of the first Indian company under Colbert, a simple little village of eight or nine hundred souls in 1726, rapidly developed into a splendid city. The beautiful blue granite from the Blavet and the Scorff was fashioned into imposing edifices to adorn the wharves whence departed and whither returned the Indian vessels, each year more numerous and more heavily laden. The returns, amounting only to 2,000,000 francs [£80,000 or \$100,000] a year, in 1714-1719, before the reorganisation of the company, reached 18,000,000 francs [£720,000 or \$3,600,000] between 1734 and 1736. The Indian factories, so long slack, resumed work with triumphant activity; one hundred million natives sought the shelter of the French flag at Pondicherry; Chandernagor grew rapidly; the islands of Mascarenhas, that well-chosen post between Africa and the Indies, became the one, the Isle of Bourbon, a rich agricultural colony; the other, the Isle of France, a naval station whence France dominated the Indian Ocean. By a happy combination, which founded free trade upon a monopoly, while the company exercised exclusive control over the traffic between France and India, French merchants and agents of the company coasted from place to place, in every quarter of the Orient, as far as China. French vessels multiplied, encouraged by success; the English and Dutch companies simmered with jealousy to behold these newcomers hastening eagerly to make up lost time.

The honour of this mighty impulse was due not less to the old prime minister or to the comptroller-general than to the financiers who from Paris directed the operations of the *Compagnie des Indes*. This movement, entirely spontaneous, this venturous expansion of France, was impersonated by two men who, posted the one at Chandernagor on the Ganges, in the heart of India, the other on the Isle of France, the key to the oceans, executed or instigated projects new and bold. This is not the time to detail the labours, the glories, the misfortunes of these two men, equal in intrepidity and

<sup>1</sup> This advantage was offset by the fact that the French colours were unknown in the Baltic, and her commerce with Portugal, very flourishing before the War of the Spanish Succession, had fallen off since the Treaty of Methuen and been replaced by that of England.

[1717-1740 A.D.]

determination, if not in character and genius — these men whom Colbert employed for the honour of France, whom the ministers of Louis XV baited one against the other, and one after the other sacrificed them both. It suffices here to write the names of Dupleix and Labourdonnais.

The American possessions showed a development even vaster than the Indian. Progress in America was not dependent upon a few great men, as in India. The tide of affairs sufficed to carry it along, since that man of genius, Law, had removed those obstacles which heretofore had stemmed the flood of colonial production. Canada, vast and cold, was the one exception; in spite of the fact that her population had materially augmented since the time of Louis XIV, she had made no such progress as that of the English colonies farther south. Louisiana, on the contrary, had prospered ever since the company, not knowing how to turn it to advantage, had ceded it back to the government in 1731; free trade had replaced the control of the company, by which all traffic had been restricted to that with France and prohibited with the neighbouring colonies. But the greatest interests, wealth, and population centred in the West Indies — the land of dazzling sunshine in the splendid tropical seas.

Here France had acquired, since 1717, a decisive and irresistible preponderance over England. Under Colbert, the wretched administration and the increasing calamities in France had deprived the colonies of the extension of domestic commerce. They were declining; raw sugar, bringing from 14 to 15 francs per quintal in 1682, had fallen in 1713 to 5 or 6. In 1696 the island of Santa Cruz (St. Croix) was abandoned; in 1698 there were not twenty thousand blacks in the French West Indies; and fifty vessels of ordinary tonnage sufficed for the island trade. At the end of 1717, the moment when Law's influence began to make itself appreciable, all was changed. A new regulation released French merchandise destined for the islands from all duty; authorised the free re-exportation of goods brought from the islands to France, subject to a tax of three per cent; and struck a blow at foreign sugar with a general tax. Marseilles was admitted among the ports enjoying commercial relations with America, which opened the Mediterranean to colonial commodities. French West Indian agriculture and commerce took huge strides. In 1740, French sugar had driven English sugar from foreign markets. French coffee from the same source, a product but recently filched from Dutch Guiana, had attained to a superiority almost as exclusive. The Spanish district of Santo Domingo remained dormant; the French, much smaller, reached a development that made it worth more than the entire English West Indies. Martinique, which in 1700 had but fifteen thousand native cultivators, in 1736 counted seventy thousand, and abounded in specie as well as in notes; general emporium for the Windward Islands, it received every year in its ports two hundred vessels from France and thirty from Canada. Guadaloupe, entering a little later into the movement, aspired to rival its rich and flourishing neighbour. These were the two queens of the Lesser Antilles, and the most productive of all the American archipelago in proportion to their extent.

The ports of France, in touch with colonial commerce, participated largely in this fruitful activity, of which the greatest benefit reverted to the ship owners. The splendid edifices with which the eighteenth century adorned Nantes, Marseilles, above all magnificent Bordeaux, afterwards so fallen into decay, are sufficient witness to the life of activity and splendour of those prosperous days. We can sum up in a few words the progress of France: before Law, if we can believe Voltaire, she possessed only three hundred

merchant vessels; in 1738, she counted eighteen hundred! Had Colbert lived to see these days, how great would have been his joy! How deep, also, his indignation at the paucity of the military marine! The old tubs of Tourville and Duguay-Trouin rotted among the silent docks in front of the empty arsenals, and the noble remnants of the naval armies were contemptuously relegated to oblivion. While France had next to no marine commerce to protect she had maintained a magnificent navy; now that she had vast interests to defend, she had neither vessels nor troops.

Two perils menaced the future of France on the seas—one imminent, of which we have spoken; the other less immediate, but growing steadily with the growth of colonial prosperity, forming indeed the basis of that prosperity—slavery. A splendid present, a future full of alarms—such was the prospect that faced urban France—France industrial, commercial, and maritime. Agricultural France, the vast dormant rural districts, offered a widely different aspect, a lamentable contrast—a dark and doubtful future, a present full of sorrow and bitterness. Fleury's economics had sufficed to ward off another bankruptcy, and to restore a partial equilibrium between the receipts and the expenditures, which would have been complete but for the war of 1733; but he had not remedied the chronic maladies of the rural population. The fatal system of taxation weighed each day more heavily; Fleury's inertia had done as much harm to the provinces as it had done good to commerce. The despotism of the tax-farmers and fiscal agents had free rein; in proportion as the government was weak at its centre, it was severe and unrighteous at its extremities. Intendants and their subordinates, commissioners, officers of elections, juggled the laws and the decrees of the courts; taxes were imposed without regard to justice; extortion, imprisonment, peculation, arbitrary favours and punishments—this was the regular régime for the most part. The intendants, guardians of order and national unity under Richelieu and Colbert, of severe and regular despotism under Louvois, were now, with a few honourable exceptions, no more than capricious pashas.

#### THE CORVÉE

Fleury was not, however, altogether inert in matters of public duty. He made one innovation, and here again his inevitable economy was fatal. The slight concessions in the matter of the *taille* were counterbalanced by a new change, by which the declining monarchy appropriated to itself the most oppressive tradition of feudalism—the *corvée*. After the war of 1733, the government, having resolved to take up the work of the regency on the public ways, opened new roads, repaired old ones, ordered works of art at the expense of the state, and authorised the intendants to levy upon the communities for men, carts, and horses for the work. This by no law, no decree of the courts, no act of government—they dared not brave the indignation of the people by a solemn proclamation of the infamous *corvée*. The enormous burden was cunningly imposed upon the parishes bordering the route by the intendants, who portioned it out according to their caprice; and imprisonment without record was the punishment of the least resistance, the slightest delay.

The result of all these abuses was the profound misery, a picture of which is left us by D'Argenson.<sup>t</sup> The years between 1738 and 1740 were most disastrous for the peasants. Under that ministry, cited by historians as a period of happy tranquillity, or at least of material well-being, "men died like flies from poverty and hard living"—and this during years of



[1735-1740 A.D.]

comparative plenty (if we except 1740, a year of dearth throughout all Europe), and notwithstanding the apportionment of provisions by the government. The eastern and western provinces were the greatest sufferers; but the distress reached even to the Paris faubourg. On a day in September, 1739, when the king passed through the faubourg St. Victor on the way to his new palace of Choisy, the crowds saluted him not with the cry, "Long live the king!" but with the appeal, "Distress! Famine! Bread!" At the end of 1740 a rumour was current that the national fund had been diminished by one sixth; and D'Argenson affirms that "misery had slain more French in one year than all the wars of Louis XIV!" Allowing for some exaggeration on his part, the facts remain sufficiently dismal.

Cardinal Fleury had neither known nor cared to know how to employ for the good of France those intervals of peace and calm allowed her; he had lived from one day to the next, a selfish old man, desiring only to assure at any cost peace to his declining years. The woes of France, instead of healing, he had benumbed with sleeping draughts. He knew not even how to prolong that sleep until he himself should have entered into the eternal silence.<sup>m</sup>

#### THE WAR OF THE AUSTRIAN SUCCESSION (1740-1748 A.D.)

Five years of peace had ensued for France. Her ardent abettors of war were satisfied. Not so those of similar temper in England, where national animosity was excited against the Spaniards on account of their commercial restrictions on the trade with South America, and of the cruelties with which they supported them. The same cry was raised against Walpole in one country as against Fleury in the other; and the English minister was driven into a war with Spain, as the latter had been compelled to hostilities against the emperor. The court of France became occupied in this interval with baser intrigues.

Louis XV hitherto had led a regular life attached to his queen, and his society was confined to a small knot of young courtiers, empty as himself, whom he admitted to partake of his *petits soupers* in the *petits appartements*. The monarch, in affecting the pettiness and privacy of humbler life, sought variety and escape from the dulness of grandeur. Even here, however, Louis was tenacious of his dignity; nor did he allow any political influence to those who partook of his convivial pleasures. One or two boy nobles had once indeed endeavoured to influence the king against Fleury. The monarch betrayed them to his minister, as Louis XIII might have done; but Fleury did not imitate Richelieu in his revenge. He merely sent the young conspirators away from court, stigmatising the plot sufficiently by calling it that of the *marmousets* or monkeys.



AN ECCLESIASTIC OF THE COURT OF  
LOUIS XV

With the year 1740 opens a new scene for Europe: fresh personages start up; fresh interests absorb. The pacific humour of the last quarter of a century is universally scouted, and the appeal to arms heard and echoed on every side. Walpole is shaken from his seat; his congenial friend Fleury sinks into the grave. A hero appears on the throne of Prussia; and a princess, no less heroic and intrepid, supports and wins her right to succeed to Austria's wide dominion. One effect of this quarrel was to interrupt the amity that had now existed since the Peace of Utrecht betwixt France and England; the former eagerly grasping so favourable an opportunity for weakening the power of the empire, and England, already at war with Spain, flinging her support into the scale of Austria against the house of Bourbon.

Such is a summary view of the interests and jealousies in collision. The emperor Charles VI, to secure the Austrian succession to his daughter, Maria Theresa, issued a decree called the Pragmatic Sanction, which Spain, France, and England had stipulated to support. The emperor Charles died in October, 1740; and poor Maria Theresa, instead of finding the sovereigns of Europe true to their oaths and to her, found all, save England, rising in claims and hostilities against her.<sup>1</sup>

#### *The First Silesian War (1740-1742 A.D.)*

Prussia first put forth menaces. Frederick II, afterwards the Great, was but a few months on the throne. He now claimed Silesia as the price of his neutrality. The Austrian army, under Neuperg, opposed him; and Frederick fought his first battle at Mollwitz, in April, 1741. He was well-nigh routed. Towards the close of the day, however, the Prussians recovered confidence, and Schwerin, Frederick's lieutenant, won the battle, whilst the king was already far gone in retreat from the field.

France had waited to see the result of Frederick's invasion. Fleury's prudence reined in the ardour of the court; but, after the victory of Mollwitz, it was no longer possible to oppose the general wish to crush the house of Austria, and divide her possessions. The marshal Belle-Isle, who shared with the duke de Richelieu the personal favour of Louis XV, was the promoter of these councils. France instantly declared for the elector of Bavaria (later Charles VII), who aspired to the imperial crown. This prince was the son of him who, for his alliance with France, had been driven from his dominions after the battle of Blenheim. This new emperor — for the gold and the influence of France procured his election — was, however, to yield Silesia to Prussia; another share of the imperial territory to the elector of Saxony; while France was to preserve whatever she might conquer on the frontier of Flanders. With these aims the armies of France and Bavaria advanced without opposition along the Danube, occupying Passau and menacing Vienna; whilst Maria Theresa, crushed in all save spirit by so many foes, made that touching appeal, which is so well known, to her Hungarian subjects. Presenting herself with her infant son in their assembled diet, she first swore to respect their independence, and then demanded their aid, in tones that her beauty and her tears rendered more persuasive. The swords

[<sup>1</sup> The struggle which ensued is known as the War of the Austrian Succession, and it lasted from 1740 to 1748. It has certain distinct subdivisions, however: the First Silesian War from 1740-1742; the Second Silesian War 1744-1745; the war in the American colonies is known as King George's War. The attempt of the Young Pretender in Scotland in 1745-1746 was really meant as a diversion of the attack on France.]

[1741-1743 A.D.]

of the Hungarian nobles flashed in air as their acclamations replied, "We will die for our king, Maria Theresa!"<sup>1</sup>

The blunders of the French contributed even more than the zeal of her friends to raise the hopes of the Austrian princess. In the beginning of the century, Villars, with the old elector of Bavaria, had possessed the course of the Danube; the French marshal proposed to march on Vienna, an advice not followed. The present elector of Bavaria was now precisely in the same position; and the young count de Saxe [Maurice of Saxony] renewed the counsel of Villars. But the elector, or the emperor, for such he now was, was fearful lest he should be anticipated by some of his rivals in the conquest of Bohemia, and he accordingly marched with the French into that country. They met at first with success. Prague, the capital, was carried by surprise and assault, planned and executed by the count (afterwards marshal) de Saxe. Eger (Egra) was also taken. The French established themselves in Bohemia; but at the same time left Bavaria open to the Hungarians, by whom it was mercilessly ravaged.

A near view and acquaintance with his allies had somewhat disgusted Frederick of Prussia. He, who was despotic in his armies, could augur little effective co-operation from such men as De Broglie, Belle-Isle, and the Bavarian emperor, each of whom had his plans and his views, one despising the talents of the other. Frederick, therefore, made peace with Maria Theresa, who was then glad to cede Silesia. The French were thus left to their own resources in Bohemia; where Prince Charles, commanding the Austrians, and relieved from the hostilities of Prussia, soon shut them in Prague. Marshal Maillebois was ordered to proceed to their succour with an army; but he not arriving, Belle-Isle was obliged to make his escape from Prague, and retreat with great celerity, though not without difficulty and loss, abandoning Bohemia and all his advantages.<sup>2</sup> The emperor Charles, driven even from his electorate of Bavaria, and now without an army, took refuge in Frankfort.

In the midst of these reverses, produced by a war that he had opposed, in January, 1743, died Cardinal Fleury, aged ninety years. He left no wealth, the noblest epitaph for the minister of a despotic government—for one who had succeeded Mazarin and Dubois; for one, too, who knew the value of economy, and who practised it for the good of the state. His political views, if not grand, were just. He was averse from breaking faith as to the Austrian succession; and was, perhaps, the only minister of his country whose aim was peace and internal prosperity, not external aggrandisement: but this his countrymen can never forgive him. They espy nought save want of spirit in his counsels; his friendship with England they construe into subserviency; and they principally censure him for allowing the French marine to fall into decay, as if peace was forever to continue with the maritime powers. There may be some truth in these reproaches. Fleury left the yearly revenue producing one hundred and eighty millions, and this without capitation, tenth, or onerous *taille*. The noblesse hated his parsimony as much as his pacific measures: war was the harvest in which they gleaned honours and employ.

[<sup>1</sup> Since Hungarian law provided for no queen, Maria Theresa was called "King"; the cry was "*Moriamur pro rege nostro*." Some historians count this event apocryphal.]

[<sup>2</sup> The retreat of Belle-Isle was compared by his friends to that of Xenophon's Ten Thousand; but his enemies replied that Xenophon had saved his army, while Belle-Isle had lost the most of his.] — SISMONDI.<sup>o</sup> It is said that of the 120,000 he took across the Rhine, he brought back hardly 35,000.]



Great Britain at length stepped forth to succour Austria in 1743. Her monarch proposed to imitate the famous march of Marlborough, to cross the Rhine, and, uniting with the imperialists, to force the French frontier of Lorraine and Alsace. The army [called the Pragmatic army], commanded by Lord Stair, and encouraged by the presence of its king, George II, and the duke of Cumberland, advanced to join the prince of Lorraine. The French, under the marshal De Noailles, were posted behind the Maine, the passages of which they preserved to prevent this junction. The river, before it reaches Frankfort, turns almost at right angles: the English imprudently marched along its right bank as far as Aschaffenburg, when they found that their enemies, in possession of the left, had it in their power to cross the river and

cut off their supplies and reinforcements. It was necessary, therefore, to retrograde. They did so, and found their suspicions verified. The French had passed and occupied the village of Dettingen; the British were now under the necessity of attacking. The marshal De Noailles drew up his troops with a ravine in front, across which the English must advance, and in passing which they must necessarily be

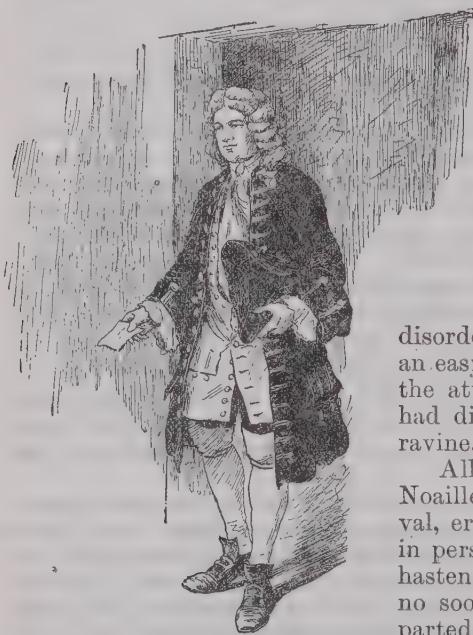
disordered, and become, on issuing from it, an easy conquest to their enemies ready for the attack. To make this sure, Noailles had disposed his cannon to play upon the ravine.

All was ordered, when the marshal De Noailles resolved to make use of the interval, ere the English arrived, and proceed in person to the other side of the river to hasten the passage of the rest of the army; no sooner, however, had the general departed on this quest, than his nephew, the duke de Grammont, anxious to win without delay the honour of the victory,<sup>1</sup> broke through the orders of Noailles, and gave

the word to pass the ravine. His troops obeyed, and thus the French found themselves in the very position in which Noailles had thought to place the English. Their cannon was useless, whilst that of the British opened with effect.

"They march, nevertheless," say the *Mémoires* of Noailles,<sup>n</sup> referring to his soldiers; "they endure a furious discharge of shot, which disorders their ranks. Three times they rally: the household troops charge with more valour than constancy or order; the English present strong, immovable masses, which send forth a continued murderous fire. In vain the duke of Chartres, now duke of Orleans, the count of Clermont, and the rest of the nobility, make the most prodigious efforts; there is no breaking the masses of the enemy: naught is left but retreat." Thus was lost the battle

[<sup>1</sup> He wished, as did D'Harcourt, to win a marshal's staff. On account of their failure the French call the battle that of "the broken staves" (*journée des bâtons rompus*).]



A FRENCH TRADESMAN IN THE REIGN OF  
LOUIS XV

[1743-1744 A.D.]

of Dettingen by the French. They fled across the Maine; and more activity on the part of their victors might have destroyed the army. George II thought but of continuing his retreat. The French guards behaved very ill in this action, according to the despatch of their general; but their fault was more than redeemed by the valour of other regiments.

Since the death of Cardinal Fleury, Louis XV resided chiefly at Choisy. He affected to imitate his great predecessor, in being his own minister; but the business of state was carried on by Clavigny, Maurepas, the D'Argensons, and Cardinal Tencin. The greatest influence, however, was with the reigning mistress, the duchess de Châteauroux, sister of Madame de Mailly. She now emulated the conduct of Agnes Sorel, in inflaming the king's warlike ardour, and urging him to stimulate the French armies by his presence. Louis accordingly proceeded to Flanders to join the marshal De Noailles, whilst Voltaire was sent to Berlin in order to induce the king of Prussia to resume hostilities.<sup>1</sup>

Louis XV, according to traditionary custom, was praised as a hero and a conqueror, although his presence with the army merely embarrassed their operations, and made this expensive and useless war still more oppressive to the French people. A numerous court with all its appendages accompanied the king, which not only materially interfered with proper attention to the substantial necessities of the army, but furnished an opportunity for indulgence in those luxuries which daily augmented the misfortunes of the tax-paying people, and the insolence of those who were favoured by the court. The duchess de Châteauroux travelled like a queen, with a royal retinue: it was thought that some respect for public decency would be preserved, by her travelling alone and residing in a separate house; but notwithstanding this, she was everywhere received with the greatest outward demonstrations of respect, and before the king came, the magistracy of the respective towns where they took up temporary residence were obliged openly to break through or otherwise construct communications between the buildings occupied by the king and his mistress.

Louis himself was to command in the Netherlands, and made himself ridiculous by causing his armour to be proved by twenty musket-shots, and by requiring only 159 mules for the transport of his baggage, which was reduced, as it was said, to the smallest possible quantity. It was owing to no appreciation of his merit that Maurice of Saxony received the command of the army; Maurice, it is true, had proved in Bohemia and Bavaria that he alone of all the French generals knew how to cheer and animate the men, and was, in fact, born to be a commander; but he was not indebted to his military but to his courtly talents for his command, and to his being as great an adept in iniquity as the king himself. And withal it cost Châteauroux and Marshal de Noailles no small efforts to persuade the king, who was extraordinarily superstitious and brought up in the most slavish priestly principles, to intrust the chief command to the count whom he despised as a Huguenot, although he was a Lutheran. Maurice first served under Noailles, but afterwards he held the command alone, and in a short time, under the eyes of the king, he reduced all those towns which are called the barriers of Flanders.<sup>2</sup>

Prince Charles of Lorraine, taking advantage of the French retreat from Prague, and their defeat at Dettingen, penetrated into Alsace and punished France in her turn with invasion. Louis, on learning this, flew from Flanders towards the Rhine; he had reached Metz when a fever seized him, the consequence of fatigue and of intemperance. The monarch's illness speedily

became alarming; and some of the more pious courtiers penetrating to his bedside, in despite of the gay duke de Richelieu, reminded Louis of the evil of his ways. The duchess de Châteauroux had attended him in his journey, and was now at Metz. Remorse and repentance seized on the monarch; the unfortunate mistress was discarded, insulted, and, but for the pity of Richelieu, could scarcely have found the means of escape. The queen repaired to Metz, and Louis asked her to forgive him. The whole kingdom was, meanwhile, in emotion and anxiety for the monarch's safety: the story of his repentance touched his people, and never was a more fervent or pathetic display of loyalty; the nation seemed but to have one thought, one prayer<sup>1</sup>—it was for the recovery of their sovereign. "What have I done to be so beloved?" asked Louis.

Frederick of Prussia seemed to participate in this general admiration for the French king. He now came to his aid, invaded Bohemia, and, by his successes, recalled the imperialists from their invasion of Alsace. Frederick was in truth alarmed at the union of England, Holland, Sardinia, and Saxony with Maria Theresa; and he chose the present moment to fling himself into the opposite scale, knowing how it would entitle him to the gratitude of France. The declaration of hostilities by Frederick was chivalric, but unfortunate. Traun drove him from Bohemia with disgrace.

Louis in the meantime had returned to his capital. His first act was to recall his mistress, the duchess de Châteauroux, and to exile her enemies. But her triumph was short; death seized her ere she was well re-established in royal favour. In the commencement of 1745, the marriage of the dauphin with a princess of Spain was celebrated. It was at the fête given on this occasion that Louis first saw Madame d'Étioles, wife of a revenue contractor. She was of low origin, her family name being Poisson. She it was who, created Marquise de Pompadour, had the address to retain for such a length of time her influence over the French king, and over the fate of Europe.

### *Second Silesian War (1744-1745 A.D.)*

Charles VII, emperor, and elector of Bavaria, died about this time. France transferred her support to his son; but the young elector, warned by his father's misfortunes, concluded a separate peace with Maria Theresa, and abandoned his pretension to the empire, on condition of being restored to the tranquil possession of Bavaria. Maria Theresa, by this submission, was enabled to obtain the imperial crown for her husband, formerly duke of Lorraine, now grand duke of Tuscany and emperor.

France, by this defection, being rendered unable to carry the war beyond the Rhine, turned her efforts toward the Netherlands. A large army, commanded by Marshal Saxe<sup>2</sup> [Maréchal de Saxe] and honoured by the presence of both

[<sup>1</sup> As a gauge of Louis XV's popularity, it is noteworthy that at this time 6,000 prayers were offered for him at Notre Dame; in 1757 only 600; in 1775 only 3.]

[<sup>2</sup> Exhausted by dissipation of all kinds, Maurice left Paris in ill-health, but as early as the month of April he undertook the siege of Tournay. King Louis and his court now again joined the army and were engaged in balls and entertainments in Douai, when the allies adopted the unfortunate resolution of attacking the besiegers in their camp at Tournay. This led to an engagement, in which the marshal reckoned with such certainty on the victory that he sent a formal invitation to the king to be present at the battle. The engagement took place on the 11th, and received its name from the village of Fontenoy. Voltaire *p.*, as is well known, has taken great pains to assign a great share in the victory to King Louis and his friend Richelieu, although he knew right well that the presence of the king and the companion of his love-adventures had only served to embarrass the commander-in-chief. The newspaper writers of these times were not conscious of the absurdity of the scenes between the French and English guards, which may be



[1745 A.D.]

king and dauphin, laid siege to Tournay [or Doornick]. The duke of Cumberland, who commanded an inferior force of English, Dutch, and Hanoverians, mustering little more than fifty thousand men, whilst the French numbered sixty-five thousand, marched to raise the siege. The remembrance of Dettingen, and a wish to rival Marlborough's victories, inspired him with this presumption.

Marshal Saxe advanced, leaving about fifteen thousand men to observe the siege, and took post at Fontenoy, his right wing resting on that village, his left in the wood of Barri, and his army drawn up in several lines across the interval. The duke of Cumberland advanced to give battle on the 11th of May, the prince of Waldeck, commanding the Dutch, on his left. The cannonade began, and its first victim was the duke of Grammont, the cause of the loss of Dettingen. The first attack was against Fontenoy, but the batteries thrice repulsed the assailants. The duke then despatched an officer to carry the wood of Barri; but there was no way of mastering either position. The English were thus exposed to the cross-fire from the right and left of the French. The duke of Cumberland resolved on the daring attempt to push on betwixt them towards the French centre. This he did, the entire force of the English infantry forming, as much from instinct and necessity as from order, into one solid mass or column. Unfortunately, neither the cavalry nor the Dutch could keep up with this attack, the interval between Fontenoy and the wood of Barri being so narrow that they must have fallen upon either of those two formidable positions. The columns of English therefore advanced alone, dragging their artillery: whole files were carried away as they passed between the French batteries; but, these passed, nothing could resist them.

A pause of politeness took place as the guards of the rival nations approached each other, it was said, in which salutations were made and returned, "Fire first, gentlemen of the French guards," cried the English officers. "Nay, fire you first, messieurs," replied their enemies. It came at last, and fatally. The French officers fell thick. Their lines were broken. Despite of the reputation of Marshal Saxe, and although he acted the part of an able general in his preparations for the battle, he was altogether wanting in his heat. His almost dying state—he was carried in a litter—might excuse this, but could not remedy it. The formidable column still advanced, the French charging it without effect in companies and squadrons. Saxe began to give orders for retreat. The king was already warned of his danger. The smallest aid of cavalry would at this moment have routed the panic-stricken French, and secured the victory to the English; but the duke was without that indispensable instrument of victory, whilst the cumbrous columns, for want of it, saw victory before them, but dared not break up their mass to snatch it. Seeing the immobility of the English, Lally, who commanded the Irish brigade, exclaimed, "Why not bring the cannon of the reserve to bear upon them?" The duke de Richelieu caught up the thought, repeated and insisted on it to the king.<sup>1</sup> Saxe approved. The few cannon, by enfiling the column, sufficed to scatter and make fearful breaches in it. The Irish brigade, composed of Catholic

read in the work of Voltaire; and the flattering historians who follow their authority edify the public with the affecting speeches which they put into the mouth of the king as he and the dauphin rode round the battle-field after the victory. In the accounts of these flattering sophists, a man without any sense of honour and shame like Louis, who commenced two bloody wars without any justifiable reason, who did despite to all principles of morality by his scandalous life and ruined the kingdom by his extravagance, is represented as a Christian philosopher !/ ]

[<sup>1</sup> Historians incline now to discard all the anecdotes Voltaire gives concerning this battle, especially this one which is blamed to a desire to give the duke de Richelieu an undeserved share in the victory. Daresté charges this to "jealous intrigues to ravish Saxe's glory."]

exiles, rushed upon their English enemies. The French rallied and returned to the attack, and the almost victorious column, defeated in its turn, was obliged to trace back its perilous path in disorder, leaving the battle-field, dearly purchased, in the possession of the French.

The capture of Ghent, Bruges, Ostend, and Oudenarde followed the victory of Fontenoy. But it by no means relieved the king of Prussia, who, pressed by superior numbers, wrote to Louis that the French conquests in Flanders were as useless to him as if they had been won in China [or on the Scamander]. Frederick was piqued to see the armies of his ally strong and triumphant in Flanders and in Italy, where the king of Sardinia was beaten, and Milan taken by Marshal Maillebois, while the army on the Rhine was



COURT DRESS AT THE BEGINNING  
OF THE REIGN OF LOUIS XV

compelled, from its weakness, to act ingloriously on the defensive. The Prussian monarch expostulated against this kind of abandonment. Louis was affronted by the hero's frankness; and the friendship between France and Prussia subsided into coolness. Whilst the French ministry, therefore, turned their efforts to fit out the expedition which conveyed the Pretender to Scotland, Frederick concluded a treaty with England, and prepared to force Austria to grant him peace anew. He won a victory at Friedland. It was not sufficiently decisive. But the conquest of Saxony, and the entry of the Prussian monarch into Dresden, despite the menaces of Russia, humbled the proud tone of Maria Theresa. She made peace, ceding Silesia to Frederick, who acknowledged her husband as emperor (January 5th, 1746).

The early part of the campaign of 1746 was favourable to the French. The British were engaged at home against the Pretender; both Brussels and Antwerp surrendered to Marshal Saxe. The empress now, however, secure on the side of Prussia, made ample preparations, and despatched two armies, one under Prince Charles of Lorraine into Flanders, the other commanded by the prince of Lichtenstein to Italy. The latter, a young and talented commander, brought the united force of French and Spanish to action before Placentia<sup>1</sup> [or Piacenza] June 16th, 1746. The battle was long and hotly contested, and terminated in so total a defeat that the French were not only driven from the field, but obliged to evacuate the whole of Italy.

The Austrians in Flanders were far from turning the scale of victory so speedily. Prince Charles of Lorraine was attacked near Liège, between that town and Maestricht, by Marshal Saxe. He was defeated, and obliged to retire behind the Maas. This battle of Rocoux was said not to have been decisive: but Marshal Saxe was satisfied to have repulsed the fresh army of

[<sup>1</sup> Daresté says that the Austrians had forty-five thousand men, and the French and Spanish only twenty-eight thousand, of which they lost more than a third, abandoning also their stores, their guns, and their wounded. He adds, "the disaster was complete, and, morally speaking, no less for France than for Spain." The abandonment of the unfortunate allies, the Genoese, was one of those stains which cannot be wiped out.]



THE COURT OF MADAME DE POMPADOUR





[1746-1747 A.D.]

Austrians, and retained his ample conquests of Flanders and Brabant. He had now advanced almost as far as Louis XIV, in his first memorable war. Holland was menaced in its vital territories. The isle of Zealand was threatened with invasion. The Dutch had recourse to the same measures which they had adopted in the preceding century. The prince of Orange was raised to sovereign power, and created hereditary stadholder. In the meantime the duke of Cumberland arrived from the field of Culloden, to defend the ally of England against Marshal Saxe. Immense armies on either side seemed to promise a decisive campaign. Maestricht and Bergen-op-Zoom were the only two fortresses that held out against the French. In manœuvring to besiege the former town, the French came in front of their enemies, advantageously posted at Lawfeld. It was now the turn of the duke of Cumberland to be entrenched and defended by cannon, whilst Marshal Saxe attacked in close column. It was the day of Fontenoy reversed.<sup>1</sup>

#### TAILLENDIER'S ACCOUNT OF LAWFIELD (1747 A.D.)

Maurice of Saxony had returned to Brussels, March 31st, 1747, and tracing out a plan of campaign for his subordinates had taken possession of Dutch Flanders. Löwendal, Contades, Montmarin, able coadjutors in the plans of their chief, effected this conquest in the space of one month (15th of April to 16th of May). Everything was made ready for battle. The duke of Cumberland, at the head of an English army; the prince of Waldeck and Marshal Batthyányi at the head of the Austrians, wished to avenge Fontenoy and Rocoux; while Louis XV, full of confidence in the marshal's plans, was eager to share a second time the glory of a great victory. Perhaps this arose from a combination of state reasons and personal vanity. With regard to Marshal Saxe others than interested accusers thought that the marshal was not sorry to prolong the war. His wonderful manœuvres, eulogised by Frederick the Great, were a little too deliberate for French patience. The king thought that his presence would force on an engagement and give a definite success which would end the war. The battle took place on the 2nd of July, 1747, a battle resulting in triumphs for Maurice. That same evening the king announced the good news to the dauphin and instructing him to convey the good news to the dauphine wrote, "Tell her that our general was never so great, but blame must mingle with our praise in that he exposed himself like an ordinary grenadier."

Such, in effect, Maurice, the consummate general, had shown himself — an intrepid foot-soldier. He had seen from the opening of the action that the village of Lawfeld was the key to the battle and that once master there he would be master also of the enemy. The duke of Cumberland, either believing the place to be sufficiently strong, or not realising its importance, had placed only a small number of troops there. Warned suddenly of danger, he brought his whole army thither at the moment when the first brigade, directed by the count de Saxe, had taken possession of the village.

Our men [the French] recoil under the shock. A new column advances, which vainly tries to cut the allies to pieces and is in its turn repulsed. English, Hessians, Hanoverians, a whole army, a whole deep column concentrates behind Lawfeld and repairs incessantly the advanced ranks which fall before the French. It is the Fontenoy column over again, only more terrible, having its front protected by a natural stronghold. A road cut between two embankments fringed with hedges furnishes a formidable trench.

Maurice, afraid for a moment that he will lose the day, says to M. de Valfous, "Well, what do you think of this? We begin badly, the enemy holds well." "Monsieur le maréchal, you were dying at Fontenoy; you won: convalescent at Rocoux, you beat them again; your good health to-day shall crush them." It does, but the *mêlée* is awful. What a veritable furnace that village is—showers of stone and fire! For a moment the tumult ceases; neither gun nor musketry fire is heard. Our soldiers advance with fixed bayonets only. Just the noise of the charge—just the shock of the men meeting; the clash of arms; the fury of war going up in inarticulate cries from thousands of throats!

Maurice, sword in hand, rushes to the head of the king's regiment and takes the village in flank. On rush his men, striking and killing! The example of the chief kindles enthusiasm in every soldier there. What avail trumpets and drums? The drummers carry their drums on their backs, preferring sword play. Not a blow to waste, not a moment to lose. When we hold Lawfeld, the artillery for which we are cutting the road will soon blow Cumberland to pieces.

Here we have a unique glimpse of the count de Saxe and his marvellous charge, so very French, where the general and soldier were as one. "At that moment," he says, in his *Mémoires*, "the enemy who were engaged in the village, hearing firing behind them, abandoned the hedges. Our troops attacked them at the other end and followed up. In an instant the whole outer part of the village was in our hands, taken amidst deafening shouts. The enemy's line was broken. Two brigades of artillery which had followed me opened fire and increased the disorder. Two cavalry brigades had come up on our left; I took two squadrons and ordered the marquis de Bellefonds, who was in command, to push on speedily to the enemy's infantry, and called to the horsemen: 'Seek your forage, my children'; and they did."

That foraging in the midst of the column which had incessantly reinforced the natural defences of Lawfeld made an enormous hole of two thousand paces in width in the English lines. "My two squadrons," adds Maurice, "were shot. Scarcely a man returned, but I had gained my object."

At what a price! For five hours the attack on the village lasted (from ten in the morning till three in the afternoon), and how many brave men on both sides had died in a purposeless war! What frightful slaughter, and doubly frightful, seeing it changed nothing in the political situation, and brought peace no nearer. In the English army ten thousand men bit the dust. We lost more than five thousand; and when that field of death was ours the twenty-seven thousand Austrians of Count Batthyányi, held in check by our left wing, retired peaceably upon Maestricht without losing a man or a cartridge. A serious mistake had been made, which Maurice realised later. There was a second victory to be achieved over Batthyányi after the defeat of Cumberland. Instead of re-uniting his victorious troops with those confronting the Austrians, and crushing an enemy inferior in numbers and already demoralised by the bloody reverse their comrades had received, Maurice committed an error by pausing to enjoy his triumph, by going to Herderen to receive the king's congratulations, so allowing Maria Theresa's general to withdraw in good order. But who will dare to blame him? Perhaps in charging as a common soldier at Lawfeld Maurice failed in his duty as general. But if this general in a decisive hour had not turned into the fiercest private soldier should we have conquered? In the intoxication of the struggle he had not foreseen probable results of the engagement.



[1744-1747 A.D.]

A Frederick, a Napoleon would doubtless not have made this mistake. Yet the victory of Lawfeld, incomplete though it was, will ever be one of the most glorious memories of French infantry, and in the annals of Maurice de Saxe one of the most brilliant pages.<sup>s</sup>

## OTHER AFFAIRS ON LAND AND SEA

The duke of Cumberland was worsted, but remained still strong enough to cover Maestricht. Marshal Saxe, unable to besiege this town, sent Löwendal to invest Bergen-op-Zoom, considered impregnable. It was nevertheless taken by assault, after a month's siege.

These successes in Flanders were compensated by reverses in Italy. Genoa, it is true, had risen in insurrection against the Austrians, and driven them out. Boufflers, and after him the duke de Richelieu, aided by the populace, were enabled to preserve the town. But to Genoa was limited their footing on Italian soil. The imperialists even penetrated into Provence. And when the chevalier de Belle-Isle attempted to force the passes of the Alps, he was defeated at Exilles, and slain, with the greater part of his soldiers. By sea, the French lost almost their last ship of war.<sup>l</sup>

Although a naval war had seemed imminent in 1740, it was postponed on account of the complications caused by the Austrian succession. For four years there were no naval hostilities between France and England. But from 1744, that is, from the date when war was officially declared, things went otherwise. The French troops received orders to be in readiness and began preparations accordingly, while the English on their side threatened the ports. The French possessed Cape Breton (*Île Royale*), a place doubly valuable, first because of the fisheries there, and secondly because it was the key to Canada and the American possessions. This was Louisburg. Since 1720, three million francs had been spent in fortifying it. The Anglo-Americans in Boston, jealous of its prosperity, and animated by a strong feeling of animosity against the French settlers, organised on their own account a small fleet to invade it in 1745, and asked London for help from the royal navy. The French colony was badly administered and full of disorder. Therefore, after only a fifty days' siege, the Anglo-Americans were victorious. The garrison surrendered, on condition that they and some two thousand inhabitants should be sent to a French port.

The conquerors, established at Louisburg, tried to enter Canada, but the governor, La Gallissonnière, repulsed this attempt. They took, however, two richly cargoes ships belonging to the Company of the Indies (*Compagnie des Indes*); these, not having been warned in time, were sailing in fancied security by Cape Breton. Such losses naturally caused disgust and alarm in France. There was an outcry against an inefficient navy and the unreadiness of Maurepas, who commanded it. All were unanimous against the shortsighted economy of Cardinal Fleury. This was only the beginning of the reverses. A fleet equipped in 1746 to retake Louisburg, placed under the command of De la Rochefoucauld d'Enville, could not get to its destination. The corsairs captured several isolated ships, and commerce with the colonies was partly stopped. Sugar, coffee, and other colonial products, which had become almost necessary articles of daily consumption, went up enormously in price.

A bold plan was devised by the English, of destroying the establishments of the Company of the Indies at Lorient. General Sinclair disembarked the 1st of October, 1746, in Quimperlé Bay, marched on Lorient, and gave the

town twenty-four hours to surrender. But the governor, the troops, and the inhabitants put forward their best means of defence. So the English general, who could then succeed only by a surprise, was obliged to re-embark. It became necessary to escort the company's transports by squadrons of the royal marines. Twice in 1747 these fleets succumbed in an unequal fight with the more powerful English. On May 3rd, Admiral Anson, commanding twenty-seven ships, captured near Cape Finisterre, in Spain, a fleet of five vessels and two frigates. The Londoners showed their delight at seeing the ingots captured from the French ships by having bonfires. On the 14th of October, Admiral Hawke captured quite near to Belle-Île six vessels escorted by a convoy going from France to the Antilles. England conquered by her superior fleet. She had, according to Voltaire,<sup>p</sup> 130 ships, manned by 50 to 100 guns, with about 115 guns below. The French had only from 30 to 35 ships, with an inefficient naval force. Although this naval war was only accessory to the great struggle, and gave but a slight hint of the turn affairs would take, these numerous losses inspired fears that were only too well founded for the safety of the colonies. The maritime superiority of the British was a crushing revelation.

#### WARS IN INDIA

It is true, the French had better success in the East Indies. The English company had there four large settlements — Bombay, Madras, Fort William (near Calcutta), and Bencoolen. The French company had two, Pondicherry and Chandernagor, the latter a recent creation of Dupleix. It was considered best to try for a peaceful settlement, and Dupleix proposed neutrality to the English. But these, considering themselves stronger than they really were, summoned a fleet from the mother-country into Indian seas and took several French ships. Labourdonnais, governor of the isle of Bourbon (Réunion) and an officer in the navy, had for several years been warning the ministry that it was dangerous to leave the almost total direction of colonial affairs in the hands of the company; that a great national interest was at stake, India running the risk of becoming the prey of the English. By an order from the government he armed at the company's expense a small fleet of nine vessels, manned by some three thousand men, of whom eight hundred were natives.

On the 6th of July, 1746, he attacked and dispersed an English fleet. Then he appeared unexpectedly before Madras. It is reckoned that there were in the town about one hundred thousand people, but the only defence was a fort guarded by two hundred Europeans and a few sepoys. Labourdonnais had eleven hundred French troopers and a few hundred sepoys and blacks, without counting sailors and the marines. The English gave up the keys of Madras on condition of their being returned when an indemnity of 1,100,000 pagodes (estimated at 9,000,000 francs) had been paid. Thus was the taking of Louisburg revenged.

Dupleix protested against this capitulation. He maintained that in signing it Labourdonnais had exceeded his powers, and that the right of disposing of Indian conquests belonged only to the governor-general of Pondicherry. Labourdonnais resisted, saying he had given his word; that he had the right to conclude the treaty, and wished to submit the whole affair to a royal decision. But France was far distant. Dupleix, knowing himself to be the stronger party, broke the treaty, and destroyed the native quarters of Madras, which was really the most populous quarter and occupied wholly by Indians.

[1746-1748 A.D.]

Labourdonnais later returned to France, where he was imprisoned in the Bastille on charges signed by the Council of Pondicherry under the direction of Dupleix. These pretended that he had betrayed the company's interests and sold Madras to the English. Dupleix next attempted to take Fort St. George. The enterprise was unsuccessful.

Then England sent out Admiral Boscawen, who, having rallied the scattered navy, found himself at the head of thirty men-of-war. Boscawen went to besiege Pondicherry. To do this he had to land his troops and set them at work with which they were ill acquainted. Dupleix armed the Indians, and was helped by a young and brilliant officer named Bussy, who was destined to become one of the greatest heroes of the Indian wars. Boscawen raised the siege after forty-eight days of incessant warfare. The Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, in 1748, assured to France the possession of Pondicherry, and Louis XV recompensed the governor by giving him the order of St. Louis, although that was distinctly a military order. The Indian princes of the Carnatic, from seeing the victory over the English, conceived the highest idea of French military prowess. This was exactly what Dupleix wanted, for he proposed thereafter to trade on their fear and admiration.<sup>7</sup>

When peace was restored no sign of amity made its appearance between the rival merchants on the Coromandel coast. Dupleix sided with one of the princes of Arcot, replaced him on his throne, and was so carried away by security and ostentation, that he bought or forged the title of "viceroys of the Carnatic of the Great Mogul," and affected a greater magnificence than the native rulers. But India had not been without its elevating effect on the genius of the rival nation.

England saw the earlier services of Robert Clive, a merchant's clerk in a counting-house near Calcutta, at first with surprise and then with pride. He left his desk, and took the command in war with a self-reliant dignity which gave confidence to his companions. Step by step he followed the proceedings of Dupleix, and smote him hip and thigh at the siege of Madura, near Arcot. The native mind was subdued by the sight of a people who vanquished the French as easily as the French had scattered the Hindus; and court influence at home completed the misfortunes which English superiority had begun.

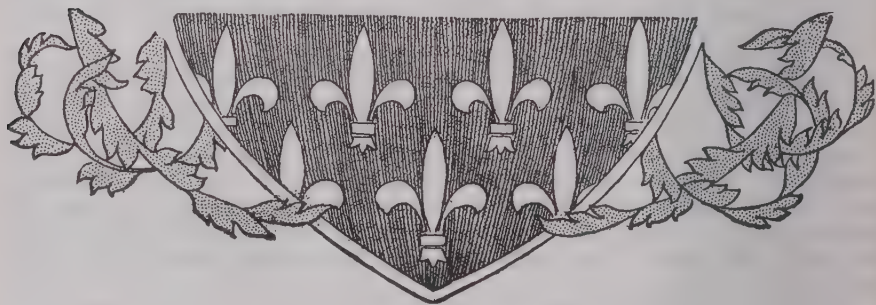
Dupleix was recalled, and, in spite of his title of marquis, was again looked upon as a book-keeper in a stall, and died of a broken heart in the effort to induce his judges to leave him some small portion of the great fortune he had at one time acquired. The count Lally, an Irishman by descent, was sent out to replace the plebeian Dupleix, and made matters a thousand times worse. He so offended the inhabitants of Pondicherry, which was a second time besieged by the English, that they almost prayed for the capture of the town and the disgrace of the commander. The capture came; and the commander, storming, cavilling, and finding fault with everybody but himself, was sent home, and, after some years' imprisonment in the Bastille, was executed as a traitor.

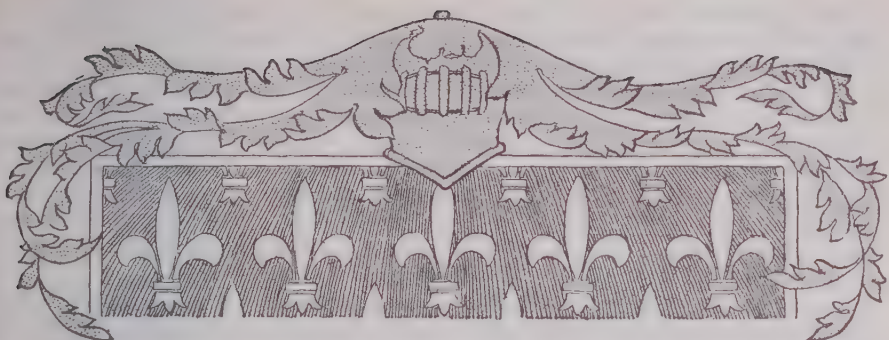
Labourdonnais, Dupleix, and Lally were the victims of French feeling in the matter of a colonial empire. Clive, on the other hand, was ennobled, Coote promoted, and honours and wealth showered on the bearers of the English flag. The issue of a contest in which the combatants were so differently treated by their employers was easily seen. And with India laid open to her powers, with immense squadrons blockading Toulon and Marseilles, and her Austrian allies ravaging Provence, England looked on with patience at the momentary triumphs of France in Italy and Flanders.



The apparent object of the war existed no more, for Francis of Tuscany, the husband of Maria Theresa, had been raised to the empire by an indisputable majority of the electors, including the vote of the versatile Frederick of Prussia, in 1746. The belligerents were further induced to a renewal of peace by the ominous appearance of a body of fifty thousand Russians, despatched by the empress Elizabeth to the aid of the Dutch. No one could tell what effect the swarms of an almost undiscovered desert would have on the future policies of the world; and it was thought wiser to prevent their first taste of the vintages of the Rhine, which might induce them to renew their visit, by an accommodation among all the states.

The Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, October 18th, 1748, therefore, was hailed with great joy. It replaced everybody very nearly in the position held before the fight. England returned the greater part of her conquests, giving back Louisburg but keeping Acadia; Frederick, however, retained his prey of Silesia; and now that Maria Theresa was firmly established on her father's throne, and had procured the empire for her husband—Francis I—the powers and potentates of Europe had the unblushing effrontery once more to sign the Pragmatic Sanction, which they had been labouring for eight years to destroy.<sup>i</sup>





## CHAPTER II

### “THE REGENCY OF POMPADOUR”<sup>1</sup>

[1748-1764 A.D.]

WE have hitherto sailed down the stream of French history, from the obscure wilderness of its rise, through the rugged and picturesque gorges, the breaks and rapids of its middle course, to the wide majestic flow of the monarchy in its later days. Embarked upon its tide, with calm around and before, we now begin to perceive that the current grows suddenly more rapid, and that without any apparent or external cause we are hurried along with a swiftness at once menacing and unaccountable. Although not within hearing, we are yet within the influence of the distant cataract.

The very men who lived in those days began to perceive the movement; not only the philosopher and reflecting man, but Louis XV himself. “The monarchy is very old,” said he, “but it will last my time”; a selfish remark, no doubt. But could he have stopped the current of its decline? And was not his conscious powerlessness, more than his selfishness, the prompter of his thought? His subjects, his compatriots, took precisely the same view; nor class nor individual knew whither they tended, but all were dissatisfied and ill at ease. A change was necessary, it was inevitable: the acts of everyone — of king, of priest, of minister, of noble, of parliament, of writer — all henceforth worked to bring about and hasten this change. The king degraded royalty by his dissoluteness, and weakened it by his profusion. The minister, turning away from the task of internal administration in disgust, directed his views abroad, and sought to gild his day of triumph by the trophies of a war, undertaken under some idle pretext of supporting the balance of power. The noble, like the monarch, degraded his order, and showed himself pressing on the lower classes, not for any public end, but for his own private gratification. The legists defended the cause of religious liberty and their own independence, indeed, but did so selfishly and blindly. The writer flattered royalty and aristocracy, and, at this price, was

[<sup>1</sup> The phrase is Lacrosette’s.<sup>b</sup>]

allowed to attack religion, the court finding itself in opposition to the priesthood. The priesthood itself increased its odium as a privileged class, by its intemperance, its ignorance, its absurdity, and its scandal.

In such a general abandonment of the ancient system, such a despair of supporting it, it is absurd to ascribe to any particular class the catastrophe in which the epoch ended. None set about revolutionising intentionally; but each stirred when it found its place irksome; each, where and how it had the power. As the noblesse had proved malcontent at one time, the magistracy at another, so now a new combination of society, the lettered class, rebelled with better success, for universal sympathy supported them; and step the first was taken in revolution.

It has already been stated that when all hostility against royal power ceased, the frowardness of opposition took refuge in Jansenism. This was in fact the second position taken up in France against sacerdotal tyranny: the first was Calvinism; its defeat has been recorded. And after it to resuscitate reform became impossible, because it must savour of Calvinism, which was hated as ignoble, as fanatical, as disloyal, and, above all, as past; for though zeal may innovate, it scorns mere imitation. Jansenism had not much more success: the base of its religious creed, at least, was narrow and sophistical; it suited legal heads, but was incomprehensible to the people. The third and last stand against papal supremacy was taken on the broad ground of infidelity; and the philosophers of the eighteenth century might plead that they were driven to this, as the last and only resource against the intolerance and tyranny of the priesthood.

The ecclesiastical power was, at the present epoch, the most prominent, the most felt; it was the vanguard of oppression. Not only was it guilty of those gross instances of injustice and crime, the breaking of Calas on the wheel, the execution of La Barre for pretended sacrilege,—enormities equal to those which sully the dark ages,—but it also wreaked its petty despotism in being the torment, the spy, and the bugbear of domestic and social life. Its arrogant pretensions, and absurd and fatuous conduct, disgusted the whole kingdom with the very name and institution of religion. It united the most odious attributes of the police and the censorship, and it peculiarly galled that rising and active intellect which characterised the society of the capital. That society combined the aristocracies of talent and of birth; it had now become the public—at least its representative.

Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, D'Alembert, were far more the organs than the teachers of this society. In attacking the church they acted in self-defence, for that church was determined to allow them neither liberty of speech nor of writing; it presented itself as a wall against the advance of knowledge and of enlightenment. The heads of the church began the war and put the creed, which they professed and represented, to the same risk that their usurped tyranny incurred. To separate the cause of religion from that of Catholicism had been tried by Huguenot and Jansenist, and they had both failed: the sole and unfortunate alternative that remained was to attack religion itself, to confound creed and hierarchy. That alternative was embraced. Infidelity reared its standard: Voltaire poured forth his volumes; the *Encyclopædia* appeared; Diderot, D'Alembert, Condillac, formed new principles of mental science and moral conduct independent of religion. Novelty and the exigence of the moment gave them force. The philosophers conquered.

France was now governed by Madame de Pompadour. She was certainly a woman of talent. The empire which she held over Louis XV, long after



[1745-1748 A.D.]

her charms had ceased to fascinate him, proves this. She bound him, as she says herself, "in the chains of habit." Her boudoir became the council-chamber, the ministers her creatures. The king was present at each determination, but was spared the trouble of either thinking or speaking. It was Pompadour who appointed generals and bishops, proposed laws and plans of campaigns. After a glorious victory, it is a complimentary letter from the mistress that we find coming to reward the triumph of the hero.<sup>c</sup>

This most charming young person, who seemed to have more than a fair share of talent and beauty, had but one defect, her birth. Fortune had done her a wrong in giving her as parents one Poisson, interested in the provisions market but driven by misfortunes into exile, and Madame Poisson, sister to the sieur De la Mothe, commissariat for Les Invalides; her gallantry had become proverbial. When Madame de Pompadour came into the world, her mother was the mistress of Lenormand de Tournchem, and he, considering himself responsible for the child, lavished sums upon her education. The child, even from girlhood, was surrounded by lovers, the most devout of whom was a nephew of M. Lenormand de Tournchem, named M. Lenormand d'Étioles, and a marriage had been soon arranged.<sup>d</sup>

#### THE CHARACTER OF POMPADOUR

Mademoiselle Poisson, born of a bourgeois family, had married a rich financier, M. Lenormand d'Étioles; but she regarded the marriage only as a matter of form, and set out deliberately to become the king's mistress. She was deemed one of the prettiest women in Paris; she dressed magnificently, and had luxurious and disordered tastes; she possessed a calculating spirit, an inordinate persistence, self-possession, remarkable histrionic capabilities; she lacked all moral sense and was without the ghost of an opinion. She was known as "the most Parisian of the Parisiennes"; and considered the title a compliment.

She was a finished specimen of the parasitic type, covered with gold and mounted on a pedestal. A practical comedienne, she possessed in their perfection the qualities native to her rôle—finesse and intrigue, greed, selfishness, impudence; she remained always mistress of herself, and was incapable of genuine enthusiasm. Guided by the counsels of a shameless and ambitious mother, she had herself presented at court; in a few weeks she had won for herself the place made vacant by the death of Madame de Châteauroux. She attached herself to the king, conquering him through his weaknesses and by subtle flattery. In April, 1745, she took up her quarters at Versailles in the apartments of Madame de Mailly. Louis declared her his acknowledged mistress; shortly afterwards he presented her with the marquisate of Pompadour, and, breaking for her all his rules of economy, spent money with a lavish hand.

The Marquise, as she was thenceforth called, eager for pleasure, for diversion, for luxury, monopolised the king—idle, sad, morose, "of all men in the kingdom," says De Carné,<sup>e</sup> "the most bored"—and plunged him into a whirl of ruinous amusements. She was graceful, vivacious, full of animal spirits; she painted, cut cameos, danced, sang, played comedy, and was mistress of all the arts of seduction. Education, says D'Argenson,<sup>f</sup> had assisted nature in perfecting her in her chosen rôle. "She is an odalisque," he adds, "smartly tricked out—an able superintendent over his majesty's pleasures." "She presides over the amusements," says D'Angerville,<sup>g</sup> a biographer of Louis XV; "it is her vocation, and she fills it with taste and address."

She organised a small theatre, the actors being the king's associates. Concerts were given there, music being the rage, as well as operas, ballets, and comedies; Madame de Pompadour being always leading lady and most able actress. A privileged number only were admitted to these spectacles, and an invitation was considered a signal favour. This theatre was looked upon as a second king's-closet. Into the intimacy of this butterfly existence she drew some men of intellect, of letters, of art, who looked upon art and letters only as fashionable diversions. Thus did she succeed in amusing, stupefying, and subjugating Louis XV.<sup>b</sup>

When Madame de Pompadour became the mistress of Louis XV, she filled his whole existence. His every hour was taken up by her. The days, hitherto monotonous, now sped away.

A thousand pleasures were devised by her to rid him of that eternity of ennui which used to intervene between sunrise and sunset. She never allowed him to relax into his old moodiness and even stirred him to work. Yet often would she draw him away from the thoughts of ministerial disputes, ambassadorial intrigues, and the cares of a kingdom.

These childish ways and delicious teasings could only become one such as herself. But sometimes she would sing as she only could; would make the clavecin give forth its sweetest airs, or, like a Scheherazade, would smooth the wrinkles from the king's brow with some piquant story. Louis XV, body and soul, was carried along with his favourite in a devilish enchantment of restless, never-ending pursuit after pleasure.<sup>d</sup>

Great as was the art this woman displayed in keeping this worse than

useless ruler from the tragedy of yawning, the nation at large was suffering worse than boredom before the appalling cost of the royal pleasantries. But her ambitions took a yet higher flight, and she assumes a permanent place in æsthetic as well as social and political history.<sup>a</sup>

#### THE INFLUENCE OF POMPADOUR ON ART

Together with a love of display, she exhibited an inordinate fondness for fine buildings. She kept the king busy with construction, interior decoration, and furniture. She expended fabulous sums at Trianon, at Choisy, at Fontainebleau; as well as on her two retreats at Crécy and Bellevue, constructed on an entirely different plan from the royal palaces. Disregarding the noble majesty of these edifices, she revelled in subtle elegancies, capricious frivolities, costly fantasies. She here exhibited all the inventions, all the possibilities of luxury; and accumulated rare and priceless objects. The artistic followed the social decadence; nobility was sacrificed to grace, even to affectation.



MME. DE POMPADOUR

[1745-1756 A.D.]

With Madame de Pompadour art degenerated to that tortuous and mannered elegance to which her name is attached. Watteau and Vanloo gave place to Boucher; salons became boudoirs. Painting, sculpture, even the engravings which vulgarised the works of the masters had for aim and end interior decoration. Furnishings were multiplied, in various and elaborate forms. Dress was richer, more ornate, more fantastic; stuffs were more various, thanks to the products of India and China. Originality and caprice were the idols of the hour. The marquise, realising that therein lay her hold on the throne, loved to hear proclamations of the advance she had given the arts; she prided herself upon being the one who maintained the magnificence of the court. Her influence extended even to other countries, above all to the petty German courts, accustomed to model themselves upon the court at Versailles.

Her only creation was an industry of luxury—that of porcelain. Saxony had a celebrated factory, the products of which were famous throughout Europe. The marquise desired to establish a similar one in France, partly from caprice or for amusement, partly, it was said, to release the country from the duty on imported porcelain. Workshops were established at Vincennes, and the royal manufactory at Sèvres was organised and set working in 1756. From the artistic point of view this new enterprise achieved a high degree of perfection; but as an industry it could thrive only by means of large gifts from the king and enormous orders which created a new source for public expenditure.

For these caprices of his favourite, the cold and emotionless Louis evinced a complaisance that could not fail to amaze his associates. He promptly lost the little energy remaining to him, yielding altogether to the enervation of an idle and sensual life. All illusion concerning him was dissipated. To absence of talent, says D'Argenson, he joined utter lack of dignity. The spectacles and the fine buildings of the marquise became for him the first affairs of state—those alone, at least, with which he could occupy himself without fatigue and without repugnance. He became accustomed to living with her in a state of continual trotting about, travelling from one house to another, and stopping but a few days; everywhere dragging the enormous train of the royal household, with regard neither to the tremendous expense of these "little journeys," nor to the inconvenience resulting in the conduct of the government.

History has never satisfactorily estimated the figures reached by expenditures in these "minor pleasures" (*menus plaisirs*)—expenditures made blindly, without calculation, and regulated only after the lapse of years. Contemporaries estimate the expenses of the king's household at double the cost of the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, and subsequent calculations prove that this is no exaggeration. The opening of the château at Bellevue, November 25th, 1750, was the occasion of the presentation to each guest of a costume of purple cloth embroidered with gold, valued at



FRENCH NOBLEMAN, MIDDLE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY



1,100 livres [£45 or \$225]. The profusion of individual gifts was one of the natural consequences of a luxury for which even the largest fortunes were insufficient. Not content with acquiring an enormous individual fortune, Madame de Pompadour threw money away without counting it. She became, as it was said, the canal for the royal favours, administering the royal benefits with an audacity which served her well, since she thus gained partisans for herself.

Of the state she disposed as she disposed of the king. Towards France and the government she took the attitude of conqueror and parvenue. She had but one aim—to enchain Louis, to reign at Versailles by intrigue. She subjected the ministers little by little to her will, less for the desire to reign than to maintain her position. In the state she saw herself—herself alone. The king of Prussia gave her her true name—*Cotillon I* (Petticoat the First).

By a contrast easy enough of explanation, it came about that this scandal divided the court and produced a reaction. While the favourite surrounded herself with a society of ambitious pleasure-seekers, the royal family took refuge in a life of exemplary regularity. The queen, it is true, counted for little, but the dauphin was remarkable for his habits of austerity. The daughters of Louis, of whom only the eldest, the infanta of Parma, was married, came each in turn from the abbey of Fontevault, where they were all educated, to take up a life of edifying piety at Versailles. The duke of Orleans, son of the regent and first prince of the blood, had taken up the life of devotion; he retired to the abbey of Ste. Geneviève, and died there after writing some books on theology.

Unhappily the religious party remained always mediocre, with small measure of activity or enlightenment. All their opposition degenerated into paltry bickering. The queen was a cipher, and the princesses were covetous as children: at the least sign of discontent among them the king and the marquise appeared them with foolish gifts.

Satirical songs were current at Versailles; it was not long ere they were repeated in Paris. Lampoons floated about whose authors were not discoverable. In them the marquise was treated of as a woman of obscure origin who had wished only for peace—peace at any price, fearing the end of her reign would result if the king returned to the army. “All are vile—ministers as well as mistresses,” finished one tirade. The audacity of these attacks at first created only astonishment; the populace seemed to feel the danger of allowing their sovereign to be criticised. But this interval was short. The enormously increasing expenditures, the new duties imposed, the more and more unmistakable weakness of the government succeeded finally so well in alienating the minds of all that a former minister at last dared to write in his secret journal the new word—*Revolution!*<sup>h</sup>

#### THE PARC-AUX-CERFS; COURT DEGENERACY

Madame de Pompadour was sufficiently acquainted with the king to recognise that mistresses were necessary to him. Her jealousy was vigilant and furious to remove all who might supplant her in intellect or in conversation, while she lent herself willingly to the introduction into his presence of young girls from whom she believed she had nothing to fear. The marquis of Lugeac, nephew of Madame de Pompadour, joined with Lebel, valet to the king, in the infamous trade, and they were always sure of the support, at need, of the chief of police. Very soon Madame de Pompadour discovered

[1753-1768 A.D.]

that Louis XV found amusement in educating these young unfortunates. Children of from nine to twelve years, attracting the attention of the police by their beauty, were stolen from their mothers by numerous artifices, brought to Versailles, and kept in the most isolated and inaccessible apartments of the palace.

There he passed hours among them. Each had two maids. The king continually amused himself by dressing them, and setting them writing exercises, so that many among them developed a handwriting exactly like his own. He was particularly careful to instruct them in the duties of religion; he taught them to read, to write, and to say their prayers, like any boarding-school master. He employed in their presence pious language; he even joined them on his knees at their prayers: and all the time, from the very beginning of this scrupulous education, he had destined them to dishonour.

Madame de Pompadour, who pretended to see nothing of this her friend's manner of life, presented him, about 1753, with the charming retreat of The Hermitage, in the park of Versailles on the road to St. Germain. The building and the surrounding gardens had been constructed and planted for her in the most magnificent style, at the expense of the royal treasury; she pretended to be weary of it, wishing to give the king an opportunity to avoid publicity in his amorous rendezvous. Soon several splendid mansions were erected in the near-by enclosure called the Parc-aux-Cerfs. They were for the reception of young girls awaiting the pleasure of their master. These were cared for during confinement, but their children were always taken from them, and placed in religious houses; they never again saw their mothers, who, on their side, never again saw the king. The number of unfortunates admitted to the Parc-aux-Cerfs was enormous; on their departure they were married to knaves or fools, to whom they brought a comfortable dot. Some among them received very considerate treatment. "The expenses of the Parc-aux-Cerfs," says Lacroix,<sup>b</sup> "were paid in ready money. It would be difficult to compute them; but there can be no exaggeration in saying that they cost the state over 100,000,000 francs [£4,000,000 or \$20,000,000]. Some statements, probably libellous, estimate them at one thousand million."

But it was not only his debaucheries which rendered Louis XV incapable of accomplishing his kingly duties; through the whole of his life ran the current of that indolent egotism which made him shrink from all intellectual effort, and upon which his soul floated from distraction to distraction. Madame Campan<sup>i</sup> pictures his intimate life, at a much later epoch it is true, but his habits do not seem to have changed during the interval: "The king," she says, "thought of nothing but the chase."

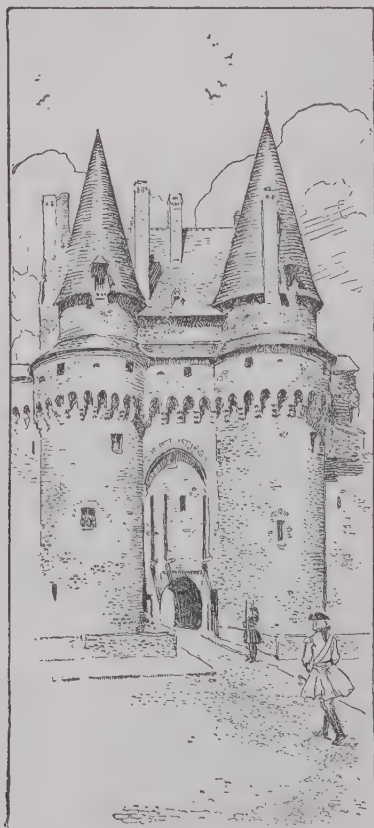
The dissoluteness thus paraded at court with an effrontery unequalled in the preceding century did not fail of its effect on the courtiers; and these followed readily in the footsteps of their master, contributing their quota to the alienation of the nation from the government. Not only did they steep themselves in sensuality; they gloried in it: and the fame of the libertine was that most desired. Vanity was the spur; they boasted of their conquests and their treacheries, striving to tarnish the reputation even of the most virtuous. To order several of his carriages to take up their stations in different localities at the same time, that he might be believed to have nocturnal rendezvous in quarters where he was not even known, was one of the favourite artifices of the duke de Richelieu. The number of families in Paris whose peace was troubled and whose fame was blasted by

the irregularities of the king and his courtiers was enormous; but the inevitable scandal earned for the court more enemies than direct offences. Those whom the people should have been able to honour strove only to render themselves dishonourable; and since the authorities made the protection of vice their chief business, society was rapidly approaching dissolution.<sup>j</sup>

The only star in this dark and dishonourable age, the much-lauded hero of the War of Succession, the dissolute son of the gallant king Augustus, Maurice of Saxony, stood no higher

in the scale of morality than Richelieu himself. He could read with some difficulty, but had never learned to write correctly. Like the knights of the Middle Ages and the distinguished persons of his own, Maurice regarded ignorance as the privilege of his rank, but he was possessed of sound common sense enough to decline the ridiculous honours which the academy offered to confer upon him. The marshal's ignorance injured no one; but the example which he set and his immoralities must, for many reasons, have produced the very worst effects, because the king lived in the same manner that he did, and because the laws and the usages of that time allowed both, to employ the unlimited power of the police intrusted to the government for the gratification of their meanest passions.

The king and Pompadour, as is well known, filled the state-prisons with persons whose only fault was the having written, repeated, read, or circulated verses or pasquinades directed against their persons or mode of life, and whoever failed in the slightest degree in any outward observance of respect towards any of those dissolute gentlemen by whom the king was surrounded, was cast into prison without hesitation and without trial. Even the flattering Marmontel, who had been lavish in his praises of Pompadour, did not



A GATEWAY OF A FRENCH CHATEAU.

escape this fate, having repeated in society some verses which were written against the duke d'Aumale, and refusing to betray their author. Marmontel, in his memoirs, gives such a full and detailed account of the circumstances, that the melancholy condition of the morals of the higher classes and of the government may be clearly deduced from his writings alone. Count Maurepas, an old fop, who was afterwards unfortunately appointed mentor to Louis XVI, was at that time minister of marine and conducted the business of his department with ability; he was dismissed from court, sent to his estates, and an incapable minister appointed in his stead, because he was suspected of having been the author of some verses which were found under Pompadour's plate.



[1748-1750 A.D.]

Marshal Saxe, who possessed unlimited power, adopted the most arbitrary measures to gratify his resentments against those favourites who proved faithless to him, whose number was far from small, and against those who supplanted him in the favour of the mistresses who wished or endeavoured to escape from his importunities. In the Low Countries the marshal ventured to practise extortions, which exceeded all bounds and excited the indignation of everyone. This went so far that Noailles had great difficulty in restraining him from fitting up privateers at his own cost, to be employed against Holland, and from turning a regular pirate, when war had not even been declared against the Dutch. Loaded with presents, and enriched in every way, he was nevertheless continually in difficulties for want of money, and what he so cruelly and scandalously extorted from those who fell into his power, he most lavishly spent in the gratification of the lowest and most degrading passions. When we examine more closely the social and inward life of many of the English aristocracy of what was called the fashionable world, or the lives of Marshal de Saxe, Richelieu, and Louis XV, we can well comprehend the cruelties and enormities of the Revolution, of which the masses were the mere instruments, while the real originators were adepts in that distinguished wisdom which Lord Byron preached.

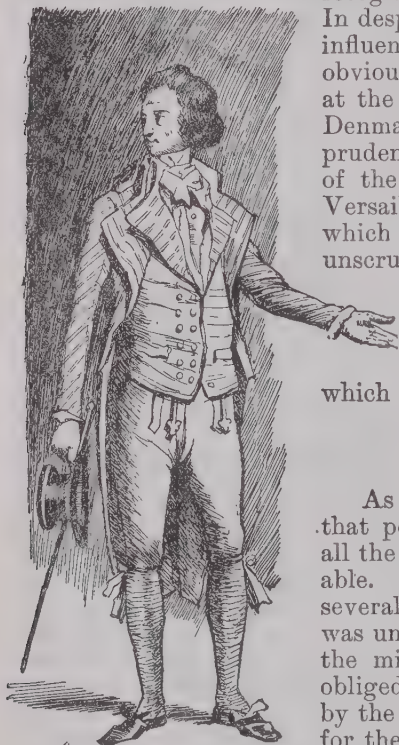
The whole public was in a state of ecstasy, and thought it an admirable device when the actress De Metz, in the character of the goddess of victory, placed a crown of laurels on the head of the victorious Saxe, in his box in the theatre, upon his return to Paris from his successful and glorious campaign. All was mere empty appearance; life was a comedy for the nobles and a tragedy for the people. The public voice applauded the erection of a Parisian stage in the camp, and considered the idea of causing balls, dancing, operas, and plays to be mixed up and to alternate with bloody scenes of strife, as incomparable and delightful; whilst the degraded flatterers of the press conducted the king and the dauphin around the battle-field, strewed with the bodies of the slain, in affecting conversation. French historians are not ashamed even at the present day to record and boast of a contemptible witticism of Marshal Saxe, which one could scarcely pardon in a common mountebank. An actress named Favart, who was especially favoured by the marshal, when she came forward to announce the subject of the next representation on the evening before the battle of Rocoux, was obliged to use the following disgraceful language, which was then regarded and is yet recorded as a piece of admirable wit: "To-morrow there will be no representation on account of the battle, but on the day after to-morrow we shall have the honour to represent," etc.

No actress who attempted to escape him was safe from immediate and arbitrary arrest. A most notorious and detestable example of his conduct in this respect occurred very shortly before his death, when his health was ruined by his excesses, and he was confined to bed dangerously ill in his castle of Chambord.

The old marshal De Noailles saw, indeed, that everything was going wrong and did not hesitate to express his opinion, for which he was removed from office and power; but he was also restored to his former station only by the influence of Châteauroux. He was more of a courtier than a statesman, countenanced every description of abuse, demanded offices of profit and honour for his relatives to the third and fourth degree, and continued to engage in incessant intrigues, whilst in his letters to the king he was constantly playing the mentor and complaining of cabals. The king himself was distrustful of his ministers, and listened with much greater attention

and eagerness to those family anecdotes and scandals which were daily reported to him by his lieutenant of police, and which were the fruits of letters secretly opened, than to the most important matters of business. Louis listened to the advice sometimes of one and sometimes of another of his courtiers, kept secret diplomatic agents in every place, whose business it often was to foil and counteract the purposes of those who were publicly recognised as the ambassadors of his government.

In despite, however, of the police and prisons, the influence of public opinion became every day more obvious and important. The most intelligent and at the same time the most absolute monarchs of Denmark and Prussia, and Catherine of Russia, prudently made terms with the French organs of the prevailing opinions, whilst the court of Versailles alone despised them. The contempt in which public opinion was held was shown in the unscrupulous and cruel treatment of the unfortunate Charles Edward for the sake of pleasing the English. By their severity the government awakened a degree of general sympathy for him and his cause which he by no means deserved.



l.c.  
CITIZEN'S COSTUME, END OF THE  
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

#### FINANCIAL DISTRESSES

As early as October, 1747, the destitution of that portion of the people who at that time bore all the burthens of the state had become insupportable. The farmers of the public taxes had paid several years in advance; every private person who was unwilling to send his gold or silver plate to the mint, or wished to lay up hard cash, was obliged to have his plate or precious metals stamped by the proper authorities, and to pay a heavy tax for the privilege. Such a tax as this, as well as the impost which was laid upon jewels, could at least affect the rich only; but taxes and duties were speedily laid upon all the necessities of life.

All sorts of goods and provisions which were brought into Paris were in future to pay a sixth part more than they had previously done (four sous a pound), and the duke of Orleans, by his earnest representations of the evil consequences, had great difficulty in persuading them to except bread and flour from this increased taxation.

All these methods of raising money however proved insufficient; the court was in want of supplies; their diplomatic efforts were checked and limited, whilst the war continued, and trade was completely paralysed; recourse was then had to the most disgraceful means: 1,200,000 livres were raised by the sale of annuities; next, to a lottery, in order to bring 30,000,000 livres<sup>1</sup> into the treasury; and the Company of the Indies, which at that time farmed the royal monopoly of tobacco, was obliged to advance 10,000,000 livres. When the expenditure of the court, and the payments

[<sup>1</sup> It should be remembered that the livre of that time was about the same as the franc of the present day though its purchasing value was higher.]

[1745-1748 A.D.]

which were made to Swedish nobles and men in power and to German princes, or the vast expenditure of their various embassies, are compared with the small sums which could be borrowed or extorted by such means, it will readily be seen, that Noailles was right when he conjured the king in 1745 not to suffer himself to be deceived by the appearance of prosperity and abundance among certain classes of the people, but to be persuaded that the misery of the mass of the nation was beyond expression.

The only persons in power who assumed the appearance of advocating the cause of the people, was the parliament; but this body, in the mode and spirit of their representations in opposition to the royal decrees of 1748, showed very clearly what sort of protection the people were to expect from an assembly of opulent lawyers and nobles.

In order to bring money into the treasury, and to extricate himself from the perplexities with which he was surrounded without injuring the privileged classes, it occurred to the minister of finance in March, 1748, to lay a tax upon certain kinds of real estates, and to deduct a percentage from all chattels which were transferred as presents, or bequeathed by collateral relations or strangers in blood; in addition to this, he endeavoured to increase the duty upon bills of exchange and articles of merchandise, and to lay a new tax upon powder, wax, silk, and paper. The parliament protested very vigorously against these threatened impositions, and took the part of those upon whom it was intended they should be laid; but at the same time they protested no less vehemently against another royal decree, which was intended to protect the interests of the frugal and industrious citizens against the extravagant nobility, who were overwhelmed with debts, and who conducted themselves with insolence, relying upon the inalienability of their estates. The government published a decree, that if a man possessed of real estates contracted and failed to pay his debts, his estates should be sold, and be transferred with all the rights and privileges thereto belonging to the purchaser. The parliament complained much more vehemently against this meditated change than against the imposition of the new taxes, which, notwithstanding all their complaints, were actually laid upon the people. Extravagance however increased rather than diminished; immense sums were lavished upon foreign courtiers and princes, as we shall show in the history of the Seven Years' War. Accounts of the expenditure of the court, and of the sums which were squandered by Belle-Isle, are to be found in all the numerous memoirs of that period; in this place we shall merely subjoin some examples of the behaviour of the generals and men in power selected from papers in the state archives.

It clearly appears from the autograph correspondence carried on between the two ministers of foreign affairs, D'Argenson and his successor Puyseux and Richelieu, that the last-mentioned was rewarded with the dignity of a marshal in return for the grossest deceptions. The Spaniards did nothing for Genoa, the French paid immense sums; but the shameless favourite of the king, without any scruple or self-reproach, used the money for his own personal ends. The affairs of the army were entirely neglected, and disorder prevailed: Humada, the commander of the Spanish troops in Genoa, would not submit to serve under Richelieu, and did not understand a word of French; the French officers conducted themselves as they had previously done in Bavaria under Broglie; they left the army in crowds during the winter and betook themselves to Paris, without any permission from the commander-in-chief. Richelieu, under the then existing constitution, found it impossible to prevent this practice; but again, the minister, with good



reason, reproaches him with a lavish expenditure of the public money, which had proceeded to an extent no longer tolerable. The minister writes, that, in such a climate as that of Genoa, such immense sums were expended for fire-wood, that a *maréchal-de-camp* received 16 livres for that article alone, and all the other officers in proportion. It may be proved indeed from the marshal's own letters, that he made the most shameful use of the large subsidies which were intrusted to his control; and from the minister's correspondence with the marshal, a correct idea may be formed of the extent to which the court and ministry at that time were in the power of the nobles, favourites, and officials of the king, and of the manner in which they were obliged to fawn and cringe, if they wished to retain their servile appointments.

The minister of foreign affairs excuses his own interference, and remarks on these points, by humbly pleading that the minister of finance (*contrôleur-général*) made heavy complaints of the immense amount of the extraordinary and secret expenditure of the army in Genoa, and in order not to lose the favour of this most gracious favourite, he is contemptible enough in an official letter to appeal to the king's mistress. The same minister afterwards threatens a M. Farconet with perpetual imprisonment, for attempting, by means of Richelieu, to negotiate a marriage between the king's sister and the king of Sardinia, and denounces him for daring to interfere with affairs that belonged to his ministerial department alone. To judge from his letters, Puyseux seems to rejoice at the embarrassments of his colleague the minister of finance, but admits indeed that he had already sent 6,000,000 livres, and afterwards three bills for 632,500 livres to Genoa, and that notwithstanding all this, the treasury then was completely exhausted.

In order to form some opinion not only of the indifference but of the contempt with which public opinion was at that time treated by the court, it is necessary only to recall to the minds of our readers, the incredible expense of the king and his court. At the very time in which the precious metals were taken from the people at large by force, and the hoarded farthings of the citizens were extorted by the imposition of a stamp-duty, the expenditure of the royal silver chambers and of *Menus plaisirs*, under the administration of a Richelieu, D'Aumont, and Gesvres, amounted yearly to many millions. This will be most clearly shown by the documents referred to in one of the papers contained in a bundle in Carton K. 150, of the "Archives du Royaume." It is one upon the *États de la dépense d'argenterie et menus plaisirs* of the years 1745-1748. It is there stated, that under Richelieu, in the year 1745, it amounted to the enormous sum of 2,842,097 livres! the *campagne du roi* inclusive. In the year 1746, under the duke d'Aumont, it reached 1,992,801; but it is added, "It was *moins forte* than in 1745, on account of the dauphin's marriage." Then in 1747, under the duke de Gesvres, 2,809,523; and finally, in the year 1748, it only amounted to 1,327,099.<sup>1</sup>

#### RELIGIOUS DISPUTES

And yet for all her unspeakable evils, the Pompadour, unlike most royal mistresses, put something also in the other scale, and the Rev. James White could say of her at this time, "The principal personage who rose in defence of the national liberty and the purity of society was Madame de Pompadour." This was in connection with the quarrels of the Jesuits.<sup>a</sup>

La Pompadour, in her connection with the philosophers, naturally adopted their prominent ideas. These, as we have seen, were directed against the

[1748-1755 A.D.]

church. Accordingly, in 1749 appeared the edict of *mainmorte*, forbidding any new conventual establishments without royal permission; also incapacitating them from inheriting or acquiring any increase of territory. This law, taken by the learned from the English statute-book, was indeed called for at a time that the church possessed more than one-third of the entire landed property of the kingdom. The royal tenth, called afterwards a twentieth, had begun to be levied during the war, and was now continued upon the privileged classes. The clergy made a stubborn resistance to the tax.

Unfortunately, at this critical period, a prelate, of tenacious character and narrow intellect, was promoted to the important post of archbishop of Paris. In Christophe de Beaumont the Jesuits immediately found a stay and a firm support; and under the shadow of his power, and the instrumentality of his arm, they soon began a crusade against conscience. It was against the latent and almost extinct sect of Jansenism that Christophe de Beaumont directed his blows. He invented billets of confessions, which each person was obliged to take out from an orthodox ecclesiastic, swearing, at the same time, belief and submission to the bull *Unigenitus*. The archbishop ordered that no person unprovided with one of those billets of confession should receive the sacraments or consolations of religion, or should be entitled to Christian burial. The consequence was, that some of the most pious inhabitants of the capital died without communicating, and were refused burial. Amongst them was the duke of Orleans, the devout son of the regent. His rank procured him burial, and previous absolution; but the almoner who was thus guilty of disobedience was excommunicated.

These facts, that one might imagine to be taken from an ironical tale of Swift, are actual events of the eighteenth century. The parliament intervened in behalf of common sense and justice, and decreed that the bull *Unigenitus* was no article of faith. The archbishop was obstinate. The priests resisted; and the altar, with the Lord's Supper, awaiting communicants, was become universally the scene of scandal, of quarrel, of anathema, opposition, and abuse. These scenes were repeated through the whole kingdom; the dead remaining unburied, the mysteries of religion profaned; whilst the Jesuits, in addition to these acts of violence, recurred also to the weapons of the impious, and represented the Jansenists in farces and in caricatures.<sup>1</sup>

At length the quarrel between the ecclesiastical and judicial powers reached a point at which one or other must succumb. The trick of a minister, D'Argenson, turned the court against the parliaments. A sick nun was refused the sacraments by a curate. The parliament condemned the latter. The archbishop interfered, and was condemned too. D'Argenson then came, and carried off the Jansenist nun, who was still alive, by a *lettre*

[<sup>1</sup> The Jansenists and Jesuits contended with one another for life and death; the pope wielded his cold thunderbolts in favour of the Jesuits; and the half-theological, half-judicial parliaments on the other hand issued decrees in favour of the Jansenist scheme of personal arrest (*prise de corps*) against all those who obeyed the commands of the pope. The Jansenists worked miracles as evidences of the favour of their merciless Byzantine-Aristotelian god, in which the parliament believed; the Jesuits and the court theologians on the other hand persecuted the miracle-mongers, and the court forbade all miracles which did not proceed from the true church. The parliament on its part defended itself, and judicially persecuted such of the bishops and clergy as refused the last sacraments even upon their death-beds to the narrow-minded devotees of the Romish church, if they did not previously express their approbation of the merciless excommunication of the pope, and when dying pronounce a condemnation and curse upon certain extraordinary doctrines in which they had believed during the whole of their lives. The whole tumult had its origin in a dispute respecting the doctrine of grace, as defined by the dogmatists; and both parties admitted that no one, not even the Apostles themselves, knew, or could know, what properly speaking was the actual state of the case! — SCHLOSSER.]

*de cachet*. The parliament was incensed at this, turned its resentment from the clergy to the ministry, and made remonstrances against illegal imprisonment and *lettres de cachet*. This threw the royal power instantly into the scale of the Jesuits.

The chiefs of the parliament were taken and sent to different prisons. This, however, was not decided without a struggle in the ministry. Machault,



A COURT COSTUME, MIDDLE OF THE  
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

the finance-minister, was for the parliament, as D'Argenson was for the clergy. The opinions of the latter prevailed, but he was unable to complete his plan. This was, to substitute a new court for that consisting of the imprisoned members; but no suitor nor advocate would plead. The remaining courts would not admit of such a menacing usurpation. The *châtelet*, or police-court, intrusted with the execution of condemnation, refused to act, or even to execute a criminal. An accommodation became indispensable. The imprisoned members were allowed to return; silence was imposed upon the clergy as to these disputed matters of faith; and the only point which they gained was the transferring of their enemy, Machault, from the department of finance, in which they had most dread of him, to that of marine affairs. This kind of treaty took place in 1754, on the occasion of the dauphiness being confined of her second son. This child was afterwards Louis XVI.

Such were the public events that filled up the interval of peace betwixt 1748 and 1755. Feats still more important than these took place in the publication of the first volumes of the *Encyclopædia* and of the *Esprit des Lois*. The intellect of the middle classes began to flourish, and to cover, like the ivy, with its verdant honours, the walls and buttresses of the social edifice, whilst the high towers and battlements were falling to decay.<sup>c</sup>

#### THE "ENCYCLOPÆDIA" AS AN ENGINE OF OPINION

The great work of the *Encyclopædia* was called forth by outside circumstances. An Englishman, Mills, and a German, Sellius, had advertised a French translation of an English cyclopædia, and they commissioned the bookseller Le Breton to undertake the legal formalities. But the latter took out the rights in his own name. This gave rise to great dissent. Mills returned to England, Sellius died. The bookseller did not wish to lose his profits. He appealed to Diderot, who was then a young, gifted, penniless writer just coming forward and seeking employment. The new rights dated from the 21st of January, 1746. Le Breton received half of the proceeds, and the other half was divided between the booksellers David the Elder, Briasson, and Durand.

Diderot comprehended the plan in its widest sense. He not only possessed an active and many sided brain but also had great forethought. He not only wished to give a summary of what man could do, think, and know,



[1746-1766 A.D.]

but also desired to make all acquainted with the inner unity, the natural origin of the aims worthy of being attained in regard to it. He joined D'Alembert, who was already a celebrated mathematician, but had kept an eye open for all philosophical and poetic appearances and developments. A number of well-known and guarded professional men of equal disposition were drawn into it. Voltaire was one of the most active and spurring workers, although it was not found advisable to publish his name. Thus the *Encyclopædia* became an effectual party organ. With rare comprehension the human sciences, arts, and skill were collected and made generally useful. But the *Encyclopædia* was no peaceful treasure-house in which the learned men and thinkers could lay down and observe all the riches they had sown; it was a giant engine of war and a subtle weapon.

In the years 1751 and 1752 the first two volumes appeared. Immediately a terrible storm arose. The first opposition was raised by the Sorbonne. The archbishop of Paris wrote a pastoral letter, which as Barbier<sup>m</sup> said, only resulted in the precious and rare book, which up till now had only been known to a few literary and scientific men, being read by all tradesmen and the like. On the 7th of February these two volumes were requisitioned; nevertheless the continuance was not forbidden. For a time D'Alembert thought of having the work published in Berlin; Voltaire advised against this "while more bayonets than books were to be seen there, and its Athens was only to be found in the private room of the king."

After an interruption of almost two years the third volume appeared in October, 1753. Malesherbes, the superintendent of the Press, had returned the confiscated papers to Diderot. The government now at variance with the clergy assisted the undertaking. From 1754 to 1756, the fourth, fifth, and sixth volumes appeared "with the approbation and privilege of the king." The editors had become more prudent, and for a time they had no trouble. D'Alembert<sup>n</sup> wrote to Voltaire: "Time will distinguish what we have thought from what we have said." In the same year, the seventh volume appeared. D'Alembert had triumphantly written to Voltaire that this volume would exceed all others in sharpness; and this was indeed the case. Unfortunately just at this time the famous book *De l'Esprit* of Helvetius was published and stirred up the mind of the people. The attacks increased in number and in strength. Rousseau, who up till now had belonged to both parties, felt himself injured by the article on "Geneva," and wrote his powerful controversy on D'Alembert. The Jesuits stormed. A committee of investigation was appointed. On the intercession of Malesherbes the judgment was mild. On the 8th of March, 1759, there appeared an *Arrêt du Conseil d'État*, by which the rights granted in 1746 were withdrawn and the sale of the volumes which had appeared and were appearing forbidden; "on consideration that the benefits derived by art and science were in no proportion to the damage done to religion and morals."

D'Alembert became tired and withdrew. This misfortune made Diderot all the more energetic and obstinate. He worked uninterruptedly with untold pains and dangers. In 1766 the last ten volumes appeared. The cry of the clergy repeated itself, and the publishers were thrown into the Bastille for eight days; but no real impediment was put in the way of the sale. So as to gain the king's favour, Choiseul and Malesherbes had prepared a little manœuvre at court. It was arranged that at table the king should ask how powder was made, and Madame de Pompadour about the best pomade. The *Encyclopædia* was fetched, and information concerning

these read out of it. The king was delighted. The *Encyclopædia* was not allowed but it was tolerated.

Seldom has such a comprehensive work found such a general circulation. Thirty thousand copies constituted the first edition. In 1774 four foreign translations existed. The printing cost 1,158,950 francs, and the clear profits for the booksellers amounted to no less than 2,630,393 francs. For his immense work and for the very great personal danger which he ran Diderot only received 2,500 francs for each volume and besides that 20,000 francs once for all.

If we consider the fundamental organisation of this enterprise in comparison with Bayle's great dictionary, it is one of the most striking proofs of how far more bold and courageous the mind had become. Where anxious doubt existed there is now firm conviction. The time for mediation and appeasement is past. In individual concerns there are many concessions and artful reserves, in others on the contrary the attack and advancement are all the more open and relentless. Diderot in his article concerning the *Encyclopædia* discovers the secret of his tactics, with the unmistakable intention of giving the reader the hints necessary for a right understanding. He says: "Every time that national prejudice deserves respect, it must be respectfully exposed in its particular article and with all its retinue of probability and seduction, but the unstable edifice must be overthrown and the vain heap of dust be dissipated, by referring to the articles where solid principles form the basis to opposed truths. This manner of undeceiving men, unfailingly and without any grievous consequences, secretly and silently operates on all minds. It is the art of deriving the strongest results tacitly. If these references in confirmation or refutation are foreseen and skilfully prepared they will make an encyclopædia of a nature to change the popular mode of thinking."

In places where the authorities can the most surely expect insidious positions, there must be clever circumspection, in others more hidden and remote there must be a fight with open visor. For example in "Christianism" there is the doctrine of Inspiration, in "Apparition" refutation of the same; in "Soul and Liberty" the doctrine of the incorporeality and arbitrariness of the soul, in "Naitre" various representations of the doctrine of metabolic assimilation and the thereby compulsory corporeality and positiveness of nature.

Contemporaries were right who considered the *Encyclopædia* the most prominent work of the age. A firm standard had been raised, the signal was given. Gradually but surely, imperceptibly but effectively, the mode of thinking of the new school entered into the dispositions and convictions of men. It was not necessary to agree with all the affirmations of the *Encyclopædia*, and yet its negations might be fully shared; it was not necessary to be its absolute friend and partisan, but at the same time an enemy might be pursued in common. And in this sense, when Cabanis<sup>9</sup> called the encyclopædists by the somewhat exaggerated expression: "the holy confederation against fanaticism and tyranny," for that age it was an actual historical truth.<sup>0</sup>

#### THE APPROACH OF WAR (1755 A.D.)

War came now to distract attention from the internal state. The French had betrayed an impatience of what they esteemed the pusillanimity of their government. The peace of Aix-la-Chapelle was universally stigmatised as inglorious, because it did not add new territories to France. Those in power,

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however, had ample materials for judging how dearly Louis XIV had paid for his conquests, and they were prepared to make great sacrifices to preserve peace. In England the court party entertained the same peaceful sentiments, so wise in their principle. But the opposition, headed by Pitt, and supported by popular clamour, demanded the glories of triumphs and trophies. The great and ignominious sacrifice which France had made to English friendship, the arresting and expelling the pretender Charles Stuart from her dominions, was forgotten. The instances of national collision now taking place abroad were exaggerated with premeditated hostility. Each country accuses its antagonist as the aggressor.

In the East Indies, the rivalry of France and England dated from the preceding war. Dupleix, governor of Pondicherry, an ambitious, turbulent, ostentatious man, never ceased to intrigue with the native powers, and with the court of the Mogul, to extend his country's territories and influence. The English naturally intrigued and armed against him; and war was carried on betwixt him and Clive, whilst the respective nations remained at peace at home. In this instance the French government displayed a spirit of fairness and even backwardness. They disowned and recalled Dupleix, to the indignation of their countrymen, and even of their historians who flatter themselves that, despite their naval inferiority, they might yet have disputed the empire of the East.

In North America arose a more serious cause of quarrel. The French possessed Canada and Louisiana, one commanding the mouth of the St. Lawrence, the other that of the Mississippi. The intervening territory was occupied by the English colonists. The French aimed at possessing themselves of the whole course of those rivers and of the Ohio, which almost joins them; thus enclosing British America within a long frontier line of posts, and, consequently, excluding her from the rest of the continent. Such pretensions were untenable from the nature of things, even if treaties favoured them, which they did not. To draw thus a narrow line across the whole extent of a continent, that line itself unoccupied except by stray forts, and these too, for the most part, in embryo, not in being; to draw this around a vast and peopled region, can only be compared in arrogance to the act of the Roman ambassador, marking around the foreign potentate a line in the sand, and daring him to step beyond its magic circle. The only surprise is, to see the French ministry, so forbearing in Europe, risking war upon such unsupportable claims in America. But the science of political geography was not well understood in these days.

The limits betwixt Canada and Nova Scotia, the latter having been ceded to England by the last treaty, were not accurately defined. The officers of each nation, participating little in the moderation of their governments, proceeded to extremities. A French captain was slain. Reprisals followed. Braddock attacked Fort Duquesne on the Ohio, but was defeated by the French and the Indians, whose alliance they had hired. England, on her side, declared war by capturing all the merchant vessels of her rival.<sup>c</sup>

England did this as she once attacked Spain without any warning or formal declaration of intent. As Duclos<sup>p</sup> said: "An English squadron without declaration of war, without the mention of the least discontent, attacked and took two of our vessels, the *Alade* and the *Lyys* in June, 1755. This piracy lasted six months before we made reprisals. The English had captured ten thousand sailors before we dreamed of resistance." The conduct of France has some resemblance to that of the United States prior to the War of 1812 with England.<sup>a</sup>



## OPENING OF THE SEVEN YEARS' WAR (1755 A.D.)

When war was tardily declared, the result was even worse humiliation. In the words of Paul Gaultier: "Victory has never been invariably faithful to any people; but even in the hours of defeat, honour can be saved. It has often been seen in the wars France endured or provoked how fate betrayed her arms, but one has not previously seen a shameful reverse in which the vanquished failed to save, in default of glory, at least the esteem of the victors and the pity of posterity. It is not so with what follows, one of the



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most dolorous epochs of history. . . How degenerate France seemed! She had soldiers, indeed, brave and daring under fire and fatigue, but no one to command them. The list of generals put at their head would seem to have been arranged by the enemies themselves, so well it served their interests to face such adversaries. The Contades, the Clermonts, the Soubises, generals sustained only by royal favour, were so ridiculous that the French, following the precept which Figaro gave later, 'made haste to laugh to keep from weeping.' They sang.

"Hostilities so badly begun, operations so ill conducted, could have only the most detestable results: grandeur for Prussia and England, ruin for France. Some brave men however did their whole duty and ought not to be enveloped in the condemnation: Montcalm, Bougainville, Vaudreuil, Dieskau and De Lévis defended Canada for four years with 8,500 regulars and 18,000 colonials against 22,000 English and 58,000 militia supported by a formidable fleet. Lally-Tollendal, with 700 men, ruined Pondicherry, resisted the attacks of 20,000 English soldiers and fourteen vessels. There were some glorious pages of history there, but the theatre of these exploits was far away; the French government forgot Montcalm

and his companions, and if it remembered Lally it was only to condemn him to death for treason. Twelve years later, it is true, his memory was rehabilitated; this will not be true of the memory of those who judged him."

To the spectator of the first period of the war none of these disasters was visible. To them France was continuing her path of glory, triumphing on land and sea and in the colonies oversea.<sup>a</sup>

When the moment at length arrived for the commencement of a struggle, for many months delayed by so many acts of cowardice and folly, there was an immense disparity of naval force. The royal French navy, completely ruined in 1748, had been restored, but in proportion very insufficient in comparison with the formidable number of vessels massed in the harbours of England. The English had one hundred ships-of-the-line, of from 50 to 120

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guns, of which sixteen were three-deckers with 90 to 120 guns, and seventy-four were frigates of from 32 to 46 guns; their building yards and arsenals were in the best condition; those of the French were destitute of wood for building, of rigging, masts, and even of artillery! The French had but sixty ships-of-the-line and thirty-one frigates. Of the sixty ships three were unfit for service; eight were being overhauled; four stood unfinished on the slips; of the forty-five others the greater part needed to be repaired before putting out to sea.

Even this figure had only been reached because Machault, having been transferred to the navy department in 1754, had caused fifteen vessels to be rapidly constructed or finished in one year. Machault, so criminally complacent or so ill informed in Indian affairs, was roused in the time of need and showed much decision and vigour: a great number of new ships were set on the slips; extraordinary efforts were made to obtain supplies; rewards were offered to privateers; and considerable armaments at Brest and Le Havre and numerous troops collected in the French channel-ports put the English in dread of a descent either on their coasts or on Jersey or Guernsey. A general panic bore witness to the fact that England, so warlike on the ocean, had little of this quality on her own soil; as at the time of the invasion of Charles Edward, the English people were only reassured by the summons of foreign mercenaries, Hanoverians and Hessians: the preceding year George II had concluded a treaty promising to subsidise the landgraf of Hesse-Cassel who had engaged to lend him as many as twelve thousand soldiers if required; the princes of Hesse, descendants of heroes, had become mere merchants of human flesh.

These threats of a descent on England deceived the enemy concerning the true plans of the French government, advised, it is said, by the old duke of Noailles. At the very beginning of the year small squadrons had set sail for the Lesser Antilles, Santo Domingo, and Canada. On the 10th of April twelve other vessels, commanded by La Gallissonière, set out for Toulon, escorting 150 transports freighted with some twelve thousand men under the orders of Marshal Richelieu. On the 17th the expedition descended on the island of Minorca.

### *The French take Minorca*

The point of attack had been well chosen; no blow could be more damaging to England than the loss of this post whence she threatened Toulon and dominated the western basin of the Mediterranean. As an offensive position Port Mahon was more formidable than Gibraltar itself. The choice of the naval leader was not less praiseworthy; La Gallissonière was the best of French sailors. The name of the general was not so welcome to the public. The king's pander, the model corrupter, growing more depraved with increasing years, little faith was placed in his political and military talents. The event did not however justify the apprehensions which his name had excited.

The French seized Ciudadela on the 18th of April and then directed their march to Fort Mahon, the capital of the island. The English evacuated Mahon and concentrated in the fort of St. Philip, a huge citadel which commands the entrance of the arm of the sea which forms the harbour of Mahon. The English government had allowed itself to be surprised: an arrogant confidence in 1755 and, since the threats of descent, an exaggerated fear had prevented it from sending a squadron to winter in the Mediterranean and from reinforcing the garrison of Minorca: if the citadel was strong and well provisioned the garrison was not numerous; there were but

twenty-five hundred men to defend this vast extent of fortifications. When on the 19th of May, a relieving squadron did at last arrive it was already more than eight days since the French cannon had made breaches in the outworks.

The issue of the siege was to depend on the shock of the two squadrons. The English fleet commanded by Admiral Byng was slightly superior to the French; it consisted of thirteen ships against twelve. It attacked on the 20th of May, having the wind behind it. The van of the French which came first into action was roughly handled; but the enemy did not attempt to pursue their advantage; the object was to cut off and overwhelm the rearguard that they might approach the shore by Fort St. Philip. La Gallissonnière perceived his adversary's intention and kept his ships in such close order that it was impossible for the English to break through the line. The cannonade was not to their advantage. In firing the French marine artillery had the same superiority over theirs that their infantry had over the French. Their manœuvres were frustrated and three of their vessels had sprung a leak so that they were in danger of sinking. Admiral Byng, judging that a prolonged battle might lead to the destruction of his fleet, effected his retreat. La Gallissonnière, having the wind against him and faithful to his instructions which charged him to subordinate everything to the success of the siege, would not leave the neighbourhood of Port Mahon and allowed the enemy to regain Gibraltar.

To have victoriously sustained the shock of the English on their own element was in itself a considerable success. But the garrison of Fort St. Philip did not lose heart. The labours of the siege were heavy and Richelieu had at first directed them unskilfully, but he made great efforts to win the confidence and keep up the spirit of his soldiers. When signs of disorder showed themselves in the camp and the men began to indulge somewhat too freely in Spanish wines, Richelieu, instead of punishing them, issued an order of the day to the effect that "such as became intoxicated would not have the honour of working in the trenches." The idea was a happy one and there was a general cessation of drinking.

Richelieu ventured on a general assault. It was a rash proceeding and he must have had great confidence in the French soldiers, the first in the world in this kind of fighting. Six or seven weeks of bombardment had scarcely any effect on the masses of rock which served the place as outworks; the ditches had not been filled up; the walls still stood erect. On the night of the 27th-28th of June, whilst a large detachment in boats are endeavouring to force entrance to the harbour, four columns fling themselves into the dry moat; cannon and musketry sweep the front ranks; mines blow up the bottom of the moat with those who are crossing it; dead and wounded are succeeded by crowds of others ready to avenge them; the ladders are too short by several feet; officers and men climb on one another's shoulders, plant bayonets in the interstices of the stones and reach the top of the rampart. At break of day the English are amazed to behold the besiegers masters of three of the forts; though the main defences are intact, the governor decides to capitulate that very day.

The French could scarcely believe in their conquest, when they saw themselves in the midst of all these formidable works which they could never have scaled in cold blood, by daylight and without an enemy. In Paris and throughout France there was a veritable delirium of joy. Richelieu owed to the valour of the French grenadiers a rehabilitation which was more brilliant than lasting. The true hero of the expedition, La Gallissonnière,



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did not enjoy the gratitude of his fellow citizens. Attacked by an incurable disease, his strength of will had supported him till the conclusion of the enterprise; on his return he succumbed and died on the way to Paris. His loss was not repaired.

The rage of the English was in proportion to the joy of France. They had fancied that they had but to go out to the prey, and they now beheld one of their most precious possessions snatched from them. The popular fury was frightful and demanded a victim. The terrified ministers surrendered Admiral Byng, guilty perhaps of not having done all that he might, but less guilty in his weakness than they in their negligence. A great suit was commenced against the unfortunate admiral.<sup>1</sup>

### *Other French Successes*

Both sides were anxiously waiting for news from Canada which might bring some compensation to the English. The French general, Montcalm, embarked on Lake Ontario and descended on Oswego which was the pivot of the operations of the English. The three forts of Oswego, defended by eighteen hundred men against three thousand, were reduced to capitulate at the end of four days, almost in sight of the two thousand soldiers who were advancing to their rescue (14th of August). The French destroyed the forts to the great satisfaction of the Iroquois, the original owners of the country. On the whole the issue of the campaign in America as in the Mediterranean had been as satisfactory to France as it was un hoped for. French diplomacy had obtained other successes in Europe which confirmed the military victories. Holland sided with the French. England punished the Dutch by arbitrary seizures of their vessels; then declared that all the ports of France were in a state of blockade and that all vessels despatched from those ports would be seized as lawful prize wherever they were encountered (August, 1756). The principle of the paper blockade was the reversal of all maritime rights, of all the rights of neutrals; it was a formal adoption of the code of piracy which had been so well carried out in practice. Such a system was of a nature to turn against England the wishes and perhaps the arms of every nation which possessed a navy.

France responded to the proclamation of the paper blockade by a new progress in the Mediterranean. The French set foot on Corsica the 1st of November, 1756, and thus with Toulon, Corsica, and Minorca, France found herself mistress of the whole western basin of the Mediterranean.



A FRENCH GALLANT, MIDDLE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

[<sup>1</sup> John Byng, who is not to be confused with his victorious father, Admiral George Byng, was found guilty of dereliction of duty, but not of cowardice, and strongly recommended by the court-martial to mercy. But the ministry, desirous of appeasing the popular rage, ignored the recommendation, and Byng, who conducted himself with great bravery throughout his ordeal, was shot March 14th, 1757.]

There was something miraculous in having thus been able to win the upper hand in a struggle for which she was so ill prepared and which had been so ill begun. The fight at Port Mahon and the whole campaign had shown what the French navy might become on two conditions: namely, that the chief financial resources of France should be devoted to it and that the bad spirit of the officers of noble rank should be repressed by severe examples. Brave and highly trained, but imbued with the most senseless and reprehensible prejudices, they disdained the important duty of protecting the mercantile marine, and there were certain among them who pushed to the verge of treason the ill will they cherished against the officers who were not obliged to prove their nobility. It was once more possible, by devoting France to that task alone, to retrieve the fortune which the French had allowed to escape them in India and to dispute the empire of the seas and of America. The contrary course was to be taken. We are now to witness an example of folly, of imbecile treason to self such as has scarcely a parallel in history.

### *France commits a Great Blunder*

The great interest of France was the maintenance of the peace of the continent, in order to have both arms free on the seas. The English government for its part appeared to seek nothing by its continental alliances except auxiliary troops and future protection for Hanover. It was with this view that it had just renewed its treaties with Russia and obtained the promise of a force of fifty-five thousand men if Hanover should be attacked, September 30th, 1755. All that was needed was to abstain from carrying the war into Germany; no one was in a position to attack France on the continent. Unfortunately, another power thought it to its advantage to relight the torch in Europe: this was Austria.

Maria Theresa, always obstinate, still meditated revenge against the king of Prussia. Since 1748 she had given ear to a bold and clever counsellor who was urging her to change the whole system of European relations. The count of Kaunitz, at this time still a young man, was what Marshal Richelieu imagined himself to be, a profound politician under the frivolous exterior of a man of fashion. As early as the time of the congress of Aix-la-Chapelle, Kaunitz had entered into a correspondence with Madame de Pompadour and had induced the empress to authorise him to insinuate to the French plenipotentiary that it would be easy to reconcile completely the houses of Bourbon and Austria, and that Austria would gladly cede Flanders and Brabant if France would help her to recover Silesia.

Maria Theresa renewed her overtures on divers occasions. When the news of the English aggression against the French navy was received, Stahrenberg, the Austrian ambassador to France, formally offered the Austrian alliance. A contrary offer was made at the same time by the Prussian ambassador Kniphausen. Frederick II proposed to France to unite with her against England and Austria. The count d'Argenson, minister of war, supported the propositions of the king of Prussia. Machault, minister of marine, protested against any offensive alliance on the continent.

In 1755 the pious, the chaste Maria Theresa wrote with her own hand to the mistress of Louis XV calling her "my cousin" and loading her with flatteries. Pompadour's head was completely turned and she devoted herself unreservedly to "her friend" the empress, who was thus magnificently compensating her for the king of Prussia's contempt.

[1755-1757 A.D.]

Madame de Pompadour had an easier task with the king than she had hoped. As regards Frederick, Louis had not merely the jealousy of a vain and petty mind for genius, but a bigot's hatred of the impious. The idea of a great Catholic alliance was peculiarly flattering to him. He was persuaded that a king who supported the cause of the church would not be damned for his private failings. The politics of Europe were debated between Bernis, Stahremberg, and Madame de Pompadour.

On the 16th of January, 1756, Prussia's agent in London signed with the ministers of George II as elector of Hanover a defensive treaty against "any foreign power which should send troops into Germany." Frederick did not attempt to make a mystery to France of this engagement and protested against any thought of hostility. Frederick spoke the truth, but Louis XV was as much offended by his defection as if the elector of Brandenburg had been the rebel vassal of the king of France. The court of Vienna seized the moment, and requested a defensive agreement against the king of Prussia. The king and Madame de Pompadour, in their warlike ardour, desired an offensive alliance.

The fatal Treaty of Versailles was signed on the 1st of May, 1756. It consisted of two separate conventions: (1) the empress-queen promised neutrality in the existing differences between France and England; (2) the empress-queen and the king of France guaranteed each other's possessions in Europe, and promised mutual aid to the extent of twenty-four thousand fighting men against any aggressor. The case of the present war with England was excepted by Austria: France laid claim to no exception, not even in the case of war between Austria and Turkey, a reservation which England had been very careful to make in her treaties with Austria. If this omission were not rectified it meant the complete annihilation of French policy and influence in the Levant. As to the immediate significance of the treaty, it amounted to this: that Austria only undertook not to aid England against France and that France engaged to lend Austria twenty-four thousand men to aid her against Prussia if necessary."

#### ATTEMPT TO ASSASSINATE THE KING

Early in January, 1757, as Louis XV was proceeding to enter his carriage from the palace of Versailles, a man advanced and stabbed him in the side with a penknife. "There is the man who struck me," said Louis: "take him, and do him no harm." The wound was slight; but as the knife might be poisoned, the whole court was in alarm, and Louis himself not least. The madman, who had made this foolish attempt, was named Damiens. The keeper of the seals seized him, conveyed him to a chamber of the palace, and there causing a pair of pincers to be heated, the chief officer of justice began by torturing the criminal. Damiens' crime seems to have proceeded from no deeper cause than that itch for action and notoriety, the extreme of which the sane find it so difficult to comprehend. With a glimmering instinct, he sought to give reason and respectability to his crime by associating it with the cause of the parliament and Jansenism. The incoherent ravings and confessions of this crazy being, extracted from him partly by torture, filled the court and kingdom with suspicions, and greatly increased the animosities on both sides. What was supposed to be the death-bed of the monarch was immediately surrounded by intrigue. Machault and D'Argenson, though mutual enemies, united in working on the king's conscience, with a view to exiling Madame de Pompadour. An order was sent her to



retire from court. But the wound was no sooner found to be insignificant than the mistress was recalled, and the two ministers were sacrificed to her. Both were exiled.

The Parisian populace, who had offered up prayers for the king's recovery at Metz, were not long since persuaded that children were stolen and slain to afford baths of blood, calculated to renovate the exhausted frame of the royal debauchee.

The accommodation brought about between parliament and clergy did not produce peace. The archbishop de Beaumont took the first opportunity to renew his refusal of the sacraments. The king sent the duke de Richelieu to him to remonstrate upon his absurd zeal. "My conscience," replied the bishop, "can allow of no accommodation." "Your conscience," retorted the witty duke, "is a dark lantern, that enlightens no one save yourself." The archbishop was exiled to his country seat by the king's order. The parliament condemned and fined the bishop of Orleans for refusing the sacraments, and even sold his furniture to pay the fine. The old scandal was renewed throughout the kingdom. The clergy were, however, obliged to find some less extreme mode of acting against the Jansenists. The parliament was inexorable as ever; and the Jesuits again succeeded in kindling a quarrel between king and parliament, during which the clergy were forgotten, or left in possession of their prerogatives. Louis, in order to subdue the magistracy, had recourse to a scheme which Francis I had before attempted without success. This was to attribute to the great council of state the same privilege and authority as that wielded by the parliament. The latter summoned the peers to join them in an assembly. The king forbade them to attend. In the midst of those differences arose the necessity of new taxes to support the war. The monarch came to register them in a bed of justice. The morrow brought remonstrances from the parliament against the clergy and against the taxes. Louis in anger imprisoned the refractory members. The struggle between the legists and the Jesuits seemed to be, which should first wear out the patience of the monarch. The legists vanquished, through the support of Madame de Pompadour, and of one of her counsellors, the count de Stainville, afterwards duke de Choiseul.

#### FRENCH VICTORIES ON LAND (1757 A.D.)

Notwithstanding her conquest of Minorca, France was aware that her colonies must fall before the maritime superiority of England: it therefore behoved her to occupy the continental dominions of the king of that country. An army was sent against Hanover, commanded by the marshal d'Estrees. The duke of Cumberland levied a German force to oppose it; but being far inferior in numbers, he retired step by step before the French, allowing them to cross the Rhine, and even the Weser, which river forms the natural defence of Hanover.<sup>c</sup>

The generals and officers, who at that time were selected exclusively from the nobility, continued to enjoy all the pleasures of Parisian life in the camp, and, as we learn from the memoirs of the liberal count Ségur,<sup>s</sup> engaged in intrigues and cabals. No attention was given to subordination except in the very moment of service, and sometimes even not then. This expedition to Germany was regarded by the whole of the distinguished youth and nobility of France as a mere party of pleasure. In D'Estrees' army there were forty-one lieutenant-generals, all marquises or dukes, and fifty-five brigadier-generals, all in like manner members of the high nobility, besides the duke of

[1757 A.D.]

Orleans and the prince of Condé attended by an immense field equipage, the dukes of Fronsac and Mazarin, and the count de la Marche, a prince of the royal blood, who accompanied the army as volunteers. When we think of the baggage alone by which such a number of great and licentious nobles must have been followed, and remember besides that Maillebois, who was at the head of D'Estrées' staff, did all in his power to prevent any decisive movement from being made till Richelieu, who was making every possible exertion, should succeed in his cabals and obtain D'Estrées' command, we cannot wonder that the army advanced at so slow a pace towards the Weser. The second army destined for Germany had been foolishly placed under the sole and unlimited command of Pompadour's favourite, the dissolute and gallant prince de Rohan Soubise, who was accompanied by officers and a staff which were in all respects worthy of their commander. Richelieu assembled the third army in Alsace.<sup>1</sup>

The king of Prussia, England's ally, had begun the campaign with the invasion of Bohemia, where he at first established himself by winning the celebrated and sanguinary battle of Prague over the Austrians under Prince Charles of Lorraine; but seeking to follow up his advantage, Frederick experienced in the following month a severe check, being defeated by Daun at Kolin. At the same time D'Estrées was pressing the duke of Cumberland, who at length made a stand, strongly posted, however, and entrenched between Hameln and Hastenbeck, near the Weser.

It was the lieutenants rather than the generals of both armies that were destined to distinguish themselves. Chevert<sup>1</sup> attacked the duke's left, drove it from its entrenchments and cannon, and pushed on; Maillebois, who was to support him, hesitated: Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick seized the opportunity, marched his division between Chevert and the French, and charged the latter, so as to put them in disorder. Chevert, however, had precisely the same success against the duke, who was the first to sound a retreat. D'Estrées was about to issue the same order to his troops, when he observed the enemy retiring, and became thus informed of Chevert's success.

The duke of Cumberland, after this affair, was obliged to abandon Hanover. The marshal de Richelieu arrived on the following day to supersede D'Estrées, and under him the French continued their pursuit of the Hanoverian army, plundering and levying merciless contributions on the unfortunate electorate. Richelieu was called "Father Maraud" by his soldiers. The duke sought to retire to Stade: he hoped, late in the season as it then was, to be able to hold out in that marshy country near the mouth of the Elbe, which is impracticable for military operation; but Richelieu's activity deprived him of this resource. The duke of Cumberland was obliged to sign the capitulation of Closter-Seven (September 8th, 1757), called from a convent of that name, which was the headquarters of the French.

This disgraceful capitulation,<sup>2</sup> which abandoned Hanover to the French, and left the Prussian dominions exposed to their inroad, would have reduced any prince except the great Frederick to despair. Deserted by his only ally, all Europe was in arms against him. Russia advanced from the east; Austria, Poland, Saxony, united their forces; whilst a German army, called that of the Circles, headed by Soubise and strengthened by 30,000 French,

[<sup>1</sup> François Chevert, born at Verdun in 1695, was a soldier at sixteen: his life was nothing but a series of heroic actions; but being of low birth, he could not be made a marshal.]

[<sup>2</sup> England later disavowed the treaty and put her soldiers in the field again.]

[1757 A.D.]

menaced him from the southwest. The enemy occupied his capital, Berlin, from which the royal family had escaped to Magdeburg.

In this extremity Frederick endeavoured to negotiate with Richelieu: he flattered the duke; upbraided him for counteracting the policy of his great uncle, the celebrated cardinal, by raising up the power of Austria;

and besought him, in covert terms, to oppose La Pompadour in her fatal obsequiousness to the empress. These attempts had the good effect of amusing Richelieu and paralyzing his activity. Frederick was not blind to the critical state of his affairs. Twenty thousand men were all that he could muster: with these Frederick resolved to fight the united army of French and Germans commanded by the prince of Soubise and the prince of Hildburghausen: they numbered upwards of fifty thousand men. Despite of this inferiority they dreaded Frederick, and retreated from Leipsic at his approach, crossing the Saale: he passed in after them, and, coming in sight, hesitated. The Germans and French, gathering audacity from the king's inaction, hovered round him, marching along his flank, and menacing an attack. It was the morning of the 5th of November: Frederick spent it in reconnoitring the enemy.



A FRENCH OFFICER, MIDDLE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

It was not till the afternoon that he gave his orders, gathering the greater part of his troops on one point, on his left, and concealing the movement by the inequality of the ground, as well as by his tents, which he left pitched. Ere Soubise or Hildburghausen could make a corresponding movement, the Prussians broke through all before them on the point of attack; and the rest of the confederate army, seeing its flank laid bare, turned and fled. So simple was the decisive battle of Rossbach<sup>1</sup> that retrieved the fortunes of Prussia.<sup>c</sup>

Kitchin<sup>t</sup> calls the battle of Rossbach "a most eccentric and humorous battle, lasting only an hour and a half. The grim and tattered Prussians were not a little amused at the extraordinary rubbish, the theatrical accessories, the mass of luxuries, the disreputable high life which fell into their hands." Gaulot<sup>q</sup> quotes a song with which France consoled itself on the disaster of the contemptible Soubise; it may be roughly Englished thus:

[<sup>1</sup> The field of Rossbach is near those of Jena, of Lützen, and of Leipsic. The banks of the Saale are fully immortalised by carnage.]



[1757-1758 A.D.]

“Soubise exclaimed, lantern in hand: ‘I must hunt round; where is my army? ’Twas here yesterday morning; has somebody captured it or am I astray? Ah, I’m all lost, I am distraught. But no, let us wait till broad daylight, till noon. And yet, heavens! what do I see? How my soul is rejoiced! Beautiful miracle; there it is! there it is! But ah, *ventrebien*! what can it be? I was wrong: it’s the enemy’s army!’” Everything was set to music in the France of the Old Régime.<sup>a</sup>

On the 5th of the following month, Frederick, who had marched into Silesia, defeated the Austrians at Lissa, and recovered his ancient superiority in despite of his numerous enemies. In the meantime the duke of Richelieu, having broken so far through the terms of capitulation at Closter-Seven as to seek to disarm the Hanoverian troops, which by that agreement were to remain quiet, but not to lose their arms, found those vanquished enemies start up afresh. Their new leader, Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, far surpassing the duke of Cumberland in military talent, was now able to hold Richelieu in check. The English ministry, roused by the spirit of the elder Pitt, made every effort to second her gallant ally: a body of English troops reinforced the Hanoverian army, and the next campaign seemed to promise revenge for the duke of Cumberland’s defeat.

In the beginning of the year 1758, Richelieu was superseded in his command by the Count of Clermont, who being at the same time abbot of St. Germain des Prés, was called the general of the Benedictines. Under him the French commenced their retreat from Hanover.

Prince Ferdinand precipitated this retrograde movement by anticipating their arrival on the Weser: he attacked and took Minden. In May, the French were already behind the Rhine, shamefully routed without even the honour of fighting, and leaving upwards of ten thousand prisoners in the hands of the enemy. Prince Ferdinand soon passed that river. The French general purposed to continue his retreat towards France, when the indignation and wounded pride of his officers obliged him to await the attack of the prince at Crefeld (or Crevelt) in the duchy of Cleves. There the count of St. Germain offered a gallant resistance to the enemy; it might have been a successful one, when the count de Clermont gave abrupt orders to retreat, and abandoned his lieutenant. The French left seven thousand dead on the field, and with them all hopes of retrieving the disasters of the campaign.

At this juncture the very diplomatist who had counselled and concluded the treaty with Maria Theresa — the cardinal de Bernis, a creature too of the mistress — thought fit to oppose his conviction to her obstinacy, and speak in opposition to the war. La Pompadour was positive. Bernis was disgraced,<sup>1</sup> and Choiseul became secretary of state in his stead. The new minister, though too sage not to perceive the folly of persisting in a war from whence so little was to be gained, paid, nevertheless, the price of his elevation by renewing the treaty with Austria, and making fresh preparations for carrying on the war.<sup>c</sup>

After his disgrace at Crefeld, Clermont, whom Schlosser<sup>1</sup> calls “effeminate, incapable, and sickly,” was replaced by the count de Contades, who was somewhat less disqualified.<sup>a</sup> Soubise was reinstated and reinforced, and the duke de Broglie’s army placed under his command. Contades no sooner joined the army on the lower Rhine than Soubise commenced his march on the 8th of July, 1758. Contades first watched the movements of the enemy for some

[<sup>1</sup> Frederick the Great said of the abbé Bernis, “His follies were his fortune; when he grew wise he fell.”]

time, then drove him continually but slowly further back: Soubise was opposed by the prince of Isenburg, who, however, with his six to seven thousand men, was by no means equal to the superior French force. Isenburg advanced to meet Broglie, who commanded Soubise's advance, and came to an engagement upon the heights of Sangerhausen. Broglie was victorious.

Contades compelled Prince Ferdinand to recross the Rhine, on which occasion the prince gained great renown by his masterly retreat. The prince was now reinforced by twelve thousand English troops which had been landed at Emden, whilst Contades increased his forces by eight thousand Saxons, who had escaped from their compulsory service in Prussia and were taken into French pay.

Soubise advanced anew. Count Oberg most imprudently and unwisely offered him battle near Landwehrhagen on the Lutterberge (December 30th, 1758). This engagement ended in the complete rout of the allies, who were thrown into confusion, and Oberg's division would have been wholly annihilated if Soubise had followed up his advantage; but he was too well pleased to have gained a victory<sup>1</sup> at all to make any further efforts, and was created a marshal, as well as Contades, but immediately retreated to Cassel and still further. Oberg indeed received his dismissal. Contades, it is true, took up his winter-quarters on the farther side of the Rhine; but Soubise paved a sure way for retreat to the French armies destined against Hanover and Hesse, by the treacherous occupation of Frankfort. The court was in the meantime at length convinced that Soubise was incapable of conducting any great operations, and Contades was appointed commander-in-chief of both the armies on the Rhine.

The campaign of 1758 proved as indecisive in other parts of Germany as on the Rhine and in Westphalia, and as fruitful in misery, devastation, and sorrow to the unfortunate inhabitants of the country.<sup>2</sup>

Whilst the king of Prussia, with unchanged courage and talent, but with most uncertain fortune, was making head against his enemies, the French army was mustered near Frankfort in the spring of 1759. Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick began the campaign by attacking it at Bergham, but was repulsed by the marshal de Broglie. The French now drove the prince of Brunswick before them, and reached once more the banks of the Weser. Minden was taken; and the inhabitants of Hanover began to look forward to falling again into the power of the French. Prince Ferdinand rallied his forces, however, and took post near Minden, putting an isolated column in advance to entice and deceive his enemies. Contades marched, on the 1st of August, 1759, to attack this body, placing his cavalry in the centre, and his foot upon the wings. The French attribute to this disposition the loss of the day, their horse being swept away and routed by the batteries<sup>2</sup> which Prince Ferdinand had prepared, whilst the infantry, disordered by its defeat, were unable to act with effect, and were driven from the field. The loss of the French was severe; amongst their colonels slain at the affair of Minden was the marquis de la Fayette, a noble of an ancient family. He left his marchioness, a lady of the house of Lusignan, pregnant. This posthumous child is the La Fayette of the Revolution.<sup>3</sup>

The obstinacy or cowardice of an English general, who belonged to the

[<sup>1</sup> "The success was Chevert's; the recompense fell to Soubise." — GAULOT.?] ]

[<sup>2</sup> There were six English regiments of infantry which won the name of Minden regiments from their heroic firmness in marching against the heavy French cavalry, who charged in vain again and again, and finally fled.] ]

[1759 A.D.]

same caste from which the generals of the French army were chosen, saved the French army which was beaten from complete destruction. Germaine commanded in this battle the first division of the English cavalry; he received orders three times from the commander-in-chief to fall on the enemy, but as often excused himself. He was even unwilling at first to allow Lord Granby, the leader of the second division, to yield obedience to Ferdinand's command: this, however, was done against his will, but the full effect of the movement was no longer to be attained. The English nation was filled with indignation at this conduct on the part of Germaine; he was dismissed with disgrace, called before a court-martial and found guilty: we shall nevertheless afterwards meet with him in the following period as one of the ministers of George III, conducting the affairs of the American War with the greatest negligence and ignorance, and after having brought disgrace and injury upon himself, his colleagues, and the nation, and finally been driven out of the house of commons and the ministry, appearing under the title of earl of Sackville as a peer of Great Britain.

The victory gained by Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick at Minden is reckoned among the most splendid deeds of the century, and Contades was placed in circumstances of great danger in his retreat. The hereditary prince of Brunswick, Ferdinand's nephew, drove the French beyond the Rhine, and gained some considerable advantages over the duke de Brissac at Crefeld. The French themselves admit that it would have been possible completely to have cut off the retreat of their conquered army to the Rhine and the Maine: their retreat resembled a quick and ruinous flight.<sup>1</sup>

### *Ruin of the French Navy; Losses in India and America*

This year proved most unfortunate to the French. Hitherto the English fleets had more insulted than harmed them. They had made frequent descents, at Rochefort, at St. Malo, and at Cherbourg, causing damage, indeed, and bearing away trophies, but reaping no advantage, whilst it deepened the generous rivalry of the hostile nations into bitter and inveterate hatred. Pitt brought vigour and largeness of purpose to the British war councils; and France now saw her fleets destroyed, and her colonies fall one by one. Admiral Boscawen fought La Clue near the Straits of Gibraltar, took two men-of-war, and burned several others, August 17th.<sup>2</sup>

In spite of this serious check the cabinet of Versailles did not entirely abandon its projects; it gave up the grand army of Soubise but not the duke d'Aiguillon's expedition, which was to make its way to Scotland, whilst a small squadron setting out from Dunkirk was to go by the north of Scotland to effect a diversion in Ireland. The plan might have succeeded if the soldiers and their transports had been assembled with the fleet in the roadstead at Brest; but the selfish vanity of the duke d'Aiguillon had retained them at Morbihan, where he commanded in chief whilst at Brest he would have been subordinate to Marshal de Conflans. The fleet had therefore to go to meet this convoy.

On the 20th of November Admiral Hawke came up with Conflans off Belle-Île. Conflans had twenty-one vessels against twenty-three. He had nothing to do but to receive the shock bravely. He tried to avoid it by passing along the rocks called Les Cardinaux, and entangling his fleet in the bay, bristling with islets and reefs, which forms the mouth of the Vilaine. Admiral Hawke, who had the wind in his favour, followed the French undauntedly at the risk of losing himself with them in what were a kind of maritime defiles.



The commander of the French rearguard, Saint-André du Verger, repeated the devotion of the brave Sabran. He invited his own ruin in order to arrest the enemy and made himself illustrious by a glorious death. His crew was almost annihilated when the flag was taken. The French ships, tossed about in a stormy sea in the midst of the rocks, knocked up against one another, whilst it was impossible to manipulate them. Two were sunk; two went to pieces on the reefs. Night suspended the disaster. At break of day, Conflans' flagship and another vessel were wrecked and burned in

the bay of Le Croisic. Two English vessels were lost on the sandbanks while endeavouring to follow Conflans. The French van, seven vessels strong, had hardly been engaged at all and might have avenged Saint-André and atoned for the disgrace of Conflans. Its leader, Beaufremont, thought only of regaining the open and went to take refuge at Rochefort. Another division of seven vessels, favoured by the tide, entered the Vilaine where it might have been thought impossible for frigates to penetrate; it thus saved itself but could not come out again. Before the Vilaine and the Charente, the English resumed the blockade they had previously kept up before Brest.

This deplorable catastrophe<sup>1</sup> completed the humiliation of France; the fleet, which had hitherto preserved its honour intact, fell to the level of the land army. The corruption, effeminacy, and selfishness of the court had spread from the military to the maritime nobility.

The Dunkirk squadron had set out a month before the disaster of the Vilaine under the orders of an ex-pirate named Thurot, and much dreaded by English merchants. After various adventures this intrepid sailor effected a descent on Ireland in the month of February, 1760, and took the town of Carrickfergus. It was simply an effort of despair and could only mean the sacrifice of brave men. Thurot was slain and his squadron captured. The cabinet of Versailles, overcome by these decisive reverses, renounced all further maritime enterprises. The most melancholy tidings, one blow following another, had arrived from America."

The fate of Canada was decided by that action where Wolfe fell in the achievement of victory, bequeathing Quebec, and the wide provinces of which



A COLONEL OF FRENCH INFANTRY, EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

[<sup>1</sup> The French as usual found solace in epigram, and thereafter called this flight (which the English call the battle of Quiberon Bay) "the day of Monsieur Conflans." The term has since been used for a disaster in which the defeated has lost without even engaging. Kitchin<sup>2</sup> calls the year 1759 "the most disastrous perhaps ever seen by France; the 'Annus Mirabilis,' if ever there was one, of the English people."]

[1759-1763 A.D.]

it is the capital, to the possession of his country (1759). Notwithstanding the defeat of Minden, the duke de Broglie was enabled to keep his positions in the countries of Hesse and Cleves. Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick endeavoured generously to put forward his nephew, the young hereditary prince. But neither birth nor favour can make a general. The French defeated him near Cassel. The young commander was then sent against the town of Wesel, but here too he was repulsed by the marquis de Castries. It was in this campaign that the chevalier d'Assas, whilst in advance of his regiment, fell alone in an ambuscade. "If you speak a word, you die," cried the enemy, whose success depended upon being yet undiscovered. "Help! here is the enemy!" cried the gallant young officer, calling and warning his regiment, whilst he received his death shot on the instant for his heroism.

The struggle of the rival nations for superiority in the East Indies was this year decided. Count Lally, the Irish officer to whom the victory of Fontenoy was chiefly owing, had succeeded to the command as well as to the activity and talents of Dupleix. He had worsted and harassed the English, and had even laid siege to Madras. In Coote, who now commanded the British, he found a countryman and a triumphant rival. Lally was worsted in turn, and besieged in Pondicherry, which was taken in the early part of 1761. Lally was a zealous soldier, but an overbearing and despotic governor. His conduct excited powerful enmity. He cared not on whom his censure fell; whether on the ministry, the court, or the very country for which he fought. Accused of causing the loss of Pondicherry, he repaired to Paris and faced his accusers. Committed to the Bastille, pursued by the calumnies of the French India Company, and the populace who joined them, the unfortunate Lally was condemned to lose his head. So much was his ferocious temper dreaded, that a gag was placed in his mouth as he was led to execution. So iniquitous a judgment proves how unfit the parliament was to exercise even judicial functions, much less the legislative authority, which it claimed.

The duke de Choiseul in the meantime sought fresh support, and was happy enough to secure it by an alliance with Spain. The present king of that country was Charles III. Betwixt him and France was concluded the Family Compact, by which the houses of Bourbon promised mutual aid. It was an unfortunate act for Spain, whose colonies of Cuba and Manila, with her ships of war and commerce, fell at once into the hands of England. In short, had France or her government been bribed to enrich and afford triumphs to Great Britain, she could scarcely have adopted other measures, or persisted in policy more pernicious. She now lost Guadeloupe and Martinique, every colony almost and foot of earth beyond her continental realm. Even Belle-Île on her own coast was captured. When one country had nought left to lose, and the other little to win, the overthrow of Pitt, and the rise of Lord Bute's influence, consequent upon the death of George II and the accession of his grandson, opened the way for peace.

It was signed at Paris, February 10th, 1763. France ceded Canada and Cape Breton. The Mississippi was declared to be the boundary betwixt the colonies of the respective nations; New Orleans, however, on its left bank, adhered to Louisiana. In India, property and territories were restored to their ancient limits; but the French were to send thither no more troops. Guadeloupe and Martinique were restored to France; Grenada was kept by the British, who, besides, appropriated St. Vincent's, Dominica, and Tobago. Senegal was also ceded to them, and Minorca restored. The demolition

of the port of Dunkirk was to be completed, and an English commissioner to oversee the execution of this article.

Peace could scarcely have been rendered more disgraceful to France, and yet she signed it, so pusillanimous was her government, so exhausted were her finances, so spiritless and disorganised her armies. The nation, proudly susceptible, deeply felt the humiliation. They attributed it not to their own want of courage, or talent, or resources, but to the imbecility of their government, and fundamentally to the vice of its constitution. Whatever of loyalty, or of ancient attachment to despotic rule, still lingered in the country, evaporated with the national honour on witnessing this disgraceful treaty.<sup>1</sup> As religion had lost its hold over French minds by the absurd conduct and misrule of its chief, so did royalty. Both fell as much from mismanagement as from the arguments or attacks of enemies. Facts and not words produce ultimate effects, and decide the opinions of the many; and governments, like individuals, gain solidity and general esteem, much more by their achievements and fortunes than by the pleas of birthright or good intentions.

Almost simultaneously with this Treaty of Paris, that betwixt Austria and Prussia was signed at Hubertusburg. Frederick still held the much-contested Silesia. Far more than a million of men had been sacrificed in vain. The frontier betwixt Austria and Prussia remained the same. The glory of the war chiefly remained with Frederick, who, through an unexampled course of victories and reverses, still preserved the character of great. Perhaps the most astonishing reflection is that the Prussian monarch ruled over not more than four millions of subjects, a population that constitutes but a very secondary state. Yet out of this he raised armies and funds to combat at once France, Germany, Poland, and Russia. Bonaparte effected wonders with ample means; but when reduced to play the forlorn game of Frederick against united Europe, the great French captain fell, the Prussian lived and died a king.

#### CHOISEUL BANISHES THE JESUITS (1764 A.D.)

Although lost in the noise and events of foreign war, the underplot of domestic politics, the struggle betwixt the Jesuits and high churchmen on the one side, and the parliament, the men of letters, and the public voice on the other, was continued with unabated inveteracy. The sovereign interfered from time to time in these disputes, through the influence of La Pompadour, who from her life and station, as well as from her liberality, was opposed to the church party and the dauphin. The clergy were censured, and the prelates exiled. The opposition of the parliament, however, against papal and sacerdotal usurpation, was confounded with that which it offered to taxes and fiscal edicts; and when this latter species of frowardness became troublesome, the court was compelled to punish the magistrates, and give an apparent triumph to the high church.

The menaced encroachment of the parliaments upon the sovereign power was interrupted, in the first place, by the minister Choiseul, who took the part of the legists, and who adroitly made them desist from such pretensions by allowing them a complete triumph over their immediate enemies, the clergy. The duke de Choiseul was an exception to the long succession

[<sup>1</sup> "If the American War some twenty years later made the French soldier a republican, the Seven Years' War destroyed all the honour and credit of the French noblesse; their vices, incapacity, and folly were displayed on an open field."—KITCHIN.<sup>2</sup>]



[1763-1765 A.D.]

of ministerial mediocrity. Extremely ugly, his conversation and address soon removed the disagreeable impression made by his appearance. He had the boldness, the nationalism, the independence, of the first Pitt.

The Jesuits, instituted to support sacerdotal authority, proved the principal cause of its overthrow. Their ambition, their corporate spirit, excited fear and envy; their corruption of morality's plainest principles made them unpopular; and, finally, their efforts to master the throne excited a league of sovereign princes against them, which now produced their complete destruction.

In Portugal, where the reign of the Jesuits seemed most assured, it was a lawyer, the marquis of Pombal, who, arrived at the ministry, undermined and destroyed the order.<sup>1</sup> Divers circumstances reinforced the hatred of the judicial body towards the Jesuits, and their power over them produced the same catastrophe in France. The most eminent of the rising legists drew up reports on the tendency and illegality of such societies. La Chalotais, attorney-general (*procureur-général*) of the province of Brittany, especially distinguished himself by the talent and virulence of his report. A judgment of the parliament of Paris deprived the Jesuits first of the liberty of teaching, or of receiving new proselytes. Great efforts were made to shake Louis XV, and deprive the ministry of his support. The dauphin, the pope, the cardinal of Lorraine exerted themselves to this effect. But the duke de Choiseul, supported by Madame de Pompadour, succeeded in carrying his point. The order of the Jesuits was abolished in 1764, and its members banished the kingdom.

There was a sad and unfortunate similarity in the positions of Louis XV and of Louis XIV in the latter part of their respective reigns. Both, unsuccessful in their wars, had been reduced to a disgraceful peace: both to this great cause of unpopularity joined a secluded and dissolute life; for Madame de Maintenon, in the eyes of the people, could never be other than a royal mistress. The same splendour, the same misery, profusion in expense, poverty in finances, marked the conclusion of either reign. Both monarchs were doomed to see their children perish by an unaccountable decay, and to have the prospect of their crowns falling on the head of an infant. The people murmured to behold the pious and the young carried off, whilst the aged and licentious monarch survived. Suspicious of poison and foul play circulated. That horrid credulity, which loads royalty with every crime, then became prevalent in France: it soon swelled into a fatal prejudice.<sup>c</sup>

#### THE LAST DAYS OF POMPADOUR

Madame de Pompadour had preserved an influence over the king which could only be compared to that which Cardinal Fleury had exercised before her. She assumed with him the tone of a respectful and courageous friendship. Despite the loss of freshness, her beauty had preserved an imposing quality and by the dignity of her manners she succeeded in obtaining oblivion for all that was shameful in her position. She contrived to awe even Marshal Richelieu, whilst the prince de Soubise and other great nobles were proud of being called her friends. She showed respect towards the queen; but, angry at having been unable to overcome the dauphin's contempt, she kept the court alive to his absurdities, spoke of his hair-shirt, his scourge, his secret withdrawals for the purpose of reciting his breviary in

[<sup>1</sup> The story of the general rising against Jesuitism has been fully told in the history of Portugal.]

the garb of a Jesuit. As to the princesses, the king's daughters, she had accustomed them to show outward respect to her as the monarch's choice.

Always an actress, always bent on playing her part, she lived in a continual agitation; she took it much to heart that she was the object of the nation's hatred, a fact that she could not disguise from herself, and this distress increased a malady peculiar to her sex which had attacked her. A man whom she had raised to power, the duke de Choiseul, who was suspected of having been her lover, had easily attained to the popularity which she could not win. It was she who was blamed for the war, whilst it was to the duke de Choiseul that the nation believed itself indebted for the peace.

The secret malady which was undermining the strength of Madame de Pompadour had manifested itself in the spring of 1764 in acute sufferings. The court was then at Choisy; but in spite of the etiquette which permitted no individual who was not of the blood to die in the palace, Louis XV had her conducted to Versailles: already she was aware of her danger and her one thought was to die like a queen. She therefore continued to have the interests of the state discussed before her and to procure the nomination to various offices of those persons to whom she accorded the last signs of her favour. She had too much regard for public consideration not to fulfil the requirements of the church in her last moments at the same time that she endeavoured to preserve to the end the approbation of the *philosophes*. Her pride refused the tears of penitence; and yet the clergy showed themselves respectful towards the expiring favourite. She had several interviews with her *curé*, and when he would have withdrawn after the last: "Wait, *monsieur le curé*," she said to him, "we will leave here together." She did actually die that very day, the 15th of April, 1764.

It is affirmed that Louis shed no tear, did not seem pensive, nor seek for solitude. It is even related that being at his window when the remains of Madame de Pompadour were leaving the courts of the château he was heard to pronounce these words: "Madame la Marquise will have bad weather for her journey to-day." Madame de Pompadour was then forty-four years old; she left all her property to her brother, the marquis de Marigny; the husband she had abandoned disdained to receive the smallest share of that rich inheritance.

The dauphin soon followed the favourite to whom he had allowed his contempt to be too plainly visible. He expired the 20th of December, 1765, at the age of thirty-six years. The son who, eight years later, was to succeed to the crown under the name of Louis XVI, was then only eleven years old. The exclamation of Louis XV when this child, coming into his room, was announced for the first time under the name of Monseigneur le Dauphin, was treasured as a sign of feeling on the part of a man who had given scarcely a token of possessing any. Poor France! a king fifty-five years old and a dauphin of eleven!





### CHAPTER III

## THE LAST DECADE OF LOUIS XV

[1764-1774 A.D.]

As Pope Benedict XIV said, "Is there need of any further proof of the existence of a Providence than the sight of France prospering under Louis XV?" — BESENVAL.<sup>h</sup>

ON the death of his son, the dauphin, Louis, in a frenzy of grief, returned to the queen, behaved affectionately towards his virtuous daughters, closed the Parc-aux-Cerfs, and had no longer any declared mistress. The courtiers feared lest a confessor should take the place of a favourite. But this return to rectitude did not last long: the queen was soon forgotten and neglected again, and died some time afterwards worn out by grief (June 25th, 1768); her father, the good Stanislaus, who had procured for Lorraine thirty years of peace and prosperity, preceded her to the tomb (February 3rd, 1766). Then the king plunged once more into his crapulous debauchery, the Parc-aux-Cerfs was reopened; he became completely estranged from his people, holding himself quite aloof from public affairs, amusing himself by listening to scandal and police reports, shamefully amassing money for his own private use by stock-jobbing, spying on his ministers, and letting state affairs go on as best they could.

Choiseul, when the marquise de Pompadour (1764) and the dauphin (1765) were both dead, seemed destined to become prime minister; he tried to make people forget the dishonourable origin of his elevation to power, by throwing all the odium of the unpopular Seven Years' War upon Madame de Pompadour. He was the only one of the ministers of this period who seemed to have clear ideas and plans, and a definite purpose. People were inclined to look upon him as a great man destined to rejuvenate monarchy, to abolish abuses, and to raise the standing of France in the eyes of the world. Such were indeed his plans, but he did nothing. The politics of this period seemed to be absolutely incapable of construction or even of repair. Besides, Choiseul was less a statesman than courtier and wit. Nevertheless, if he showed little ability in his home policy, he thoroughly understood the foreign interests of the country. With striking sagacity, he foresaw that the two powers which threatened the liberty of



Europe were Great Britain at sea and Russia on the continent; all his efforts, therefore, were directed against these two countries.

He tried to form a league of naval powers against Great Britain, to take advantage of the troubles existing in her colonies, and to rehabilitate the French navy. He first tried to make sure of the alliance of the states of the house of Bourbon, united by the Family Compact, and especially of Spain, where his friend De Aranda was making noble efforts to bring about reform. He then attempted to insure the alliance of the two countries which England regarded as her vassals: Portugal, which country the marquis of Pombal<sup>1</sup> was endeavouring to set free from a shameful servitude, and Holland, where the republican party was indignant at the humiliation of the national flag, and at the servile dependence of the stadholders. Lastly he tried to make sure, if not of the alliance at least of the neutrality of Prussia and Austria.

The Seven Years' War having seriously affected the finances of England, the ministry attempted to improve them by making the colonies for which they had been fighting (1765) share in the taxation of the mother country. They laid arbitrary taxes on colonial commerce and a stamp duty was decreed by parliament on all transactions. The American colonies declared that as they were not represented in the English parliament, they could not be taxed by it. Disturbances arose in the large towns, and rebellion seemed imminent. The colonists even began to turn their eyes towards France in expectation of assistance. Choiseul saw in this crisis an opportunity for the maritime war which he desired to bring about; he secretly incited the Americans to resistance, and did all he could, even spending money in this cause, to foment existing troubles.

Choiseul, while following the course of all these troubles, so favourable to his plans, devoted the greatest energy to the re-establishment of the navy. He gave an excellent government to the Antilles; and Santo Domingo became the most flourishing colony on the face of the earth, a source of immense wealth to France. He attempted to colonise Guiana; but failed completely in that pestilential climate to which thousands of men were sent out only to die. Lastly he made an acquisition of great value, namely, Corsica.

Corsica had, during the Middle Ages, fallen under the dominion of the Genoese; but the mountaineers of the interior, a wild and courageous population, had never recognised the Genoese as their masters, and had maintained a continual struggle against them. When the maritime power of Genoa declined, the Corsican insurrection became extended and consolidated, and at last, after many risings, succeeded in driving the Genoese troops from the island. The republic demanded help from France, who forced the Corsicans to accept again the dominion of their former rulers (1735). But when the French quitted the island, the rebellion again broke out; the Corsicans freely enrolled themselves under Pasquale Paoli, a man of genius, and attempted to form an independent state. Genoa, being too weak to subdue these rebellious vassals, again appealed to France for help. France agreed to act as mediator, and invested the ports with French troops (1763). The mountaineers refused to submit and appealed for help to England.

Had England succeeded in taking possession of an island situated only a few hours' journey from Toulon, she would have had a citadel at the gates

[<sup>1</sup> Kitchin's comments on this period: "It is customary to speak of the enlightened sovereigns of this time; it would be fully as correct to call it the age of enlightened ministers. Pitt with George III, Pombal ruling in Portugal, Aranda in Spain, Choiseul at the court of Louis XV, are quite as characteristic of the age as Joseph II or Frederick the Great."]

[1765-1769 A.D.]

of France as she already had one at the gates of Spain. With Corsica, Minorca, and Gibraltar, she would have driven the French and the Spanish from a sea which seems naturally to belong to them. Such an event must be prevented at any price. Choiseul made up his mind to gain Corsica for France, and not only to make of it a colony which would be valuable on account of its situation, its harbours, and its forests, but, in spite of its position, language, and customs, to make it an integral part of French territory. A treaty was concluded by which the Genoese ceded Corsica to Louis XV, who called himself its king and decreed the union of the island with France, August 15th, 1768.

The Corsicans, indignant at being sold without their consent, made an energetic resistance; but Choiseul having sent fifty battalions against them, while England remained deaf to their appeal, they were obliged to yield. Two months after the cessation of hostilities, and a year after the edict of union, Napoleon Bonaparte was born at Ajaccio (August 15th, 1769).

The Poles rose in 1768 and formed a confederation at Bar [in Podolia] "for the defence of liberty and religion." The Russians and king Stanislaus, with those who dissented from the Romish church, marched against the insurgents, appealed to all Europe for help, and exposed the Machiavellism of Catherine. Prussia had already pledged itself secretly to Russia; Austria maintained a hypocritical neutrality; Sweden, ruled by its aristocracy, who were in the czarina's pay, remained passive. France was the only power left who could save Poland; and the czarina hoped through the influence of England, with whom she had formed a close friendship, to prevent French interference. Choiseul had protested against the election of Stanislaus; he sent subsidies, officers, and engineers to the confederates at Bar; incited Maria Theresa to check the ambition of the barbarians of the north; urged Gustavus III, king of Sweden, to shake off the yoke of his aristocracy; finally he persuaded Turkey to begin hostilities. He would have liked France to declare herself openly on the side of the Polish insurgents and to send her fleets to the Baltic and the Mediterranean. But it was too great an undertaking to help both Poles and Americans against two powers who would certainly form an alliance and perhaps oppose France helped by Prussia and Austria. Louis XV trembled at the idea of the universal war that he foresaw. His finances were in a most disastrous condition, and though the minister had vanquished the Jesuit party, he had not been able to abolish their dissensions and their intrigues. He could not stand up against so many obstacles, and his failure involved the ruin of Poland.

By the death of the dauphin in 1765, Louis XV's eldest grandson (afterwards Louis XVI) became dauphin of France; and from that time Choiseul entered into the views of the court of Vienna to betroth the young dauphin with the Austrian princess Marie Antoinette. In this way he gained the interest and favour of the court of Vienna, but irritated and incensed the most powerful and patriotic part of his own nation against himself. Choiseul sacrificed everything in internal administration also to the necessity of maintaining his position at the head of the government. Although he was the creature of Pompadour, and had humbled himself before her, yet he was a man of education and had some honour to lose, and must therefore have found the task of maintaining himself in the king's favour yearly more difficult, because the latter continued to sink deeper and deeper, and Richelieu, Aiguillon, and other fashionable profligates were his daily companions.

It was unfortunate that the king did not, after Pompadour's death, immediately find a woman who was qualified to fill her place, to rule the monarch

with unlimited sway, and to be somewhat observant of the outward decencies of life. Neither the young women with whom they were accustomed to furnish the king's seraglio, nor Mademoiselle St. Romans, who enjoyed his favour for a longer period than the others, was able to exercise that power over him which his habits and his indulgences required.

#### EVILS OF THE PARLIAMENTS

Since the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, the parliaments had carried on a constant struggle with the court respecting the Jesuits, the taxes, the registration of the royal edicts, and other affairs; but in the last four years of the reign of Louis XV these contentions assumed the precise form of those disputes into which George III had

fallen with the corporation of London since the Peace of Paris. In France at this time all the rights and privileges of the estates, corporations, and of individual citizens were at the mercy of the most contemptible and scandalous men and women who were favourites at court; and therefore the boldest orators of the public tribunals were universally regarded as the defenders of the rights of the people, which they were not in any respect, nor could they be.

The great judicial courts of ancient France determined the causes which came before them in the king's name, but wholly independent of his influence, as the imperial courts of Germany did, and often even decided against him. The presence of the peers and princes of the blood in Paris moreover gave to the parliament of Paris, on particular occasions, all the dignity and pre-eminence of the Carlovingian tribunals; they were therefore called, in the same sense as the word was applied to the king, sovereign courts (*cours*



MARIE ANTOINETTE

*souveraines*). Parliament was divided into a great number of chambers, and had therefore many councillors, presidents, hundreds of secretaries, procurators, barristers, attorneys, and inferior officers: in the time of the League and the Fronde it had a whole army of writers in its service, whose name (*la basoche*) always continued to be a subject of dread in times of public commotion. As the office of a councillor of parliament was only to be had by the payment of a certain sum into the public treasury, the interest of which amounted to something like the salary to be received, or, in fact, was only to be bought, these councillors formed a peculiar species of aristocracy, and the places were hereditary in families like advowsons in England. This parliamentary



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aristocracy was at all times a matter of apprehension to the ministers of the crown, because the court must necessarily employ the instrumentality of this powerful body in communicating the royal edicts to the inferior courts and magistrates. All these edicts therefore must be read before the court and recorded; and this furnished the parliaments with a pretence for raising objections. There was no other body or person who was in any way justified in preferring complaints against any measures of the government whatsoever; and no one dared to venture on such a course, or the consequence would have been immediate imprisonment by virtue of a *lettre de cachet*.

The parliament of Paris enjoyed greater distinction than the other parliaments, on account of its sittings being held in the capital.

The parliament embraced a chamber of taxes and a high court of exchequer in itself; and what was called the registration of decrees respecting new impositions always led to long debates, refusals, and protests, and, from want of a free press, the parliament finally became the only organ of public opinion. The parliament formed an opposition against the ministers of the crown, which of itself gave a degree of political importance to their struggles in favour of the Jansenists, which were often in the highest degree ridiculous, because the court had formed an alliance with Rome and the Jesuits against the persecuted Jansenists, whom the parliament took under their protection. The parliaments besides contended much more vehemently against the spirit of the age and the prevailing opinions which favoured frivolity and sentimentality, under the name of philosophy, than the ministers of the court, among whom Choiseul in particular solicited and courted the friendship of Voltaire as eagerly as Frederick the Great or Catherine II.

The spirit which reigned in the parliaments, and among the learned scholastic theologians and theological jurists of whom it was composed, was completely the same as the tone of puritanism which prevailed in England in the years immediately preceding the English Revolution. No real improvement, no restoration of the relaxed order which had taken place in the political and moral condition of the country, no legislation suited to the spirit of the age and commensurate with the demands of the public, was to be expected from the parliaments and their jurists.

At a later period the parliaments opposed the king's government, when the latter was desirous of abolishing those detestable and barbarous laws by which, even after the time of the American War, the pious clergy among the reformers were liable to be condemned to the galleys if they ventured to preach to their congregations. The parliament also strictly prohibited such books as Rousseau's *Héloïse* and *Émile*, which were in everyone's hands, and regarded as the pride of the nation, and issued a decree of personal arrest against the author, who was protected and countenanced by a prince of the blood, some of the most distinguished peers, and all the fashionable ladies of Paris, notwithstanding and in contempt of these decrees.

The wars which the well-armed combatants in parliament had carried on respecting dogmas and discipline, Jansenism and Jesuitism, reached their termination immediately after the Seven Years' War; on the other hand, political contentions increased in violence just in proportion as the king sank deeper in incapacity and immorality, and fell into worse hands. The king, and the clever profligates by whom he was continually surrounded, pushed the principle of autocracy and of the divine properties of royal blood to the most revolting extent, as may be seen from the disgrace and incarceration inflicted upon such miserable rhetoricians as Marmontel and Morellet for some insignificant expressions. King Louis, who was an enemy to all

innovation, was compelled, by the resistance of the parliaments to his royal commands, in the last years of his life, to fall in with the spirit of the age, to act in opposition to the conservative principles of the parliaments: first, in reference to philosophical and political economy; and secondly, in reference to the reformation of the whole system of judicial administration.

#### CONFLICTS BETWEEN KING AND PARLIAMENT

As respects the latter point, Louis' zeal by no means sprang from a wish to reform the court, or to act in accordance with the requirements of the age, but simply from a feeling of dislike to the parliaments. Before the end of the Seven Years' War, his royal autocracy had, as we have seen, suffered a defeat from the judicial power of these corporations, which had descended to them from the feudal times, when he attempted to maintain and carry through his Jesuitical papism in opposition to the parliaments, which were zealous defenders of the Jansenist fanaticism.

At the same time the speeches and debates in parliament, to whose sittings the public was admitted, had become so bold and daring that the hearers might readily suppose themselves removed to the times of the Fronde. Pompadour and her creatures had been attacked in the strongest language; references were made to the fundamental laws of the old French constitution; and learned investigations were carried on to see if the ministers of the crown were justified by any law of the ancient constitution in exercising absolute power in the name of the king in the way in which they had hitherto done.

These discussions and inquiries naturally led to the conclusion that, even under an absolute and despotical government, the life, freedom, and property of the citizens ought to be inviolate, or only affected by legal forms, if a despot were not desirous of undermining his own throne; the violation of these natural rights was however daily perpetrated in France by means of arbitrary letters of arrest under the royal seal (*lettres de cachet*), of which there were but too many proofs.

These royal warrants were at the disposal of every minister of the crown; and not only every minister, but every person who had influence at court could avail himself of these means of tyranny and terror to seize upon and imprison a disobedient son, a troublesome relative or creditor, or an author who had given him any offence. Whenever this dreadful seal was exhibited to any public man, it denoted a living death; it marked him at once as a person for whom there was neither examination nor court of justice, neither protection nor help to be expected from his family or any of his friends.

The government had scarcely restored peace between the parliament and the clergy when they had again fallen into a bitter contest with the parliament. In this new dispute very violent measures had been adopted by Machault, minister of marine, and D'Argenson, keeper of the seals, the former a friend of Pompadour, and the latter her detestation. The parliament, now threatened by military compulsion, had not only called in the peers to its consultations, but hit upon a plan which would have converted the dispute with the parliament of Paris into a war with the whole parliamentary nobility (*noblesse de robe*) of the kingdom. It was alleged as a principle that all the sovereign legal courts in France constituted only one body, of which the parliament of Paris was the soul; or, as it was expressed, that all the other parliaments belonged as classes to that of Paris.

[1756-1759 A.D.]

The ministers immediately perceived the danger of this doctrine, and caused the king in person publicly to prohibit the enunciation of such theories in parliament, and all attempts to give them efficacy by speeches or decrees; or in other words, they caused him twice in the same year, in September and December, 1756, to hold what was called a bed of justice (*lit de justice*), in which the king, in order to convert the parliament into something resembling an ancient assembly of the Franks (*cour plénière*), took his seat after the fashion of the Merovingian kings, with a cushion at his back, cushions under each arm, and one under his feet. Notwithstanding all these pompous and absurd ceremonies and royal sittings, at which etiquette imposed silence upon all those who were present except the king and his chancellor, the parliament had immediately renewed its protest as soon as the king had left the assembly: it had protested against such an invasion of their freedom of deliberation, and utterly refused to acknowledge any resolutions forced upon them by the mere personal authority of the sovereign. This gave rise to new contentions; some of the chambers which were particularly vehement were abolished; the contest waxed more violent in word and action, and daily encroachments were made upon the political influence of the parliament by royal decrees.

Machault and D'Argenson were removed. The contest between the clergy and the parliament, however, was still carried on for a considerable time under the succeeding ministers, till at length the second dispute ended like the first. All the chambers of the parliament were restored to their former functions, and in September, 1757, everything had been re-established on its previous footing. The financial edicts which were afterwards laid before parliament were in reality mere extortions, which only furnished means for the moment, and in the last case were only further impositions inflicted upon those classes of the subjects already oppressed with taxes, feudal services, tithes, salt-duties, and a poll-tax: the consequence was that the parliament had been only two years restored to its rights when a new contest arose. Machault was obliged to sacrifice his place as minister of finance, because he ventured to propose to the parliament the recognition and approval of a species of taxation, the burden of which would have fallen chiefly upon the privileged classes, of which the parliament for the most part was composed; his successors therefore, who did not venture to think upon the introduction of any species of improvement, were obliged to help themselves out by extortions.

The three ministers who immediately succeeded Machault, *viz.*, Moreau de Sechelles, Moras, and Boulogne, although they had recourse to all possible means of raising money to meet the expenses of war and the extravagance of the court, had found themselves reduced to inextricable difficulties; they were replaced by a man supposed to be more fertile in expedients, and better disposed to act with greater boldness against the parliament and public opinion. This man was Étienne de Silhouette.

Silhouette had commenced his official career by a measure which had been equally a matter of rejoicing to the extravagant court, to Pompadour, and the oppressed people, and therefore appeared to do what was really incredible; he raised 72,000,000 livres without laying any new burdens upon the people; for it appeared as if he took the money out of the purses of the farmers-general, who were the blood-suckers of the nation. But when his first means of resource were exhausted, he too had fallen into a war with the parliament, and was able to maintain himself for only eight months in his position. Before he retired from his office he even renewed the measure



to which recourse had been previously taken in the time of the financial stringencies of the regency, by which every man was compelled to send all his silver plate to the mint.

By Silhouette's removal from the ministry of finance a sort of truce had been purchased between the government and parliament, but this proved of the shorter continuance, as at this very time Choiseul had been appointed to the helm of affairs, who knew well how to avail himself of parliament in a most diplomatic manner for the promotion of his own private views, in order to make himself important and indispensable to the king. The parliament was then carrying on an unceasing contention with the court, sometimes about taxes, sometimes about Jansenism, sometimes about the Jesuits, and

finally on account of the favourite and companion of the king, the duke d'Aiguillon. We must dwell upon this last-mentioned ground of dispute a little more in detail, because it ultimately led to the abolition of the parliament. After the death of the marquise de Pompadour, the duke d'Aiguillon first fell into a dispute with the parliament of Rennes, and secondly with that of Paris, which involved him in transactions from which he could not extricate himself even by the favour of the king.

The duke d'Aiguillon possessed what was then considered as the chief ornament of a courtier — pre-eminence in every sin ; he was inseparable from the king's orgies, and notwithstanding his insolence and pride, did homage to every clever courtesan who acquired influence and dominion over the aged monarch ; along with all this, he, like the king, was zealous for the cause of the pope and the clergy, for the ceremonies and external forms of religion. When commandant of Brittany, he played the sultan in every respect, and pushed that sort of criminality and licentiousness in which he indulged in company with the king in Paris and at Versailles to such an incredible extent that no age was a protection against his passions, and he even violated the sanctuary of the convent.



LADY OF THE COURT OF  
LOUIS XV

The parliament of Brittany, following the example of that of Paris, was filled with indignation at his conduct, and resisted the various taxes which he wished to impose ; the duke treated its members in the most brutal manner. The distinguished but somewhat vehement attorney-general, La Chalotais, was persecuted by him with irreconcilable hatred.

It was discovered that the money which had been voted for the repair and maintenance of the highways had been applied by the duke to a different purpose, and the parliament commenced a suit against him for the misapplication and embezzlement of the public money. The end of it was that La Chalotais was sent by the parliament to Paris to endeavour to induce the king to recall the duke from Brittany, with an assurance that a recall would

[1765-1768 A.D.]

immediately put an end to the dispute between the estates and the first officer of the government.

In the course of this contest the duke behaved in such a despotical manner, and the compulsory measures to which he had recourse were in such flagrant violation of existing rights, that the most distinguished councillors sent in their resignations. The estates of Brittany, that is especially that of the third estate, and the towns forgot the cause of the Jesuits, and resolved to unite with the parliament in defence of their civil rights.

On the express orders of the king, the duke d'Aiguillon suddenly arrested the attorney-general, La Chalotais, his son, and five other councillors of parliament, on the night of the 10th of November, 1765.

The absurd and wholly undefined charges contained in the king's letters-patent (*lettres patentes*) were to form the ground of a judicial inquiry and prosecution; the object was to force the parliament of Rennes to prosecute those who had been arrested by the king's command, and thus to punish its own members who resigned their offices as councillors. The numerous councillors who had sent in their resignations declared that they persisted in their determination, and many others now joined in their declaration. It was found necessary altogether to give up any semblance of a regular parliamentary tribunal, and to have recourse to a species of military commission. New letters-patent was issued for the formation of a royal commission, before whom the prisoners were to be tried in St. Malo, as before a court of king's bench. The commission sat in the end of January, 1766, and they were about to pronounce the sentence of death which had been sent to them ready made from Versailles, when some urgent remonstrances, sent by the parliament of Paris, deterred the king from his design; Choiseul also roused his conscience on the point, and represented to him the extreme danger of the course he was about to pursue. The sentence of death, as well as the whole of the proceedings, was annulled, and on the 17th of February, 1766, the case was again referred to the natural and legal judges of the accused: these judges were the members of the parliament of Rennes; as this however was now nothing more than a rump parliament, owing to many resignations, La Chalotais refused to acknowledge it as competent. This refusal was not only well founded in reason, but also in law; the parliament was servile and mutilated, and the attorney-general appealed to an ordinance of 1737 in which express provision was made for such contingencies.

The king now issued an order under the great seal in November, 1766, by which the whole prosecution was declared to be at an end by his majesty's command. Notwithstanding this royal decision, the king's displeasure was manifested towards La Chalotais, his son, and four councillors of parliament, by ordering them to be banished to Saintes.

The estates of Brittany, the parliament, and the duke d'Aiguillon in the meantime were at open war, and not a month elapsed which was not distinguished by some acts of violence, by attacks upon existing rights, and instances of banishment or incarceration. In the course of three months, Aiguillon's uncle, the minister in Paris, obtained no less than 130 *lettres de cachet*, which he sent to his nephew in Brittany, where they were used as instruments of tyranny and terror against the first persons in the country. Choiseul was opposed to the ambition of both uncle and nephew, but sought to maintain his credit with both parties. The king was at length persuaded of the wisdom of recalling Aiguillon from Brittany. The parliament was then restored to the full exercise of all its former privileges and rights, and the councillors or members of the estates, who had been prosecuted,

imprisoned, or banished by Aiguillon, were restored to liberty and their friends. These events took place in 1768, and in the year immediately following the scandals of the court led to a new and violent war with the parliament.

#### DU BARRY THE NEW MISTRESS

One of the profligates of the court and panders to the depraved tastes of the king had met with a young woman named Lange in a house of bad reputation in Paris, who was a common courtesan utterly destitute of shame, but of surpassing beauty. She was immediately recommended to the notice of one of the king's chamberlains, to whom the oversight and management of such affairs were peculiarly intrusted. She was in consequence brought to the palace, and by her arts gained such a complete ascendancy over the king that feelings of disgust and abhorrence were excited in the public mind when it was known that a common courtesan, of the most degraded stamp, whose tone and manners betrayed the place from whence she came, was received into the palace and occupied those apartments which were appropriated to a queen. The whole court was to do her homage, as they had formerly done to Pompadour; she was to be ennobled by a title, and therefore was immediately married to the brother of the profligate who had discovered her in her den of infamy, became Countess du Barry, and then she was presented at court (1769), as it is called, or in other words the court was converted into a brothel.<sup>d</sup>

#### *Capefigue's Defence of Du Barry*

What was the true origin of the countess du Barry? If we are to accept the version of her story given by the Choiseul coterie, she was born at Vaucouleurs, 1745,<sup>1</sup> and was called Jeanne Vaubernier; perhaps they wished to suggest a trick or caprice of fortune, for Vaucouleurs was the birthplace of the chaste heroine of Orleans, and they wished to emphasise perhaps the contrast between the woman whom they represented as a prostitute and the noble maiden who saved France. The witty society of the eighteenth century delighted in such antitheses. Jeanne Vaubernier came to Paris and entered a milliner's establishment under the name of Mademoiselle Lange; there is no proof of the metamorphoses, the passing liaisons, the debauches which are attributed to the milliner's girl with her bandbox and her mobcap. But the street songs of M. Choiseul and the ditties of M. de Maurepas have asserted them, and they have been received and believed.

Suddenly this Mademoiselle Lange became the wife of the count du Barry, a member of a noble and worthy family. Was it a love match, an overwhelming passion for a pretty girl? Not at all. It was a greedy speculation, the shameful calculation of a dissipated man. M. du Barry married a prostitute in order to offer her to a king sated with pleasure. Such is the hideous legend circulated by the Choiseul party about the countess du Barry. Must it be accepted as true? When the members of a faction depict the character of one who is in opposition to them, they seem to delight in painting it in the blackest hues. This may possibly have been done in the case of the countess du Barry. I do not say that this woman did not resemble others of her time, that she did not possess the vices of that dissolute period; but why should her character be so vindictively attacked and held up to the

[<sup>1</sup> There is a dispute as to this date; the *Goncourts* give 1743, and the *Biographie Universelle*, 1744.]





MME. DU BARRY SITTING FOR HER PORTRAIT BUST



[1769 A.D.]

execration of posterity? Was it not sufficient that she was the declared and adulterous mistress of an enervated king—was not that enough stain upon her honour? Let us remember that this countess du Barry was, after the death of Louis XV, the most unselfish friend and follower of the court, and that she devoted herself most nobly to the royal family; she sacrificed all her diamonds and her fortune, nay, she even gave her life for her two idols, Marie Antoinette and the chivalrous duke de Brissac, whom she deeply loved.

In the picture painted by the last of the Vanloos, you may have noticed a shepherdess of rare grace and beauty, with a noble and lofty brow, almond-shaped black eyes under arched eyebrows, a small, perfectly rounded nose, rosy lips half open, showing beautiful pearly teeth, a long oval face such as we find in the Vandyke portraits of the Stuarts, and besides all this a beautifully moulded bust and an exquisite slender form, rendered more striking by the glow of youth and happiness which emanates from the whole personality. This is the portrait of the countess du Barry when, at the age of twenty-four, she was presented at court, in 1769, by a respected and well-born lady, the countess of Béarn.

What struck the courtiers—and this is acknowledged by the most bitter enemies of the countess du Barry—was the look of graceful modesty which seemed to pervade her whole person. One of the old followers of M. de Choiseul expressed himself more strongly, saying: “Far from taking her to be the king’s mistress, you would have thought she was a little school-girl who had just made her first communion.”

Without entering into the mysteries of their private life, what particularly charmed Louis XV was this mingling of childlike simplicity with a caustic though not ill-natured wit, and a certain firmness and nervous energy which never failed her when necessary. Weak characters always like to be surrounded by people who possess a great deal of energy, and when that energy is united with a lovely face, it assures the success of a measure which has been thought out while the thinker was smiling behind her fan.

Louis XV soon became quite devoted to Madame du Barry. He resumed his former habits, his little suppers, bright with many candles, his freedom, and his familiar ease. The countess du Barry was gifted with a quick and lively faculty for repartee; she also had an admirable gift of reaching the very heart of a question by a witticism, often very forcibly and boldly expressed. The king would laugh like a child at her sallies; and to be able to give an old man a few moments of forgetfulness and amusement is to establish an immense influence over him. The king’s privy council, led by the duke d’Aiguillon, clearly saw how useful Madame du Barry’s growing influence might prove. The duke made himself the close ally of Madame du Barry, who from this moment was considered as the enemy of the Choiseul party. It has been said that this ill feeling arose from the fact that the duke of Choiseul had refused, from moral scruples, to acknowledge and bow down before the power of the new favourite. M. de Choiseul had not always had such scruples. Who had brought him into power? Another favourite, Madame de Pompadour. And also had not M. de Choiseul hoped that his own sister, the duchess of Grammont, might attract the notice of Louis XV?

The question of morality counted for nothing. This hatred was instinctive and easily explained. Madame du Barry, who was henceforth the organ of the privy council, had a great dislike for the methods which allowed the members of parliament to gain so much power, and which showed so much respect for authors and philosophers; she attacked M. de Choiseul at every



[1768-1769 A.D.]

point. A butt for the minister's street songs, compelled to hear *La Belle Bourbonnaise* — a song entirely directed against her — sung daily under her windows, the young countess avenged herself by smart sayings. Having one day dismissed her cook because the king complained of a dish, she wittily said: "Sire, I have dismissed my Choiseul; when will you do the same with yours?" Another time she took as a symbol the coffee which was boiling over, to put into forcible language her conviction that the affairs of state were going to wrack and ruin. This was the way to please the king. He would laugh heartily at such pleasantries. But her attacks told, and the

power of the secret council increasing, Choiseul's ministry and particularly M. de Maupéou, were bowing before the influence of the new favourite.<sup>e</sup>



A FRENCH PEASANT.

## FINANCIAL TYRANNIES

For twelve years Choiseul had dealt with the kingdom and its finances with the greatest French frivolity, as if they had constituted the mere private concerns of the king. Before he retired he brought into the ministry one of the most hard-hearted and most audacious calculators who had been employed to drain the pockets of the people in France since the times of Emery. The abbé Terray, chosen minister of finance at the end of the year 1769, was a man wholly destitute of all feelings of humanity and compassion, and possessed a

countenance as insensible to emotion as those of Lord North, Talleyrand, and other diplomatic *virtuosi*. During the last years of the reign of Louis XV this man reduced the finances and the kingdom, whose credit was wholly destroyed, to such a condition that he himself openly admitted that he knew of no further means of supply, and yet, although all other payments were suspended, he caused Du Barry's allowance of 60,000 francs a month, which were appropriated by the king to this infamous courtesan, to be regularly paid.

Maupéou continued to be first president of the parliament till 1768, when he was appointed chancellor; he then became the most violent opponent of the parliament over which he had previously presided. Terray also engaged in a contest with the parliament. He published a number of edicts, by which all the payments then due were stopped, the payment of the bills

[1768-1770 A.D.]

drawn upon the farmers-general of the taxes refused, the interest due upon sums borrowed retained in the treasury, and the payment of the sums accumulating as a sinking-fund obstructed. He did not even stop here, but seized upon the moneys accumulated in the savings-banks; and whilst he allowed all other yearly salaries to remain unpaid, he continued to furnish the means for paying the royal pensioners and favourites. He withheld the payment of all the officers and servants of the state, because all the cash which could be collected was necessary for the supply of the king's privy purse, from which not a farthing was allowed to be taken for the expenditure of the state; and this ready money was used as a means of making speculations for the king's personal advantage.

One of the chief questions of French political economy at that time was the trade in corn, which, like every other description of intercourse and commerce, was subjected to numerous restrictions; Terray appeared of a sudden in 1768 to do homage to what was then regarded a most liberal principle, by setting it free from all restrictions; but in fact this free trade in corn was laid hold of as a means of some of the most scandalous speculations which were ever undertaken by a king for the benefit of his private resources. The bread of the poor and necessitous was made an object of royal speculation, not with a view to cheapen the price of bread to the poor, but to make it dearer; the blood-sucker who devised this "Famine Compact" was rich in various knowledge. No one among the privileged classes at that time suspected that the minister of finance, and afterwards the chancellor, by their measures drove through all the veins of the people that maddening hatred to a system of absolute monarchical government, which burst forth with such irrepressible violence and barbarous rage twenty years afterwards, precisely because it had been so long and so powerfully repressed.

#### THE PARLIAMENTS DEFY THE KING

Since his recall from Brittany the duke d'Aiguillon had been the inseparable companion of the king and his mistress. In order to have a privileged access to all the orgies of the palace, he had obtained the situation of commandant of the hussars of the royal guard; but the revenge of the parliament of Rennes followed him even to Versailles. The parliament declared that they were in a condition to furnish documentary evidence to prove that the duke, as governor of Brittany, had been guilty of suborning false witnesses against his enemies in the parliament, and even of attempting the lives of some of the councillors by poison: this question was now brought forward. A judicial prosecution against him was commenced. The king attempted to put an end to the prosecution, not in the usual way, but by a cabinet order (*arrêt du conseil*). This attempted interference on the part of the king with the usual course of law gave rise to such a violent commotion in the parliament, among the estates of Brittany, and by their means through the whole of France, that the chancellor himself became alarmed. The cause was withdrawn from the parliament of Rennes and referred to that of Paris, in order to deliver Aiguillon from the prosecutions promoted by La Chalotais and his party in a splendid and judicial manner, and to escape the bitter animosities of the whole province of Brittany on account of the violation of one of the chief conditions of their union with France. The king and his party wished to make sure of their cause, and at the same time to give the court the highest degree of solemnity and pomp; the sittings therefore were appointed to be held in the king's presence in Versailles, and the court to be

opened there on the 4th of April (1770). As long as the affair was new to the king, the speaking and procedure might have proved entertaining, but he soon became weary of the court; and besides, a pause in the proceedings took place, on account of the festivities in Paris and Versailles in consequence of the marriage of the Austrian princess Marie Antoinette with the king's grandson, the dauphin. These festivities were unhappily accompanied by a great misfortune and loss of human life.<sup>1</sup>

The parliament was now doubly irritated against the chancellor, the controller-general, and the scandalous proceedings of Aiguillon, Du Barry, and the king, because at this very moment they threatened to ruin and corrupt the successor to the throne also, by introducing the pure-minded bride of the dauphin, and the young dauphin himself, into the sink of pollution into which the palace of Versailles had been recently converted. Parliament therefore sought to revive all the former causes of accusation and contest. The violations of law and justice in the case of La Chalotais were not only brought before the court, but the question was raised and discussed anew, whether the king really possessed the right, by his own sign-manual and personal order (*lettres de cachet*), to seize upon and imprison whomsoever he pleased, and they appeared as if they were disposed to commence a prosecution even against those members of the cabinet who had advised the king in the affair of the parliament of Rennes. These movements excited great anxiety in the cabinet, and the parliament was summoned anew to meet in Versailles, in order to put an end to the prosecution against Aiguillon by a personal dictum of the king.

The parliament was now again about to have its power and privileges destroyed by being called to a royal sitting, in which its members were not allowed either to express their opinions or to give an open vote, and in which the chancellor, who went round and collected the votes in a low tone, could easily make the minority into the majority at his pleasure. It therefore resolved to anticipate the court. In order to prevent Aiguillon's case from being issued a third time by a royal *placet*, the whole parliament, at which the princes and peers were present, declared beforehand, that "they could never regard any accused person, and especially the duke d'Aiguillon, as acquitted when the verdict of acquittal was pronounced at a bed of justice." Notwithstanding this, such a Carlovingian or Merovingian court was held at Versailles on the 27th of June, 1770, in the queen's ante-chambers, on which occasion the young dauphiness, from a loge in one of the chambers, was a spectator of the grand drama of a solemn court of justice.

Upon the king's command and in his presence, it was declared that all the proceedings which had been taken before the parliament in the respective causes of the duke d'Aiguillon, La Chalotais, and Caraduc, were by this deed annulled; and moreover, that no one should hereafter dare either to revive those questions in any form whatsoever, or even to mention them.

Whilst the king was dining in public with Du Barry and Aiguillon in Marly, with the express design of distinguishing the latter by special marks of favour, the supreme court passed a sentence of condemnation upon the man whom the king thus delighted to honour, and in a form of unusual severity. A decree published on the 2nd of July declared the duke to be seriously inculpated and "affected" by suspicions and even by facts, which left a "stain upon his honour"; that he was therefore suspended from the

[<sup>1</sup> An enormous crowd gathered to see the fireworks, and the street being torn up, when a panic ensued from an accidental conflagration, over twelve hundred people according to Sismondi and Dareste were trampled to death in the rue Royale.]



[1770 A.D.]

enjoyment of all his privileges and functions as a peer, till he was fully acquitted by a court of peers, by a sentence passed after the observance of all the necessary forms prescribed by the laws of the kingdom, "for which nothing could be a substitute." This decree was not only immediately sent to the duke, but upon command of the parliament it was printed, together with the reasons on which it was founded, and ten thousand copies were circulated over the whole kingdom.

The government could not overlook this insulting measure, and the king was personally and grievously offended. On the 3rd of July, the decree of the parliament was formally annulled by the cabinet, and the rights and privileges of the peerage, which had been abrogated by the parliament, were confirmed anew and secured to the duke. This decision of the cabinet (*arrêt du conseil*) was communicated to the parliament in an unusual and most offensive manner. The chancellor, in the presence of the king and before his eyes, was obliged to remove the record from the minutes of parliament which had caused the council to annul the proceedings.

At that time Choiseul was raised in public opinion from being a mere courtier and ambitious intriguer to a patriot, a defender of justice and the laws against the arbitrary dominion of the king. The parliament found friends on the very grounds which afterwards caused Choiseul's banishment to be regarded as a martyrdom. The parliament, with all its intolerance, with its barbarous mode of action and its pedantic forms, appeared as the only bulwark of the people against the most cruel arbitrary dominion, and its boldest declarations against the royal council were received with rejoicing, because such decrees alone and popular ballads opened up an outlet for the free voice of the people, whilst the press was under the strict censorship of the police.

The complete suppression of popular opinion in those years, and the impossibility of finding a free vent for any national feelings, led to the formation of a party which opposed a rude audacity and shameless wit to the boldness of the courtiers and the court, who believed themselves above the reach of any power, protected by bayonets and the police. The extent of their self-deception was first fully experienced by Louis XVI, at the moment when he had need of the support of that public opinion, which his grandfather, with impunity, had despised through his whole life.

The king was prepared for any step, however senseless or bold; for he thought himself so far exalted above the whole nation that he might venture even in these unsettled times to raise the miserable profligate whom he protected and favoured, but who was condemned and disgraced by the parliament, to the dignity of first minister of the crown. This he really did. He also banished Choiseul to his country estate. It was easy to induce such a king to dispense with the services of the chief guardians of existing rights: this was effected by an arbitrary and sudden exercise of power (*coup d'état*) by means of the high police.

The contest between the king and the parliament affected not only the case of Aiguillon, but the main question was, whether in all future times in France the principles of the Turkish and Slavonian governments, which the king publicly and solemnly announced as his own, were to be considered valid, or the rights and privileges of the ancient Franks of German race were to be still defended and maintained. The parliament adhered rigidly to Frankish rights, whilst the king, Aiguillon, and Maupeou maintained the autocratic principle which is the law of Russia and Turkey. If therefore those principles were to be maintained, which his infallible king

had declared in 1766 to be just, and moreover to be his will, Maupeou must necessarily get rid of the ancient parliaments of France.

In 1766 the parliament of Paris declared that all the parliaments of the kingdom were "classes" or "branches" of a corporation, whose duty it was to defend the privileges and laws of "the kingdom": to this declaration the king expressly opposed his own autocracy. He maintained that all his subjects, from the prince to the peasant, were bound to acknowledge his will as the only foundation of justice and law. He alleged that his power was immediately derived from God; which perhaps, under certain conditions, no one would have been disposed to controvert; but it was impossible to acquiesce in the declaration by which it was accompanied, that "he alone was the only source of law and justice, and that for that reason he could or would make no account of a unity of sovereign power in matters of law



FRENCH CAVALRYMAN, EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

claimed by the parliament, or of the classes or branches of any such corporation." It was quite impossible for the parliament to concede any such principle as this, and it paid no respect whatever to the claim; Maupeou therefore secretly prepared his measures.

On the 7th of December, 1770, the king appeared in parliament, and in contempt of the decree which it had passed, he first commanded the duke d'Aiguillon to take his seat among the peers of the realm, and then further commanded that the royal decrees which the parliament had previously refused to enter should be now written down and entered upon their records in his presence.

The parliament could not allow this order to be entered on its records without acknowledging the justice of all that was said in the introduction to this sovereign dictum of the king. The royal act was therefore scarcely perfected, when it not only protested but also came to a resolution, to which it was scarcely justified in coming as a mere tribunal of justice; for it was not justified in refusing justice to the people in consequence of its disputes with the king. The parliament suddenly resolved that "in its deep sorrow it must suspend its functions, because the minds and spirits of its members

[1770 A.D.]

were too grievously oppressed to enable them to act as judges on questions affecting the property, lives, and honour of their fellow citizens." This resolution indeed compelled the parliament to enter upon a struggle which was neither creditable nor honourable to itself; because the court had here decided in its own cause, and the king, on the other hand, assumed the defence of the people in order to secure a court for the administration of justice.

## PARLIAMENT ADJOURNS DECEMBER 7TH, 1770

This struggle and cessation of duties on the part of the court continued for fourteen days, because neither the parliament nor the king would be the first to yield. The king made four attempts to reduce the parliament to obedience; all however in vain. And now Aiguillon, by the instrumentality of Du Barry, was elevated to be prime minister of France. This led to such internal commotions, that public order could only be maintained by military power.

Happily the people did not actively interfere; they only came of age and were ripe for action ten years afterwards; in the meantime they were quiet spectators of a contest carried on between their writers, princes, and parliament on the one hand, and the court on the other, which did not in the least affect their general interests.

As to the princes of the blood, they engaged in the struggle merely because they would have wished to seize upon and exercise the power which Aiguillon possessed; and they were far from entertaining any idea of carrying on a longer struggle for justice and law than their own interests required; they gave proofs, however, that there were persons who could venture openly to resist the king and to answer him rudely, and thereby paved a way for bolder men, which seventeen years after some of them ventured to tread.

The remarkable scene illustrative of this remark, and the personal and public dispute which took place between the king and the duke of Orleans and prince of Conti, stand alone in French history since the time of Louis XIV. The duke of Orleans said to the king, June 27th, 1770, "Since we are not allowed to deliver our opinions without constraint, I cannot in my conscience approve of these cabinet orders, which are neither consistent with the law, the constitution, nor the honour of the peers." The king replied, "In case my parliament should summon the peers, I forbid you to attend, and commission you to make my will known to the other princes of the blood." The duke answered, "Sire, the other princes of the blood are here; such a command will proceed more becomingly from your mouth than from mine." The king turned to the princes, and said, "You hear, messieurs?" "Yes, sire, we hear something which is very repugnant to the rights of the peers, and not very advantageous to the duke d'Aiguillon."

The parliaments of Bordeaux and Toulouse passed a judgment precisely of the same import with that of the parliament of Paris, against the inseparable companion and minister of the king, and the parliament of Rennes returned the king's letters-patent unopened. As a punishment for this act of insubordination, the king caused two deputies from the court, who had been sent to him to Paris, to be thrown into prison. The parliament of Metz also by a sentence which it pronounced gave rise to a formal campaign on the part of the uniforms against the robes of justice. Marshal d'Armentières marched against the peaceful parliament with eight companies of grenadiers, tore out the sentence from their records before their eyes, released the advocates who had been arrested by command of the parliament, and in his turn carried off



some of the councillors of parliament to places of banishment. The parliament of Rouen and the chief college of taxes ("the court of aids") did not suffer themselves to be terrified by these acts of violence from sending representations to the court, couched in strongest language. The parliament of Bordeaux was not deterred or turned aside from its course: it would not for a moment recognise the right, which the king's council assumed, of annulling a sentence which had been legally passed, and of laying down the principle, "that there is no other justice or law in the land except the will of the sovereign, and that the courts and officers of justice are a species of royal servants."

The government of France proceeded upon this principle with the parliaments in January, 1771, and with the parliament of Paris in particular. Everything was carried through by mere military power. The friends of darkness rejoiced; and there seemed to be no suspicion that such agitation was but the outward sign of a deep inward movement of the public will, growing and increasing with the progress of the age and oppression exercised by sovereign powers.<sup>d</sup>

#### FALL OF THE PARLIAMENTS (1771 A.D.)

The edict of December 7th, 1770, shook the very foundations of a magistracy that had existed for centuries. From one end to the other of France the reconstruction took place. Only one aim was kept in view, namely, to render the king's authority, and that of his ministers acting in his name, supreme and absolute over the fortunes of the nation. But Louis XV hesitated. Maupeou's enterprise appeared to him dangerous. However, subject to the persistent persuasions of his mistress, who in her turn was urged on by the duke d'Aiguillon, with whom Maupeou was carrying on a secret intrigue, he at last yielded and consented to shelter his own weakness behind the energy of the chancellor; but he reserved the right of disowning his part in the business should the latter fail, and of punishing his minister in a most signal manner for the disappointment that he, the king, would have to endure.

On the night of the 19th of January, 1771, two musketeers made their way, in the king's name, into the houses of the members of parliament. They ordered the members to resume their functions, and enjoined them to answer in writing, without comment or remark, a simple "yes" or "no." Confused by this fatal awakening, moved by the tears and terror of their families, thirty-eight magistrates wrote "yes": the rest held out. Soon even those who had consented, began to feel ashamed of what they had done; they felt that honour forbade them to forsake their colleagues, and they all retracted the consent which they had been surprised into giving.

The following night they were again awakened. The king's officer entered and informed them they had all been deprived of their offices by a decision of the council, which forbade them ever to perform their functions again or to sit as members of parliament. A few moments after, some musketeers arrived bringing warrants, exiling the recalcitrant members to different places, all distant both from the capital and from each other.<sup>1</sup> On the 23rd of January, the chancellor summoned a provisional parliament consisting of members of the council of state; a monstrous combination, because in cases of appeal to a higher tribunal the judgments pronounced by one part of the council which called itself the parliament would have to be revised by the other

[<sup>1</sup> Before the end of the year over 700 members of various parliaments were in exile.]

[1771 A.D.]

part of the council. As early as the month of February, the provisional parliament recorded an edict creating higher courts (a kind of parliament) in the towns of Arras, Blois, Châlons-sur-Marne, Clermont, Lyons, and Poitiers.

The fall of the parliaments created a profound sensation, but produced no sign of rebellion. The proscribed members showed noble resignation and did not appeal to the interest or sympathy of the multitude. The people remained calm because they were indifferent. They blamed the parliament for not having defended the interests of the ratepayers with as much energy as it had shown in the defence of its own prerogatives. The parliament had, besides, powerful enemies in those who supported the Jesuits and the priests, while Voltaire, and the philosophers whose writings had been condemned by the parliament, openly rejoiced in its ruin. Philosophy in this case cared more for revenge than for the interests of liberty; this approbation was loudly testified, and the echo of these rejoicings penetrated to the people and was not without influence on public opinion.

But side by side with this indifference to the fate of parliament, there arose a deep feeling of indignation against those who were vilely flattering a courtesan, who openly professed a contempt for the laws, destroyed the constitution of the law courts, exiled people, confiscated their property, and built upon the ruins of liberty a most humiliating despotism. The agitation produced by this feeling was in proportion to the progress of ideas on liberty. Weak as yet among the lower classes, more pronounced in the middle classes, it had spread rapidly among the aristocracy.

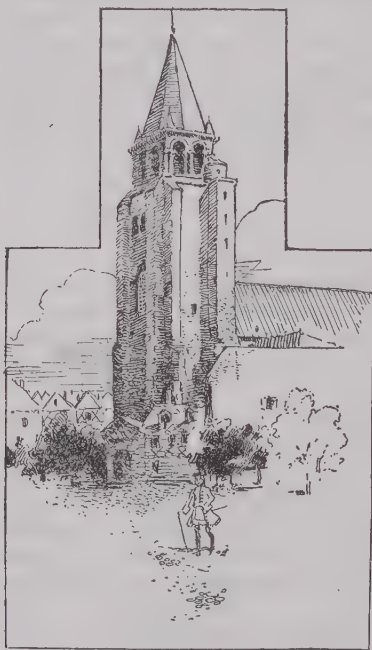
Paris, said Baron Besenval,<sup>h</sup> which by its outcry had urged on the parliament to make a desperate resistance, rose against this act of authority (the edict of December 7th); it was quite a different thing when, a few days later, the parliament and the "court of aids" were formally dissolved. Then the excitement was universal; amongst women especially. According to them, the monarchy was being undermined; and they spoke of members of parliament as of victims who were being sacrificed on the altar of despotism.

All the princes of the blood except the count de la Marche, son of the prince of Conti, made known to the parliamentary recorder that they protested against all the recent acts. The resistance of the bar was unanimous. Barristers refused to plead before the semblance of a court which had replaced the former judges, and attorneys would give no instructions for the undertaking of any proceedings.

The firmest as well as the most intelligent opposition came from the court of aids which was presided over by Lamoignon de Malesherbes. In the protest against the edict of December, 1770, and the state of the magistracy, a protest adopted by the court of aids on the 18th of February, the illustrious magistrate firmly declares what are the foundations of kingly authority and obedience of subjects:

"By what fatality, sire, are your most loyal subjects forced to remind their master of the obligations which providence laid upon him in giving him the crown? You only hold the crown from God, sire. You also owe your power to the voluntary submission of your subjects, and to that attachment to your royal blood which we have inherited from our ancestors. Deign to remember that the divine power is the source of all legitimate sovereignty, but that its whole aim and object is to insure the greatest happiness to humanity; that God only crowns kings in order to procure for his subjects security of life, personal liberty, and peaceful enjoyment of property.

"There exist in France, as in all monarchies, certain inviolable rights which belong to the nation. In spite of the machinations of those who are endeavouring to sow disaffection in your kingdom, they have not yet succeeded in persuading you that there is no difference between the French nation and a nation of slaves. The law of property is, of all human laws, the one which has heretofore been most respected in France. That a man cannot be deprived of his office is also a sacred law in this kingdom, for it is through that alone that any citizen can feel sure of his position. Therefore confiscation of property, and especially confiscation of office, have never been decreed except after a criminal inquiry. For the first time, sire, since the founding of the kingdom, we have just seen both property and offices confiscated after a mere allegation and by a decision of your council.



CHURCH OF ST. GERMAIN DES PRÉS,  
PARIS

"The nation used formerly to have the satisfaction of making known its grievances to the kings who preceded you; but for a century and a half the states have not been convened.<sup>1</sup> Until now the protests of the courts have, to a certain extent, made up for those of the states; but to-day the last resource which was left to the people has been taken from them. The people, now that their representatives are dispersed, have no longer any means of making themselves heard. The nobility, who are nearer to your majesty, are obliged to keep silent. Finally, even the princes of the blood seem to be denied access to the throne. Question the nation itself, sire, since the nation alone is permitted to be heard by your majesty. The incorruptible testimony of its representatives will show at least whether the magistracy alone is

interested in the violation of the laws, or whether the cause we are defending to-day is that of the people, through whom and by whom you are king."

The king only admitted the delegates of the court of aids, charged with the complaints of that court, on the 4th of March following. He said to them, "I shall not receive the protests of the court of aids if such protests concern matters which do not come within its province, and still less, if before being presented to me, they have been allowed to gain publicity."

A solemn mass was to be celebrated on the 22nd of March in memory of the entry of Henry IV into Paris, and the different courts were summoned to attend. On the 20th the members of the court of aids decided that they would withdraw if the stalls set apart for the members of parliament were occupied by any except those who formerly belonged to that institution, and, finding these places occupied by members of the provisional parliament, the court actually retired. On their return to the palace, they renewed their protest, declaring they would acknowledge none of the acts of the new court,

<sup>1</sup> The last states-general had been convoked in 1614 under Louis XIII.



[1771 A.D.]

and forbidding all officers within their jurisdiction to yield obedience to it. Before many days had passed the president was banished to Malesherbes.

Royal commissioners appeared on the 9th of April before the court of aids which had been convoked by warrants, and recorded an edict suppressing that court and transferring its functions to the parliaments and the higher councils. This being done, Marshal Richelieu enjoined the magistrates to disperse. They remained seated and declared they would only yield to force.

The marshal called in the soldiers. Then the court retired, led by the king's officers. All the members afterwards met at the house of the president De Boisgibault, who was presiding in the absence of Malesherbes, and signed a protest against the edict suppressing the court. A warrant was issued banishing the president De Boisgibault.

The inadequacy of the provisional parliament soon made itself felt. The chancellor saw the necessity of making some definite organization which would inspire confidence, but where was he to find the constituents of a new parliament? The former members rejected every proposal that was made to them; they preferred honourable banishment, and not one of them was deterred by the prospect of losing the income arising from his office. The great council was then appealed to, being supposed to cherish an old grudge against the parliament in consequence of former disputes. Its adherence was obtained, except in the case of some members who were consequently banished. The great council formed the nucleus of the new court, where the number of judges was reduced to seventy. This was augmented by twelve ecclesiastics, several councillors of the court of aids, and some legal personages.

The king summoned these heterogeneous elements to Versailles on the 13th of April. Three edicts were read before this assembly and were recorded, although the council had no legal existence because it had not been formally installed. The first edict dissolved the Paris parliament, the second suppressed the court of aids, the third transformed the great council into a parliament.

Séguier, advocate-general, had the courage to utter before Louis XV and the judges who had superseded the former magistrates a speech representing the dissolution of parliament as a source of disturbance to men's minds and of confusion in the state. To this speech, the king, in closing the assembly, replied in the following words: "You have just heard my intentions, I wish them to be complied with. I command you to begin your duties on Monday. My chancellor shall install you. I forbid any protests against my wishes, and any representations in favour of my former parliament, for I shall never change." He pronounced these last words with an energy which was not habitual to him, and which created a profound impression.

The following day the attorney-general and the advocates-general sent in their resignations. Whilst these things were going on, the king was forming his ministry.

The countess du Barry wished the duke d'Aiguillon to be foreign minister, as another mortification for Choiseul. But it was necessary to wait till the sensation caused by the blow which had been struck at the parliament had somewhat calmed down. The duke d'Aiguillon was only declared minister in the month of June. The severity of his character supplemented the obstinacy and impetuosity of Maupeou. Severe measures became more and more frequent. Already the king, in letters written by himself, had forbidden any of the princes of the blood "to appear in his

presence, to see any member of the royal family, or to frequent any place where the court might be established." Anyone who opposed the chancellor's plans was either banished or imprisoned. If a parliament, by its decisions or by its representations, reflected in any way upon the new tribunals, it was immediately dissolved and replaced by judges chosen from among the sheriffs or seneschals. All the parliaments in the kingdom were thus successively destroyed and reconstructed during the year 1771.

This revolution of judicial order had taken place without any hindrance. Open opposition gradually diminished, as the new tribunals became consolidated and seemed to give promise of stability. At the end of some months, part of the bar reappeared in court. Many members of the former parliament, weary of exile, consented to a liquidation of their financial claims, thus seeming to acquiesce in the measure which struck a mortal blow at their whole order. The princes found their banishment from court a great hardship. By mutual agreement it was resolved to look upon their protest as not having taken place, and they reappeared at Versailles—first, the prince of Condé and the duke de Bourbon, later on the Orleans family. The prince of Conti alone remained true to his convictions.

Maupeou and Aiguillon were triumphant. Their work seemed to be prospering, their ascendancy complete. Madame du Barry was a reigning power; the princes frequented her receptions, and many of the courtiers intrigued to gain the privilege of being admitted to the supper-parties at which she entertained the king. But this apparent calm concealed a deep wound. Maupeou had set a disastrous example of instability, and furnished a logical justification of future revolutions. People saw in his policy only an attempt to establish a weak despotism built up by an adventurer, assisted by a courtesan.

Montesquieu,<sup>i</sup> when discussing the different forms of government, had pointed out those which he considered most likely to conduce to the liberty and happiness of nations. In the midst of their declamations against religion, the philosophers also threw out suggestions of liberty, and soon men's imaginations began to follow them in their inquiries as to the right relations between sovereigns and their subjects, and the duties of people to the king. The attack directed by Maupeou against the inviolability of the magistracy, gave a considerable impetus to this disposition of men's minds. Already the expression "the sovereignty of the people" was being timidly uttered in this old nation which was trying to become young again. If no revolt took place in 1771 it was because the educated classes, amongst whom revolutions always originate, not knowing exactly what they desired, had not been able to incite the lower classes, who put their convictions into action almost before they are clearly defined. Around the king chaos was beginning to prevail. No sooner had the ministers overcome their enemies than they became divided against themselves, each one trying to grasp power at the expense of his colleagues. In society confusion reigned, because, while exceedingly tired of existing things, men knew not what means to adopt in order to change what they disliked.

The general dissatisfaction was shown in popular songs and jokes incessantly passing from mouth to mouth. The latest news of the disgraceful proceedings at court, and the vileness of certain magistrates were rapidly circulated and eagerly sought for by the irritated public. The police found it impossible to stop the sale of satirical writings. "The libel-mongers," says Lacretelle,<sup>j</sup> "had acquired such power that the court sometimes compounded with them and bribed them to suppress their insulting statements

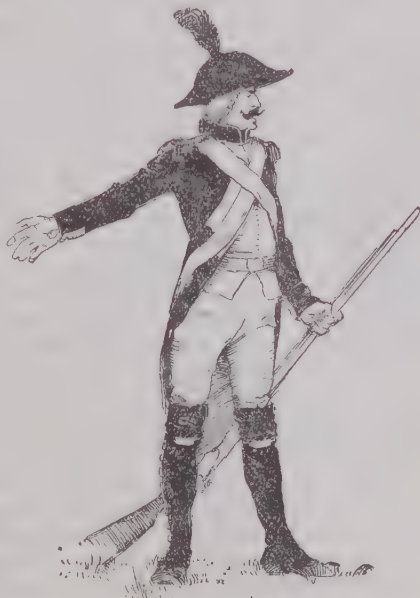
[1771-1773 A.D.]

so that the whole of Europe might not ring with them." What can the police do against a crime in which everyone is an accomplice? They obtained obedience, but were laughed at all the same. The punishments appeared more ridiculous than terrible, people cared little for a few months' banishment provided it helped to bring about a better state of things. Some military men even were beginning to doubt the doctrine of passive obedience.

It did indeed vanish, but the monarchy fell into decay at the same time. The revolutionary tendency received a powerful impetus from the deep resentment aroused by Maupeou and Terray, who succeeded in alienating all parties. The first, not satisfied with having wrecked the magistracy, kept provinces where the states were held<sup>1</sup> in subjection to terrorism. Warrants were issued more frequently than ever from the office of the duke de la Vrillière. The marchioness of Langéac, his mistress, used to sell them, and never refused one to any powerful man who had a grievance to avenge or a passion to gratify.<sup>k</sup>

The comte de Ségur tells an anecdote whose humour renders it all the more horrible, as an instance of the corrupt ministry under the duke de la Vrillière: One day the chevalier de Coigny met a young flower girl remarkable for her beauty, called Jeanneton. She looked remarkably happy and on his asking why, said, "I am joyful because I have been to the count de Sainte-Florentin, and Madame . . . persuaded him to give me for ten louis a warrant of arrest against my husband, who is a brute, and is cruel to me."

Two years after the count met the same Jeanneton, but now pale, thin, and hollow-eyed. "Why, Jeanneton, what has become of you, my poor girl; I never see you?" "Alas, sir, I was very silly to rejoice. My husband had the same idea as myself. He went to the same minister and by the same means got me sent to prison, so that twenty louis were spent by our poor family to get both of us shut up."<sup>l</sup>



AN INFANTRYMAN, END OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

## THE LAST DAYS OF LOUIS XV (1774 A.D.)

Meanwhile, his old fear of hell had grown upon the king with increased force; and this it was that suggested to Du Barry the fantastic idea of playing the rôle of De Maintenon. While the first dignitaries of the church prostituted the Roman purple at the feet of a courtesan, a simple priest had

[<sup>1</sup> These were the *pays d'état*, of which there were seventeen in 1789, such as Brittany, Burgundy, Provence, Languedoc, etc. These were the most recent acquisitions of the crown, and had retained certain of the old liberties.]



dared to raise a protesting voice. The abbé De Beauvais, preaching the sermon on Holy Thursday, 1773, before the king and his favourite, stupefied the court with this allusion: "Solomon, fallen anew into debauchery, worn out in the attempt to spur his jaded senses by all the pleasures surrounding the throne, ended by seeking fresh diversions among the vile dregs of public corruption!"

He awaited at least disgrace, if not even the Bastille; he received a bishopric. Louis rewarded the rude warning, but he failed to profit by it. The Du Barry, terrified, plunged him deeper still into the mud; the favourite called to her aid all the infamies of the *Parc-aux-Cerfs*.<sup>1</sup> Seeking therein a pillar of support, she found instead her own ruin and Louis' death. The latter, an old man reeking with corruption, was at last struck down by his own vices, and his last victim dragged him to the tomb. A girl hardly more than a child, daughter of a miller in the environs of Trianon, by force of promises and threats had been delivered up to Louis by the royal police. Carrying in her system the germs of smallpox, of which she herself soon after died, she infected the king. On April 29th, 1774, the disease broke out, complicated by other evils smouldering in his vitiated blood.<sup>2</sup>

Du Barry and her creatures held their own for some days against those who preached penitence and the sacraments; when, the situation growing desperate, Louis sent the favourite to the duke d'Aiguillon at Ruel. The day following he declared that, though responsible for his conduct to God alone, he regretted having been the cause of scandal to his subjects. Dying despotism still stammered its formulas, interrupted by the death-rattle.

As on the famous journey of Metz, in 1744, Versailles, Paris—all France awaited anxiously day by day, hour by hour, news of the health of that prince known in those other days as Louis the Well-beloved; but this time one dread alone was manifested—that he would recover. When it was known that he had at last expired, the 10th of May, at two in the afternoon, a heavy weight was lifted from the heart of France.<sup>3</sup> The putrefied remains, which tainted the air, were removed in haste and without pomp to St. Denis, amid the sarcasms of the crowd which lined the way.<sup>n</sup>

### *Carlyle on the Last Hours of Louis XV*

Louis would not suffer Death to be spoken of; avoided the sight of churchyards, funeral monuments, and whatsoever would bring it to mind. It is the resource of the Ostrich. Or sometimes, with a spasmodic antagonism, significant of the same thing, and of more, he would go; or stopping his court carriages would send into churchyards, and ask "how many new graves there were to-day," though it gave his poor Pompadour the disagreeablest qualms. We can figure the thought of Louis that day, when, all royally caparisoned for hunting, he met, at some sudden turning in the Wood of Senart, a ragged Peasant with a coffin: "For whom?"—It was for a poor brother slave, whom Majesty had sometimes noticed slaying in those quarters: "What did he die of?"—"Of hunger": the King gave him the steed.

<sup>1</sup> We speak figuratively; since the actual *Parc-aux-Cerfs*, the house on the rue St. Méderic had been sold by the king in 1771.

<sup>2</sup> His three daughters, who had never had the disease, presented a beautiful example of filial devotion: they cared for him devotedly during the course of the illness.

<sup>3</sup> The *Mémoires de Bachaumont* cite a significant speech of the abbé Ste. de Geneviève. Some young philosophers were joking over the inefficacy of the saint's intervention in the malady of the late king. "Of what do you complain," interjected the abbé; "is he not dead?"

[1774 A.D.]

But figure his thought, when Death is now clutching at his own heart-strings; unlooked for, inexorable! Yes, poor Louis, Death has found thee. No palace walls or life-guards, gorgeous tapestries or gilt buckram of stiffest ceremonial could keep him out; but he is here, here at thy very life-breath, and will extinguish it. Thou, whose whole existence hitherto was a chimera and scenic show, at length becomest a reality: sumptuous Versailles bursts asunder, like a Dream, into void Immensity; Time is done and all the scaffolding of Time falls wrecked with hideous clangour round thy soul: the pale Kingdoms yawn open; there must thou enter, naked, all unkinged, and await what is appointed for Thee! Unhappy man, there as thou turnest, in dull agony, on thy bed of weariness, what a thought is thine! Purgatory and Hell-fire, now all too possible, in the prospect: in the retrospect,—alas, what thing didst thou do that were not better undone; what mortal didst thou generously help; what sorrow hadst thou mercy on? Do the “five hundred thousand” ghosts, who sank shamefully on so many battle-fields from Rossbach to Quebec, that thy Harlot might take revenge for an epigram,—crowd round thee in this hour? Thy foul Harem; the curses of mothers, the tears and infamy of daughters? Miserable man! thou “hast done evil as thou couldst”: thy whole existence seems one hideous abortion and mistake of Nature; the use and meaning of thee not yet known. Wert thou a fabulous Griffin, devouring the works of men; daily dragging virgins to thy cave; clad also in scales that no spear would pierce: no spear but Death’s? A Griffin not fabulous but real! Frightful, O Louis, seem these moments for thee.

And yet let no meanest man lay flattering unction to his soul. Louis was a Ruler; but art thou not also one? His wide France, look at it from the Fixed Stars (themselves not yet Infinitude), is no wider than thy narrow brick-field, where thou too didst faithfully, or didst unfaithfully. Man, “Symbol of Eternity imprisoned into Time!” it is not thy works, which are all mortal, infinitely little, and the greatest no greater than the least, but only the Spirit thou workest in, that can have worth or continuance.

But reflect, in any case, what a life-problem this of poor Louis, when he rose as *Bien-Aimé* from that Metz sick-bed, really was! What son of Adam swayed such incoherences into coherence? Could he? Blindest Fortune alone has cast him on the top of it: he swims there; can as little sway it as the drift-log sways the wind-tossed, moon-stirred Atlantic. “What have I done to be so loved?” he said then. He may say now: What have I done to be so hated? Thou hast done nothing, poor Louis! Thy fault is properly



A FRENCH SOLDIER, TIME OF LOUIS XV

even this, that thou didst nothing. What could poor Louis do? Abdicate, and wash his hands of it, in favour of the first that would accept? Other clear wisdom there was none for him. As it was, he stood gazing dubiously, the absurdest mortal extant (a very Solecism Incarnate) into the absurdest confused world; wherein at last nothing seemed so certain as this, That he, the incarnate Solecism, had five senses that were Flying Tables (Tables Volantes, which vanish through the floor, to come back reloaded), and a Parc-aux-Cerfs.

He who would understand to what a pass Catholicism, and much else, had now got; and how the symbols of the Holiest have become gambling-dice of the Basest, must read the narrative of those things by Besenval,<sup>h</sup> and Soulavie,<sup>o</sup> and the other Court Newsmen of the time. He will see the Versailles Galaxy all scattered asunder, grouped into new ever-shifting Constellations. There are nods and sagacious glances; go-betweens, silk dowagers mysteriously gliding, with smiles for this constellation, sigh for that: there is tremor, of hope or desperation, in several hearts. There is the pale grinning Shadow of Death, ceremoniously ushered along by another grinning Shadow, of Etiquette: at intervals the growl of Chapel Organs, like prayer by machinery; proclaiming, as a kind of horrid diabolic horse-laughter, "Vanity of vanities, all is Vanity!" Poor Louis! With these it is a hollow phantasmagory, where like mimes they mope and mowl, and utter false sounds for hire; but with thee it is frightful earnest.

Doomed mortal;—for is it not a doom to be Solecism incarnate! A new *Roi Fainéant*, King Donothing; but with the strangest new Mayor of the Palace: no bow-legged Pepin now for Mayor, but that same Cloudeapt, fire-breathing Spectre of Democracy; incalculable, which is enveloping the world! Was Louis, then, no wickedder than this or the other private Donothing and Eatall; such as we often enough see, under the name of Man of Pleasure, cumbering God's diligent Creation, for a time? Say, wretcheder! His Life-solecism was seen and felt of a whole scandalised world; him endless Oblivion cannot engulf, and swallow to endless depths, —not yet for a generation or two.

However, be this as it will, we remark, not without interest, that "on the evening of the 4th," Dame du Barry issues from the sick-room, with perceptible "trouble in her visage." It is the fourth evening of May, year of Grace 1774. Such a whispering in the *Œil-de-Bœuf*! Is he dying, then? What can be said, is that Du Barry seems making up her packages; she sails weeping through her gilt boudoirs, as if taking leave. Aiguillon and Company are near their last card; nevertheless they will not yet throw up the game. But as for the sacramental controversy, it is as good as settled without being mentioned; Louis sends for his Abbé Moudon in the course of next night; is confessed by him, some say for the space of "seventeen minutes," and demands the sacraments of his own accord.

Nay already, in the afternoon, behold is not this your Sorceress du Barry with the handkerchief at her eyes, mounting Aiguillon's chariot; rolling off in his Duchess's consolatory arms? She is gone: and her place knows her no more. Vanish, false Sorceress; into Space! Needless to hover at neighbouring Ruel; for thy day is done. Shut are the royal palace-gates for evermore; hardly in coming years shalt thou, under cloud of night, descend once, in black domino, like a black night-bird, and disturb the fair Antoinette's music-party in the park; all Birds of Paradise flying from thee, and musical windpipes growing mute. Thou unclean, yet unalignant, not unpitiable thing! What a course was thine: from that first trucklebed



[1774 A.D.]

(in Joan of Arc's country) where thy mother bore thee, with tears, to an unnamed father: forward, through lowest subterranean depths, and over highest sunlit heights, of Harlotdom and Rascaldom to the guillotine-axe, which sheers away thy vainly whimpering head! Rest there uncursed; only buried and abolished; what else belittled thee?

Louis, meanwhile, is in considerable impatience for his sacraments: sends more than once to the window, to see whether they are not coming. Be of comfort, Louis, what comfort thou canst: they are under way, these sacraments. Towards six in the morning, they arrive. Cardinal Grand Almoner Roche-Aymon is here in pontificals, with his pyxes and his tools: he approaches the royal pillow: elevates his wafer: mutters or seems to mutter somewhat:—and so (as the Abbe Georgel, in words that stick to one, expresses it) has Louis “made the *amende honorable* to God”: so does your Jesuit construe it.—“*Wa, Wa,*” as the wild Clotaire groined out, when life was departing, “what great God is this that pulls down the strength of the strongest kings!”

The *amende honorable*, what “legal apology” you will, to God: but not, if Aiguillon can help it, to man. Du Barry still hovers in his mansion at Ruel and while there is life, there is hope. Grand Almoner Roche-Aymon, accordingly (for he seems to be in the secret), has no sooner seen his pyxes and gear repacked than he is stepping majestically forth again, as if the work were done! But King's Confessor Abbe Mondon starts forward, with anxious acidulent face, twitches him by the sleeve: whispers in his ear. Whereupon the poor Cardinal has to turn round, and declare audibly, “that his Majesty repents of any subjects of scandal he may have given (*a pud monner*): and purposes, by the strength of Heaven assisting him, to avoid the like—for the future!” Words listened to by Richelieu with mastiff face, growing blacker; and answered to, aloud, “with an epithet,”—which Besenval will not repeat. Old Richelieu, conqueror of Minorca, companion of Flying-Table orgies, perforator of bedroom walls, is thy day also done?

So it has lasted for the better of half a fortnight: the Du Barry gone almost a week. Besenval<sup>h</sup> says, all the world was getting impatient *que cela finît*: that poor Louis would have done with it. It is now the 10th of May, 1774. He will soon have done now. This tenth May day falls into the loathsome sick-bed: but dull, unnoticed there: for they that look out of the windows are quite darkened: the cistern-wheel moves discordant on its axis: Life, like a spent steed, is panting towards the goal. In their remote apartments, Dauphin and Dauphiness stand road ready: all grooms and equerries booted and spurred: waiting for some signal to escape the house of pestilence.

And hark! across the Ciel de Bœuf, what sound is that: sound “terrible and absolutely like thunder?” It is the rush of the whole Court, rushing as in wager, to salute the new Sovereigns: Hail to your Majesties! The Dauphin and Dauphiness are King and Queen! Overpowered with many emotions, they too fall on their knees together, and, with streaming tears, exclaim: “O God, guide us, protect us; we are too young to reign!”—Too young indeed.

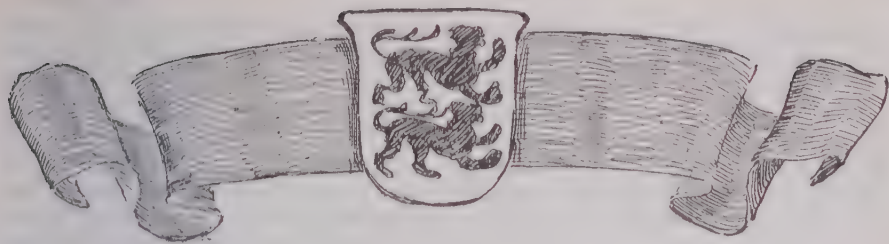
But hush, in any case, “with a sound absolutely like thunder,” has the Horologe of Time struck, and an old Era passed away. The Louis that was, lies forsaken, a mass of abhorred clay; abandoned “to some poor persons, and priests of the Chapelle Ardente,”—who make haste to put him “in two lead coffins pouring in abundant spirits of wine.” The new Louis with his Court is rolling towards Choisy, through the summer afternoon: the royal tears still flow; but a word mispronounced by Monseigneur d'Artois sets

them all laughing, and they weep no more. Light Mortals, how ye walk your light life-minuet, over bottomless abysses, divided from you by a film.

For the rest, the proper authorities felt that no Funeral could be too unceremonious. Besenval himself thinks it was unceremonious enough. Carriages containing two noblemen of the usher species, and a Versailles clerical person; some score of mounted pages, some fifty palfreniers: these, with torches, but not so much as in black, start from Versailles on the second evening, with their leaden bier. At a high trot, they start; and keep up that pace. For the jibes (*brocards*) of those Parisians, who stand planted in two rows, all the way to St. Denis, and "give vent to their pleasantry, the characteristic of the nation," do not tempt one to slacken. Towards midnight the vaults of St. Denis receive their own: unwept by any eye of all these; if not by poor Loque his neglected Daughter's, whose Nunnery is hard by.

Him they crush down, and huddle under-ground, in this impatient way; him and his era of sin and tyranny and shame: for behold a New Era is come; the future all the brighter that the past was base.<sup>p</sup>





## CHAPTER IV

### THE AGE OF VOLTAIRE

[1717-1789 A.D.]

The real age of Louis XIV included but twenty-five or thirty years, the age of Voltaire extends from his first imprisonment to the French Revolution. Voltaire dominated his epoch longer and more efficaciously than did Louis XIV. He held it by the head and by the heart. He was the point of departure or the centre of the whole intellectual movement; he shook up all ideas; in every kind of literary work he has given us works of prime importance; for more than sixty years his voice did not cease to make itself heard. The fact that his adversaries are chiefly known to us as "Voltaire's enemies" proves his kingship. He was in his time "the king Voltaire." — RAMBAUD.<sup>b</sup>

IN the eighteenth century, with Louis XV, royalty renounced its self-assumed direction over matters of the mind. It did nothing for letters: it continued to do almost nothing for science, while the superintendence of the fine arts, intrusted in 1751 to Poisson, marquis de Marigny and brother of Madame de Pompadour, encouraged but an inferior art. French royalty allowed foreign sovereigns to usurp the protector's rôle which formerly Louis XIV exercised in their dominions.

In reality, however, men of letters had no longer any need of the throne's protection. In the sixteenth century they depended on the nobles, in the seventeenth on the king; now, in the eighteenth, they looked for support to the public.

Louis XV was too much the slave of a complex etiquette to mix with his subjects; moreover he had no taste for men of letters, and above all he feared them. When it came to a matter of protection he had to protect himself against them. To please their new masters, the public, they attacked the ancient system of government on all sides. All was changed in the relations of king and men of letters. The true king of the latter was no longer at Versailles; he was at Ferney.<sup>b</sup>

#### VOLTAIRE

Three men were at the head of the movement; Voltaire, Rousseau, and Montesquieu. The first, whose real name was Arouet, was born in Paris in 1694, his father being a former notary and native of Poitou. He saw only the unhappy years of the great king, and was one of the most ardent leaders



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in the reaction which burst forth against the religious customs of the preceding reign. At twenty-one years of age, thrown into the Bastille on account of a satire against Louis XIV which he had not written, he was already paying the price of his reputation for wit and malice. Having opened his career with his tragedy of *Œdipe*, full of threatening verses (1718) and the *Henriade*, an apology for religious toleration (1723), he immediately achieved renown, and was everywhere sought after. He was, however, one day to feel the disadvantage of the highly aristocratic society into the midst of

which he had been introduced from his earliest youth and which suited his brilliant and buoyant wit, his fine and delicate temperament. A chevalier de Rohan-Chabot, having spoken insolently to him, was quickly punished for it by one of those stinging replies which Voltaire knew so well how to deliver. The cowardly and brutal grand seigneur revenged himself by the hands of his lackeys. Voltaire, having no lackeys, demanded satisfaction. The gentleman, by a second act of cowardice, persuaded the minister to lock up this impudent plebeian, who dared call himself grand seigneur, in the Bastille. Being released soon afterwards, but on condition of leaving the country, Voltaire went to England "to learn and to think." He remained there three years engaged in the study of Locke, Newton, and Shakespeare with a mind more eager for liberty of thought and speech than for political liberty. On his return his dramas, *Brutus* and *La Mort de César*, placed on the French stage a reflection of the great English tragedian and his *Lettres anglaises* made popular the ideas of the wise philosopher and the great astronomer. This was not accomplished with-



JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU

out persecution. The latter work was burned at the hands of the executioner.

Voltaire, who owed to Christian sentiment two of his most beautiful poetical works, *Zaïre* and *Tancrède*, attacked the church without ceasing, and his strongest as well as his most constant efforts were directed against that spiritual power which hampered thought, even more than against the civil authority which only hindered action. To prosecute this war he allied himself to sovereigns and worked under their protection. He was in correspondence with the great Catherine of Russia and many German princes. He sojourned at the court of Frederick II, that sceptic and learned prince whose French verses he corrected. This relation with foreign monarchs rendered him insensible to the reverses of France. His native land seemed to him to be where liberty of thought reigned, and thus he forgot his true fatherland. He finally established himself at the extremity of France on the very frontier in order to be able at the first indication of peril to cross over to Ferney near Geneva. From there issued light verses, letters, tragedies, novels, works of history, science, and philosophy, carried as it were by the winds, and making the tour of Europe in a few days.

For good or evil, Voltaire represented the society of his time. He was indifferent to the disordered state of morals, and if hidden under a brilliant

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outside, he was ready to esteem it as an added elegance. But in aging with the century he took, like it, to more serious thoughts. The social evil became his personal enemy, and love of justice his strongest passion. He rescued and defended the victims of deplorable judicial errors; he denounced unceasingly the numerous faults of legislation, of jurisprudence and public administration; and all the reforms in the civil order which he solicited have been accomplished after his time. He had, in a certain way, the intellectual government of Europe for fifty years, and justly merited the hatred of those who were blind enough to imagine that the world could remain stationary, and the admiration of those who regarded society as under an obligation to work without ceasing for its material and moral amelioration. Cardinal de Bernis, in 1775, called him "the great man of the century," and with reason.<sup>c</sup>

## ROUSSEAU (1712-1778 A.D.)

Jean Jacques Rousseau exercised an influence of another sort. Voltaire spoke with the accents of a sovereign; Rousseau wrote as one of the people, son of the working classes,<sup>1</sup> one who had known poverty, almost misery, and lived for a long time as an adventurer. His genius was revealed in two strange works in which he appeared to take sides against society and civilisation. The success of an opera opened to him the doors of society in Paris, then those of the court; but in this new atmosphere he felt awkward and ill at ease. He had to struggle against his past and the false position he had made for himself. Naturally restless, carried away by an exalted sensibility and an active imagination, he was unable to adapt himself to the arbitrary conventionalities of the court society into which he had not been born and which was never congenial to philosophers and men of letters who desired to impose upon it their yoke. He sought a retreat at l'Ermitage, near Montmorency, then in Switzerland, afterwards in England, nowhere finding peace, carrying always with him his pride, his sensibility, his diffidence, disdain, jealousy, and rancour.

In his life we find the key to his works. He declared war against the inequalities of society which caused him so much suffering, a suffering which never ceased. He attacked not only the vices of society, but its errors, its ridicule; and he did this without restraint, at the risk of shaking its principal institution. He followed no rule or law save his own feelings. Virtue and duty for him lay in the promptings of the soul and of passion. He strove for simplicity and truth, and fell constantly into exaggeration and error. He held himself entirely outside of the church and the government. He accepted nothing as it existed; he made for himself an individual religion and virtually lived in an ideal society of his own creation. He searched, he changed; he possessed great and generous aspirations tinged with melancholy. As has been said of him, he was a savage, morose and speculative. But appealing to the sentiments, he moved the soul. He was the most vigorous and original polemist of his century—Villemain<sup>f</sup> says, the orator of his century. Not having, like Voltaire, a rôle to play, powers to save, and interests to defend, he held a straight course; he listened only to his own convictions, although these convictions varied and based themselves frequently on superficial principles. He was carried along by passion and brought his style to the point of declamation, often an exaggerated declamation.

His success was in part due to the fact that, in an age of evil politics, of remissness in customs, and a lowering in the standard of character, he stirred

[<sup>1</sup> He was the son of a clock-maker of Geneva.]

the souls of the people. He communicated to France something of his own restlessness. He agitated her and put passion into her. Encouraged and astonished by his first success, he pursued his course but modified it. From a misanthropical critic he became unconsciously a reformer. He took up the cause of spiritualism against Diderot or D'Holbach who attacked it, or against Voltaire and others who defended it badly; and as it was his nature never to be satisfied, he established philosophy in religion. He declared war against spectacles and the theatre. In *Émile*, published in 1762, he undertook to remodel mankind by education. He preached the family spirit and love of humanity, noble sentiments which had been too much forgotten by the court circles of the eighteenth century. It had been customary in great families to keep children at a distance; from that time it became the mode to recall them.

Had Rousseau been satisfied with his first discourses, the impression of them would have soon been effaced. *Émile* assured his popularity. It was a plea often false, but always ardent, warm, favouring generous ideas. It was a book little calculated to inspire confidence even in those prepossessed in its favour, but a book full of seduction. It allured by the easiness of the virtues that it preached, a religion without cult, a morality without practice or obligations, a well-doing, a love of humanity, all the more vague in that the objects treated were so widely extended. Rousseau exalted the sensibilities and reconciled more or less all the moral ideas to the sentiments. Having variety in himself he gave variety to his readers. By the romance of *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, he won the women and children, painting the picture of the passions in colours a little less vivid than those used for the romances and comedies then in vogue. Even his faults, the romantic fashion in which he painted the movements of the soul, his manner of dogmatizing, but added to his success.

*Le Contrat Social*, published also in 1762, was Rousseau's greatest work, and undoubtedly the greatest work of the eighteenth century, after *L'Esprit des lois*. Rousseau, without stepping out of the field of pure speculation, searched for the origin of sovereignty and placed it in the people, prior to the formation of society. He taught that society was the work of the sovereign people, established in virtue of a contract of which he discussed the clauses. He undertook to determine the rights of man and those of the citizen, the rights of the individual and those of the state. He debated the conditions of power and proclaimed that the nations always possessed the power of changing their government.

Rousseau is far from having the justness of mind necessary to solve finally the difficult problems that he attacks. He too often tends to exaggerate the rights of the state at the expense of the individual, and to sacrifice the liberty of the individual. Despite certain restrictions, he pushes the sovereignty of the people to the point of tyranny. His ideas are frequently obscure and contradictory.

But *Le Contrat Social* was, for the men of the eighteenth century, a revelation. Rousseau brought to the light of day a crowd of questions, forgotten or relegated to the dust of the schools. He brought them up for discussion in the presence of an incorrigible government, of which the better minds commenced to despair. He took again all the political doctrines for a basis as Descartes had taken the philosophical beliefs, commencing by doubting in order to reach a new conclusion. He engaged in controversies of a new order. He undertook to find the rational legitimacy of the different powers, while before the search had been only for their historical legitimacy.



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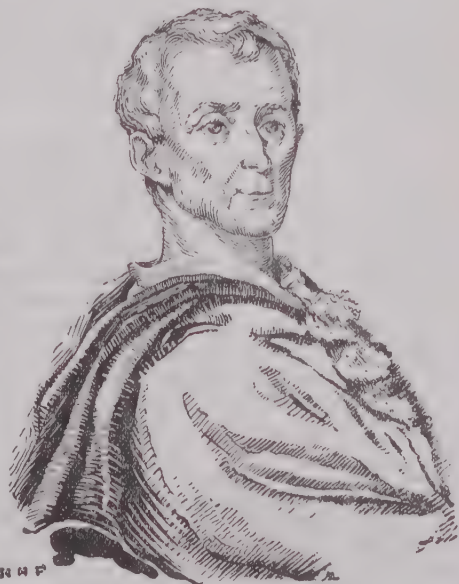
His influence on the last generation of the eighteenth century was enormous. The misfortune was that he was nearly alone in the education of this generation, and that his opponents, like his disciples, swept along by him on to the ground of theory and abstraction, carried to the debates of the Revolution more absolute ideas than practical judgment.<sup>d</sup>

## MONTESQUIEU (1689-1755 A.D.)

The baron De Montesquieu, a calmer and more serious mind than Voltaire, although he had written the *Lettres persanes*, a profound and redoubtable mockery, while seeming trivial, took twenty years to compose one single book, *L'Esprit des lois*, but it was an immortal monument he was raising. "Mankind having lost its rights," says Voltaire, "M. de Montesquieu has come to find them again." Montesquieu seeks and gives reasons for civil laws and political laws; he exposes the nature of governments; and if he condemns no one, if his changes cause little inquietude, his preferences are nevertheless very clear; it is English liberty which he offers to the admiration of France. When he visited Great Britain in 1729, he wrote à Londres *liberté et égalité*, and sixty years before 1789, he pronounced the motto of the Revolution.<sup>e</sup>

Well known as Montesquieu was, yet, *L'Esprit des lois*, a work conceived and worked over for a long time in the silence of the château of Labrède, was when published in 1749 a revelation. His contemporaries found it to be a complete treatise on the origin of society, the rights of the people, civil law, political law, the basis and condition of government. Montesquieu, with his spirit of analysis and originality, raised a crowd of new questions, the greater number of which he only touched on: many he answered, and on the subjects of monarchy, despotism, aristocracy, the republic, he offered theories which though artificial were at least striking.

The first to give to France the theory of mixed government, he distinguished the different powers, executive, legislative, judiciary, and showed the necessity of separating them in theory and in action, better than had been done in any government of his day. His type is a legislature divided into two bodies and a monarchy invested with the right of veto and with responsible ministers. He revealed the principles of the representative system, and determined the true conditions of the representation not called to govern but to make laws and see to their execution — "a thing," added he, "that could be done so well, and that there does not exist even the wish to do well."



CHARLES DE SECONDAT, BARON DE MONTESQUIEU  
(1689-1755)

Trying to explain the history of Europe from feudal times and the first constitutions of the Middle Ages, Montesquieu proves that there was a tendency towards the formation of mixed governments, although the government was checked by the preponderance of royalty in France. Voltaire, dominated by his admiration for masterpieces and greatness, had glorified Louis XIV; the thinkers and original spirits of the time, intent on the future, like Montesquieu and D'Argenson,<sup>1</sup> evinced an instinctive repulsion for this exaggerated admiration and were led into other paths of thought.

*L'Esprit des lois* made people think: such was the intention of Montesquieu, for one of the characteristics of his genius was to be purely speculative. The most lively polemics sprang up as if at a given signal. Moreover the theory of mixed governments, one of the most important parts of the work, was also the part least comprehended and least pleasing to the general taste. It seemed too complicated to minds as yet but little exercised, and who imagined that the simplicity of the machinery was the first condition of good government.<sup>d</sup>

#### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE AGE

The eighteenth century may admit of division, though much less definitely than the seventeenth. We may distinguish two periods. Montesquieu died in 1755, and in the same year Rousseau published his first manifest. Montesquieu and Voltaire for the first period, Voltaire and Rousseau for the second — these are the leaders of new generations.

In the first of these two periods, criticism still respects the principle of royalty — what it concerns itself with is the reform of abuses. Montesquieu and the Voltaire of this period are monarchists at heart — the former would content himself with a temperate monarchy; the latter would admit an enlightened despotism. Voltaire was a gentleman of the bedchamber and historiographer of France (1745); he dedicated *Le Temple de la Gloire* to Louis XV; he occupied a post of chamberlain at Frederick II's court. In his *Siècle de Louis XIV* he was still under the spell of a glorious absolutism. But after 1751 Voltaire, although he corresponded with sovereigns, no longer sought their society; he had installed himself in his château at Ferney and wanted to be a king himself. Diderot, although he let himself be drawn to Catherine II's court, ended by confusing in the same attack both royalty and its abuses. Rousseau appeared and in his *Contrat Social* (1762) declared war upon monarchies.

The first period with Voltaire is a purely classic one in literature. Rousseau stamped the second by a somewhat different language and literary form; he is the point of departure of the future romantic movement. In the first period the English influence shows itself in political ideas and in science; in the second, with Voltaire and Ducis, it spreads itself over a master branch of French literature, the theatre.

In the first period nature was ignored as completely as in the time of Louis XIV; but Rousseau discovered it, revealed it, and with him a whole generation passionately sought after it. It was after 1762 that the French people opened their eyes to the beauties of the French landscape, and realised all that had been artificial hitherto in their literature, their painting, and their manner of life. The revelation was completed when Bernardin de St. Pierre initiated them into the marvels of tropical nature.

[<sup>1</sup> The marquis d'Argenson (1694-1757). Author of *Considérations sur le gouvernement de la France*.]

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## PHILOSOPHIC AND ECONOMIC TENDENCIES

The eighteenth century created no original philosophy. The high metaphysical speculations of Descartes, Malebranche, Spinoza, and Leibnitz do not belong to that age. The search after truths which the human intellect did not seem to it sufficiently organised to attain would have retarded it too much in its essentially practical work. What the century proposed to itself to do was to effect the destruction of traditional abuses and the formation of a society founded upon reason.

In England Locke had rejected innate ideas — in doing this he destroyed the bridge which Descartes had tried to throw across the abyss in order to pass from the existence of the *ego* to the existence of God. All our ideas, according to Locke, have their origin in experience; our senses introduce images of the external world into our intellect, and reflection transforms them into ideas. Cartesian metaphysics was thus ruined to its very foundation.

Almost all the French philosophers from Voltaire to Condorcet belonged to Locke's school; and with the suppression of innate ideas an entire group of philosophers had concluded in the non-existence of God, of whom these ideas, according to Descartes' doctrine, would be a reflection on our intellect. Helvétius, in his work *De l'Esprit* (1758), and D'Holbach, in a series of publications of which the chief is *Le Système de la Nature* (1770), professed atheism. Diderot himself, with frequent relapses into deism, inclined to this school. It is believed, however, that the sense of several passages in his work has been altered by his friend Naigeon, who edited his writings in 1798 and impregnated them with his own atheism.

Voltaire and Rousseau were believers in the immortality of the soul and in the existence of God. Voltaire rejected revealed religion; he affected to place paganism, Judaism, Islamism, Buddhism, and Christianity on the same footing. Nevertheless he admitted a Supreme Being outside of these various creeds. When Jupiter, Jehovah, Allah, or Brahma have been dethroned, there remains natural religion, whose dogmas and moral philosophy were founded on reason. Voltaire, like Rousseau, was especially a deist.

These ideas, often uncertain in Voltaire's mind and sparsely scattered in his works, Rousseau gathered together and expressed with convincing eloquence in his *Emile* and especially in his *Profession de foi du vicaire Savoyard*. This vicar is a priest who doubts the ancient dogmas but to whom the splendour of nature's spectacle reveals the Author of all things at the same time with the duties he has prescribed for human beings.

Two philosophic tendencies of the coming revolution are already active. Robespierre was inspired by Rousseau when he inaugurated the deistic cult of the Supreme Being; and the Hébertists proceeded from D'Holbach when they attempted to make atheism prevail.<sup>b</sup>

The philosophers attacked everything, the economists touched upon material interests only. In the seventeenth century a nation was considered rich according to the scale in which it bought little and sold much. Quesnay demonstrated that precious metals are the signs of wealth, not wealth itself, and thought it was found in agriculture. Gournay was all for industries. The theory of the Scotchman, Adam Smith, who lived a long time in France, was more general; for him wealth was in labour, and labour had three modes of application: agriculture, industry, and commerce; his disciples recognised a fourth — intellectual labour, that is to say, arts, letters, and sciences.

From the school of Quesnay came the celebrated axiom: "*Laissez faire, laissez passer*," which was applicable for the moment, when the edicts of



1754 and 1764 recognised the liberty of commerce in grain, which Turgot proclaimed anew. The marquis of Argenson had said the same thing under another form — "*Pas trop gouverner.*"<sup>c</sup>

Thus the philosophers were allowed to undertake the political education of the nation at their pleasure. Opinions were permitted to be formed in several Paris salons, entirely unsympathetic to the court, where brilliant women gathered the philosophers about them and assumed the patronage of the new ideas. From the salons of Mesdames Geoffrin and Du Deffand, or of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, these ideas spread into the cafés, the theatres, and other public places, where the society was much more mixed than before. For the old-time distinctions were gradually being effaced; nobles and bourgeois, brought up almost in the same manner, lived and above all thought alike. They had a fund of common ideas, and it might be said that France was the country in which men had become the most alike, one to the other.<sup>d</sup>

The chief evidences of this great change in public opinion are to be observed in popular customs. Side by side with the indications we have already mentioned are other symptoms, less important perhaps, but which history cannot afford to ignore. Thus dress begins to assume a character less sumptuous and artificial in consequence both of imitation of the English and of modifications spontaneously brought about. Plain stuffs and sober colours reappear among men, and the women again display that elegant simplicity brought into such prominence by the heroines of Rousseau. Panniers and vast coiffures would long since have disappeared had not court etiquette maintained them against all spirit of innovation. As it is, women are soon to allow their hair more freedom of arrangement and to restore it to its natural colour. In small things as in great a return to nature is invoked.

#### THE FINE ARTS

Most marked of all the signs of moral evolution are those observable in the arts. Tragedies gave voice to feelings of patriotism and French nationality which were applauded by Rousseau despite the monarchical form in which they were still presented; but it is in another department of dramatic art that the new tendencies find their fullest expression. The *opéra-comique*, that product of a musical school so peculiarly French, reached a high point of development between 1760 and 1780. In these prose dramas mingled with song, which in part realise the ideals of Diderot, are belied Rousseau's theories of French incapacity for musical achievement, though their source of inspiration is Rousseau himself, somewhat modified and softened.

Sedaine and other writers co-operate successfully with musicians such as the graceful Dalayrac and Monsigny, who composes by instinct, according to his illustrious contemporary, Grétry. The simple and rapid melodies of this latter composer, bubbling over as they are with eternal youth, still delight us by their contrast with the colossal works of modern times that fairly succumb under the weight of their own science and the enormous amount of machinery they require. The essential characteristics of Grétry and his school are extreme naturalness combined with a charming vivacity that is devoid of subtlety or exaggeration, and tender, penetrating passion. All traces of social corruption have disappeared; in this rejuvenated form of musical art there is to be perceived the freshness of a breath of spring.

The young French school was made complete by a German who sounded the heavier chords of the lyre and made the form of grand opera particularly

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his own. Gluck had suffered long from the insignificance of the Italian background, and his dramatic genius was never truly revealed until he found themes worthy of his inspiration and a librettist capable of giving them form. "It has been my aim," he writes, "to reduce music to its true function, that of seconding poetry by giving additional force to sentiments and situations without obstructing the action or allowing the interest to cool by the introduction of superfluous ornament." Having first made a name in Italy, which recognised his greatness while rejecting his principles of art, he came to Paris, where he took up permanent residence, making the French tongue his own. France received with enthusiasm this glorious adopted son, but Italy, again on the offensive, challenged Gluck's success in France and inaugurated that war between the Gluckists and the Piccinnists, or between the French school and the Italian school, which raged up to the eve of the Revolution.

Grétry and Gluck differed widely in genius, but their views on music were the same. For both of them expression was everything; neither could conceive the idea of separating words from music, and even in overtures and ritournelles they sought to maintain a direct relation with the text that had preceded or was about to follow.

The pure French school without doubt set to musical inspiration limits that were far too narrow; but the contrary excess has been observed in that Italian school which a brilliant genius has brought to prominence in our day, and which has in turn been modified by French influence until it more nearly approaches the happy medium discovered by the great Mozart. From a philosophical point of view, hesitation would not be possible in making a choice between the two opposite standpoints since the question of technical methods is so largely one of moral character. Gluck comprehends music after the manner of the ancient Greeks; his austere inspiration presages harmonies that would be more in place in the field of battle than on the operatic stage.

The same spirit is apparent in the plastic arts. Though Pigalle and Falconet maintain French sculpture in a relatively high position in Europe, there is imparted to it no decided impulse such as made architecture advance after 1760. Antique severity and simplicity is the style aimed at, and all fantastic curves and strange and artificial ornamental forms are inexorably banished. The hôtel des Monnaies, the beautiful edifices of the place Louis XV, and in larger if not faultless proportions the St. Geneviève or Panthéon of Soufflot attest a profound modification of taste, but do not foretell the peculiar turn the classical school is to take when it everywhere sets to reproducing Greek temples, as though there could be in architecture any absolute type which should not vary according to climate or customs.

A like revolution is to be observed in the art of painting.<sup>e</sup> New influences acted upon the artists. As fewer convents and churches were built and the age was not one of devotion, there were fewer religious pictures produced. Since the king and the high personages had not the "great taste" of Louis XIV, there were fewer historical paintings. There were fewer vast wall spaces and expansive domes to be covered with colour. A different architecture, especially in the interior of private edifices, demands a different school of painting. Another variety of Mæcenases arose—the farmers-general, the *parvenus* of finance and stock-jobbing who no longer had the ambition to imitate the grand monarch at a distance, but abandoned themselves to their own instincts, which were not elevating: the actresses who set the fashions gave the tone to the city and to the court, and like La

Guimard had fine mansions built for themselves; finally there were the great ladies whose great ambition was to be taken for actresses. For the new world there must be a new kind of art. To ornament the cosy salons, the boudoirs, the *petites appartements* of the *petites maisons* the canvases of the preceding century were of too vast proportions, too severe, too majestic. More appropriate were mythological scenes lightly treated, pastorals, *fêtes galantes*, hunting scenes, the so-called *scènes champêtres*, or even readings, conversations, and concerts (sacred terms). The great French landscape painters Poussin and Claude Lorrain (Claude Gélée) could no longer have recognised the trees, the skies, and the fountains of the canvases *à la mode*; for they are the trees, the skies, the fountains of the opera. The theatre, which had invaded private life, also ruled over the arts.

If painting had been entirely abandoned to the taste of the Mæcenases of the day there would have been a marked decadence. Fortunately, about the middle of the century, with the periodic picture exhibitions, art criticism was born. Diderot, in his *Salons* (1765-1767), Grimm, and Laharpe jeered at the caprices in fashion, upheld the true but unrecognised painters, and encouraged the return to nature. It was these men that revealed to the public the genius of Chardin and Greuze and extolled genre painting.

The *fêtes galantes* and the genre painting produced some real artists, and in spite of their faults they developed a true French art. The greatest of these painters had gone to Rome in vain; the influence of antiquity upon them was almost nothing. From the Eternal City they came back the eighteenth-century Frenchmen they went. If one would seek the real master of Watteau, Boucher, Chardin, and Greuze, he will be found in Rubens with his Marie de' Medici series.<sup>b</sup>

The achievements of these men, were, however, but a prelude to what was to follow; the art of grand, historical painting, dead for more than half a century, was to live again in a period of exceptional brilliancy. A certain eager, determined young man, a relation and pupil of Boucher but without as yet any definite, artistic aim, was sent as laureate, in 1775, to Rome, where he came under the influence of Winckelmann and his *History of Ancient Art* (*Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums*), published in 1764. Acted upon by a double current, that of Winckelmann's enthusiastic æstheticism and the republican fervour of Rousseau and Mably, the painter Louis David was formed. From the one source he received his subjects and his inspiration, from the other his sense of form and his tendency to paint figures that are like statues, just as the sculptors early in the eighteenth century were given to making statues that were like painted figures.<sup>c</sup>

#### SCIENCE

It was only in the first half of the seventeenth century that the great men of letters, like Descartes and Pascal, appear as great savants. Later on Bossuet, Fénelon, and Fontenelle are the sole *littérateurs* who show a certain acquaintance with science—and that particularly because the sciences, thanks to Descartes, were considered a branch of philosophy. On the contrary, in the eighteenth century every great man of letters is also a savant. D'Alembert was above all a mathematician. Condillac published treatises on arithmetic, algebra, mechanics, and astronomy. The less known but assuredly estimable portion of Montesquieu's writings are his works in the sciences. Rousseau prepared himself for his *Émile* by arduous scientific study, followed the courses of the chemist Rouellé and composed a treatise



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on botany. Diderot wrote on mathematics, on the cohesion of solid bodies, and published numerous scientific articles in his *Encyclopædia*.<sup>1</sup>

Poets, great ladies, and great lords, beginning with the regent Orleans—everyone was interested in scientific discovery; it was the topic of the salon and the boudoir as of the academies. Nothing contributed more to form the spirit of the eighteenth century, at once classical and full of innovation, frivolous and serious, loving light literature and weighty demonstration. The philosophers, applying to political social questions the rigour of scientific methods, gave a more resolute turn to the war upon the past. Finally the great discoveries in every direction, exalting the imagination and inflating all hearts with pride, contributed not a little to inculcate in the French that absolute confidence in the all-powerfulness of reason.

In the eighteenth century the new methods of analytical geometry and the infinitesimal calculus continued to be developed. Although French astronomers seem to play but a secondary rôle in the great celestial discoveries of the age, we must not forget the work of D'Alembert and of Clairaut. The superiority and the special work of the French in this century is the application of pure mathematics to astronomy.

What was retarding the progress of chemistry was that those impalpable and invisible substances called gases were little understood. Especially the most active of these gases, oxygen, was unknown [until 1774]. Lavoisier gave to Priestley's discovery of oxygen its full value and recognised the important rôle played by this gas in nature. He was the first to establish clearly that air is not a simple body.<sup>2</sup> In 1783 Lavoisier decomposed water and showed that it was composed of oxygen and hydrogen. Now that oxygen was known, chemistry became a science. Assisted by Guyton de Morveau, Fourcroy, and Berthollet, Lavoisier established the chemical nomenclature in 1787 and dowered the new science with a precise and supple language lending itself to all its perfections, and which was adopted by the whole of Europe.<sup>3</sup> Hitherto the terminology of the science had been a matter of whim and caprice. Such names as "liver of sulphur," "mercury of life," "horned moon," "the double secret," "the salt of many virtues," and the like, had been accepted without protest by the chemical world. With such a terminology continued progress was as impossible as human progress without speech. The new chemistry of Lavoisier and his *confrères*, following the model set by zoölogy half a century earlier, designated each substance by a name instead of a phrase, applied these names according to fixed rules, and, in short, classified the chemical knowledge of the time and brought it into a system, lacking which no body of knowledge has full title to the name of science.<sup>4</sup>

The eighteenth century abounds in savants who, renouncing all pretensions to the universality affected in the Middle Ages, devoted their entire lives to a special branch of zoölogy. Buffon, appointed intendant of the *jardin du Roi*, began his great *Natural History*. From 1749 to 1767 he published fifteen volumes upon quadrupeds in collaboration with Daubenton. From 1770 to 1780 appeared the *History of Birds*, in nine volumes, with the collaboration of Guéneau de Montbélard, the Abbé Bexon, Sonnini de Manoncourt. Afterwards came the *History of Minerals*. The sequel to

[<sup>1</sup> No attempt has been made to give in this chapter an account of the great *Encyclopædia* and its influence, since the matter has already been fully treated. See above, pp. 62-64.]

[<sup>2</sup> In common with other chemists of the time, Lavoisier supposed oxygen gas itself to be a compound. He considered its components to be a metal oxygen combined with the alleged element heat; Dr. Priestley thought it a compound of positive electricity and "phlogiston"; and Humphry Davy, a little later, supposed it to be a compound of oxygen and light.<sup>5</sup>]

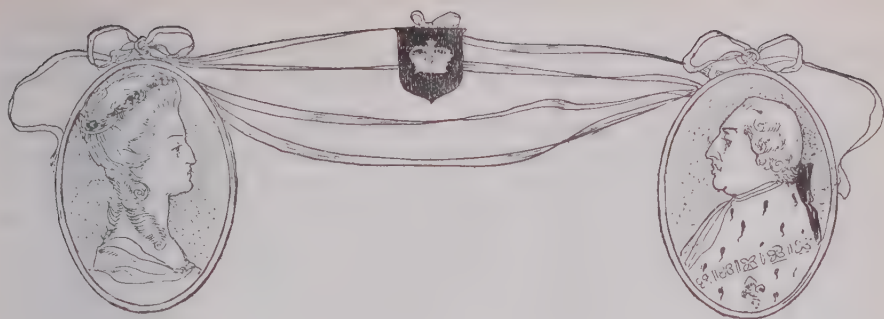
[1717-1789 A.D.]

this vast work, *Reptiles, Fishes*, etc., was left for Lacépède. In 1788 Buffon's masterpiece, *Les Époques de la Nature*, appeared. Herein are displayed his great theories on the unity of nature's plan proceeding "according to a primitive and general design; on the continuous scale of beings from the zoöphyte to man; on the mutability of species, which may modify their organs to accommodate themselves to new environments, and finally on the distribution of species over the surface of the globe. For the first time we see these great philosophic ideas applied to natural history. Buffon's pompous style, a certain taste for lofty paraphrase in place of a single word, a certain tendency to generalisation, exposed him to the criticism of some of his contemporaries. Réaumur reproaches him with reasoning too much and Buffon reproached Réaumur with the very strange criticism of observing too much. Daubenton separated from Buffon because the latter mutilated his anatomical demonstrations. He jeered at certain too classic phrases, as "the lion is the king of animals," saying that the animals had no king.

The greatest physiological discovery of the eighteenth century was made [in part] by Lavoisier. He explained in 1785 the phenomena of respiration. This discovery Darenberg calls "the greatest of modern times after the circulation of the blood."<sup>b</sup> It should not be overlooked, however, that here again Lavoisier was following in the footsteps of Priestley, and that Scheele in Sweden, Spallanzani in Italy, and Davy in England must be credited with a share in clearing up the mystery of respiration.<sup>a</sup>

To the reign of Louis XV also belonged Réaumur, who devised the thermometer and thermometric scale bearing his name; the botanists Adanson and Bernard de Jussieu; Lacaille, who went to the Cape of Good Hope in 1750 to chart the heavens; Bouguer and La Condamine, who sailed to the equator in 1736, while Clairaut and Maupertuis were in the arctic regions to determine the measuring of a degree and the shape of the earth.<sup>c</sup> But a far greater coterie of scientists was to come upon the scene about the close of the century, rendering French science of a later generation illustrious. Meantime literature rather than science is the key-note of the Age of Voltaire.<sup>a</sup>





## CHAPTER V

### LOUIS XVI AND MARIE ANTOINETTE

[1774-1789 A.D.]

THERE is nothing better proved by a course of historic study than the strange fact that the people on the very verge of change and revolution have no idea that anything is about to take place. A nation is always taken by surprise when its institutions are overthrown, like a child when its house of cards is toppled over by its own height. Contemporaries in other lands are generally quite as blind; but the spectator from a distance of time sees everything more clearly.

All the performers in the great drama, of which we are not yet come to the final act, were now upon the scene. There were Louis XVI, aged twenty years, gentle and kind; Louis XVIII, aged nineteen, clearer in intellect and more marked in character; and Charles X, aged seventeen, stubborn and proud. These were the three grandsons of Louis XV, and all attained the throne. But there was another personage at that time alive who also the likeness of a kingly crown had on: it was a little child of seven months old, a grandson of the false and dissolute regent, who, after a long period of struggle and obscurity, emerges at the end of his career as Louis Philippe. Four Bourbons and a Bonaparte were all preparing for their parts in the year 1774 — three princes, a boy playing the hoop in the streets of Ajaccio, and a baby in arms.

A young king is always popular; he has made no personal or public enemies, and there is a length of reign before him which will enable him to reward his friends. But there perhaps never was so popular a king as Louis XVI. Married at sixteen to the beautiful daughter of the emperor of Austria, one year his junior, he and Marie Antoinette, when their establishment was formed, presented to the admiring eyes of the Parisians the model of a perfectly happy life. They reminded the observers of some of those charming fairy tales where royal shepherds and shepherdesses exchange the cares of power for the enjoyments of Arcadia; and if the enjoyments were a little expensive, and Arcadia a domain filled with princes and princesses,



the interest of the story was only enhanced, and the voices of the real Corydons — the starving peasantry and angry men of the towns — were drowned in the shouts of jubilee.

The finances were utterly ruined ; the expenses of the state greatly exceeded the utmost possible extent of its income ; and the goodness of the young monarch's heart came forth in the first speech which reached the public ear: " We will have no loans, no fresh burdens, and no credit " ; and, leaving his ministers to devise means of paying the army and navy, the interest of the funds, and the overwhelming salaries of the national servants, he conducted his gay and brilliant wife to Rheims, where he was crowned (1775) with greater splendour than Louis XIV., and with a prouder display of feudal ceremony and knightly magnificence than had been dreamed of by Philip Augustus.

As if to make up for his own youth and inexperience, he called to his council the count de Maurepas, at this time seventy-three years of age, who had been disgraced twenty-five years before by the favourite Pompadour, and had been busying himself ever since in studying the modern philosophies by which the world was going to be reformed. But there are some men whom years cannot make old, nor any study of philosophy wise and prudent. The new minister was as firm a believer in Arcadia as the Phyllises and Strephons of Paris. He would bring back a golden age, where the dreams of philanthropists and the wisdom of statesmen should be united. He had read the glowing descriptions of a state of society where all men were equal before the law ; where the rich could not oppress the poor ; where the crown was the fountain of perennial grace ; and where the obsolete prejudices of a useless and supererogatory church were reduced to the purest essence of the Christian precepts, and where there was neither heresy nor superstition. He put his theories into practice with the same thoughtless levity as he had maintained them in the sparkling *conversazioni* of the capital, and gave open manifestation of his principles and designs by appointing to the management of the finances one of the least-known writers in the *Encyclopædia*, in which the most sweeping changes in government, society, and religion were agitated with the greatest eloquence and amazing success : his name was Turgot.

With a prime-minister tapping his golden snuff-box and uttering declamations about the rights of man, and a chief of the finances, one of the most honest and intellectual men in France, and imbued with all the doctrines of the school of Voltaire and Diderot, the enthusiastic young marquises and abbés, who united politics and romance in almost equal quantities, saw an end of all the miseries of life. A new era had opened on mankind, and its inauguration was intrusted to a king of the most amiable disposition, and a queen who shrouded the grandeurs of the noblest place in Europe, and the pride of the highest birth, in a graceful simplicity of manners and the most childlike enjoyment of the pleasures of her age and rank.<sup>b</sup>

Louis XVI was twenty years of age at his accession to the throne. His father, the devout dauphin, had intrusted his education to the duke de la Vauguyon, a noble of rigid and ascetic piety. This man bred up the future heir to the throne of France as if he were destined to be a monk ; and took care to render him not only scrupulously ignorant of all polite learning, but even of history and the science of government. The very external appearance of Louis betrayed this tutelage : he was slovenly, melancholy, ungraceful, bashful, and so diffident that his eyes often shrank from the regard of his meanest subject ; with all this, he had been inspired with such a religious horror of carnal affections, that he remained for many years on no closer

[1770-1774 A.D.]

terms than those of mere politeness with his young and lovely queen. Such was the character of the new sovereign, called to administer the realm at the most critical period of its history.<sup>c</sup>

Before proceeding with the events of his reign we may well make some study of the characteristics of the queen who had such sway for good and evil over him.<sup>a</sup>

Since her arrival in France, Marie Antoinette had met with opposition such as women seldom forget. As she had been forced to bear it silently, this hard situation made her false and artful. Maria Theresa, her mother, knew the court of Versailles well, and yet she committed the error of requesting diplomatically through M. de Merez, her ambassador, that her relation, Mademoiselle de Lorraine, and the prince de Lambex, should rank after princes of the blood of the house of Bourbon, at the marriage of her daughter with the dauphin of France. To please the dauphiness who wished it and Maria Theresa who requested it, Louis XV had thought he ought to make it an affair of state. But the ladies of the court from whom Louis XV expected the most submission and deference had played an obstinate and proud part, making a resistance which was invincible to the formal demand of the king. Their stubbornness went so far as to declare that they would give up the ball rather than be deprived of the right of dancing first. The dauphiness was so vexed for her part that she procured a copy of the letters that Louis XV had written to the peers; she shut them up in her cash-box and added these three words, "I shall remember." From that moment she resolved to exclude as much as possible titled ladies from her house.

The young dauphiness had an angelic face: the whiteness of her complexion was striking, her colouring bright and clear; her features were regular, her figure slim, but her eyes were subject to inflammation though fine and agreeable. She had the Austrian thick lip. She was affectionate, lively, anxious to please, and well instructed by her mother as to what she must do in order to be loved at court, if she had wished to follow her instructions. The pulpits, academies, the most brilliant societies, the papers, the almanacs of the Muses, all praised her. Flattery in France still retained the form and tone of the grand reign of Louis XIV.

Marie Antoinette had been brought up by her mother to be one day queen of France; but she no sooner arrived at Versailles than she began to shake off all that was troublesome. She went on foot, dismissing her equerry, accompanied only by one or two ladies of the court. She used to invite her brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law to dine and sup and went to meals with them unceremoniously. She was kind, and considerate, and often delicate in her charities. Once a stag wounded at the king's hunt struck a poor peasant with his horns; the dauphiness ran to his help, took his wife into her carriage, caressed her, and gave her a pension. Marie Antoinette also encouraged and protected musicians. She knew Latin, German, Italian, and had soon mastered French. With this kind of character the dauphiness had much to suffer in France. She had to swallow insults, and assist in silence at the catastrophe which seemed to overthrow the foundation of the Austrian faction at the court of France, a revolution which kept her isolated and left to herself at a court where Madame du Barry reigned supreme.

Marie Antoinette with difficulty endured the precedence which the king's favourite had over her at court; the dauphiness, naturally given to shyness and reserve, could not forgive her. Her first act on gaining authority and influence was to shut Du Barry up in a convent the very day that her husband succeeded his grandfather.

The young couple lived at court in an exemplary and retired way under the trying circumstances, each endeavouring to please the other in everything. The dauphiness began to win her husband's affections; she knew well how to surround him with comforts; she understood the weakness of his character, and according to her mother's instructions she resolved to exercise all the power of her sex and beauty on his mind. Aspiring from an early age to being one day able to govern in his name, a witticism, a caress at the right moment were the means she employed to subdue this young prince. The tactful concessions and refusals of her favours were her means of gaining his attachment; we see the king, during his last years, fearing, obeying, and loving her.



HÔTEL DE CLUNY

She was constantly being opposed by her aunts and sisters-in-law, which embittered her character and was the first cause of her misfortunes. The aunts she deprived of their prerogative, and consigned them to live at Bellevue or at Meudon with the retired old ladies. She treated her sisters-in-law with all the haughtiness of an archduchess and queen of France. They often retaliated by words even superior in haughtiness.

Finding on all sides contradictions, and the refusal of that respect due to royalty, she became more and more a stranger to France. She soon discovered a sarcastic character. Instead of endeavouring to gain the public praise, she assumed a contradictory tone, which daily increased her enemies. She thought everything should be permitted her because of her birth and rank. With no regard for the French character, naturally irritable, she roused the resentment of the nobility in office. They formed a centre of opposition, which did not spare her, and obliged her to form an intimate society of her own, and as this society was ill-chosen, having been formed by a frivolous young princess who thought of nothing but dress and pleasure, the best part of the court suspected her morals and habits.

She had scarcely become queen of France when she started the fashion of wearing large feathers. When she passed in ceremony with the ladies-in-waiting along the galleries, it was like a forest of plumes, raised a foot and a half high and waving freely over the heads. The courtiers, who could not be persuaded to adopt these fashions nor to copy the queen every day, called these feathers horse ornaments. In the month of February, 1775, she exaggerated the fashion of feathers still more. She invented wonderful head-dresses representing English gardens, mountains, and forests. The king, whose tastes were simple, only spoke timidly about these extraordinary ornaments. But at the commencement of 1776 he gave her half of the diamonds he had as dauphin and told her to be contented with these which would not cost anything. But this advice from the king did not change her, and the rage for feathers arrived at such a pitch, that sometimes one



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feather would cost as much as 50 louis [£47 or \$236]. "Your charms," added Louis XVI, "do not need adornment." Maria Theresa joined the king in trying to cure the queen of her futile tastes which she developed at such an early age. The queen sent her her portrait ornamented with large and beautiful feathers; Maria Theresa sent it back, with a note to this effect: "I would willingly have accepted the portrait of the queen of France, but I could not accept one which only represented a comedy actress." But nothing could alter Marie Antoinette's taste for these ridiculous ornaments.<sup>d</sup>

Marie Antoinette's faults consisted in a thoughtless need of affectionate intercourse, and a desire to please and to charm. A spirit of dissipation, of levity, of heedlessness became, together with favouritism, another source of evil. The queen could never be made to interest herself in any serious occupation. She is much blamed for her very incomplete education, but it must be acknowledged that this is not a sufficient reason for believing that she sought out and read the worst books. Joseph II speaks of "indecencies" with which the queen, his sister, had filled her mind by her reading; but it is unnecessary to exaggerate, or even to give full credit to Joseph's words, as he went to the farthest extreme.

The thousand accounts of her imprudent visits to the balls of the opera, to the three theatres, to horse and sledge races, also of nocturnal promenades upon the terrace at Versailles, always without the king, who only cared for sport, lotto, and blindman's buff, played for "wagers," filled the memoirs of the time with an inexhaustible variety of details. The queen's extravagance became excessive, particularly in 1776 and 1777; the reason did not consist only in the graciousness which made her unable to refuse anything to those around her, but, over and above that, she was powerless to resist certain fascinations of finery and luxury. More than once, for instance, her taste for precious stones carried her away, and this was a subject of humiliation and amazement to her mother, who wished to inspire her with a serious sense of her dignity.

The other instance of grave extravagance was gambling. The play of the king and queen at court is traditional. It is well known how much the passion for play had increased in the previous reign; one has only to read Walpole to recall how princesses of the blood gave themselves up to this excessive gambling. Mercy-Argenteau in his letters is inexhaustible on the subject: "The queen was anxious," he writes towards the end of 1776, "to play at faro. She begged the king to permit them to summon the bankers of the gaming tables from Paris. The bankers arrived October 30th and dealt the cards all the night and morning of the 31st. The queen remained until five o'clock in the morning. Her majesty dealt all evening and into the morning of November 1st (All Saints' Day); she herself played until three o'clock in the morning. The harm was that such an evening, extending into the morning of so solemn a festival, should be so spent, and it caused much public gossip."

Marie Antoinette won and lost in an evening 500 louis; she was obliged to go to the king the following day, who, without scolding her, paid it out of his private purse. From that also ensued many mischievous rumours, which the papers spread throughout Europe concerning the cheating carried on in the play at Marly, and about the suspicious behaviour of an Englishman named Smith admitted to the gaming table of the queen at Fontainebleau, who had won from the princes 500,000 francs.

These rumours aroused the indignation of Joseph II and of Maria Theresa. Joseph exclaimed that the court of France had become a gambling

hell ; he wrote in May, 1777, that if they did not understand and prevent it, "the revolution would be cruel." The empress sent a message to her daughter, to the effect that she was rushing to her doom ; that she must instantly and at any cost cut short her passion for play ; she threatened to write severely to the king about it, if she did not see a thorough change at once.<sup>e</sup>

Leaving her to her more or less innocent frivolities, let us examine the Herculean efforts of the ministers to slay the hydra-headed monster of deficit and release the gold of which she and her kind had scattered so much while the people starved in herds.<sup>a</sup>

#### THE VAIN REFORMS OF TURGOT

The count de Maurepas was an aged, experienced, cunning man of the world, somewhat resembling the prince Talleyrand of later days, unrivalled in address, in epigram, and persiflage. He was too enlightened not to have progressed with his age. He approached in principle more nearly to Choiseul than to Aiguillon. This became manifest in filling up the places of the ministry : the count de Vergennes, the ambassador who at Constantinople had seconded the views of Choiseul against Russia, was recalled to preside over the foreign department. The hated Maupeou and Terray were both discarded. Turgot, the friend of the economists, the statesman vaunted by the philosophers, replaced the latter ; his name was a pledge of reform and amelioration. The first act of the new government was to dismiss the parliament of Maupeou, and re-establish the ancient judges and courts which had been dissolved by Louis XV.

Turgot announced his financial plans and projects of reform. The principal of these were to do away with *corvées* and such taxes as weighed exclusively on the people, establishing a territorial impost that would be borne equally by all classes of society, nobility and clergy not excluded.

But these privileged orders, instead of deeming themselves called on to make sacrifices to the state, thought, on the contrary, that they were unjustly oppressed. Neither could be induced to make sacrifices. Noblesse and clergy, the parties of Choiseul and Aiguillon, united against the audacious innovator Turgot, who pretended that the privileged classes should support, according to their means, the burdens of the state. What is more astonishing, the parliament or legists united with these orders ; and thus the monarch's ministry, in its attempt to relieve the people and middle class, was marred and checked and flung aback into the ancient and pernicious courses of absolute monarchy. Never did blindness and selfishness combine more grossly, or more deservedly merit the ruin and the punishment they afterwards incurred.

Had Louis now summoned the states-general, they would have been grateful for their existence and for the influence which they afterwards wrested from the monarch. At this time, not only was the monarch beloved, but his queen was still uncalumniated, and had not yet been made to lose the affections of the people. But neither Maurepas, nor Louis, had the courage to rely on the popular mass. The states-general were still the bugbear that they had been for centuries ; and the sovereign, rather than recur to this his only support, the only body that could give him funds, and confidence, and stability, remained leaning alternately on the frail prop of mere court parties, sharing and bringing upon himself all the odium and contempt which the ignorance, the selfishness, and the empty pride of such counsellors earned from the public voice.

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Turgot fell before this opposition of the privileged orders. Malesherbes, his friend and brother minister, fell also : both were successively dismissed. The unfortunate Marie Antoinette is accused of having influenced the king to get rid of them. Some of the courtiers might indeed have incited her to this act ; but the blame rests not with her. Turgot and Malesherbes fell by the opposition of the noblesse and parliament, the latter then allowed to possess a legislative veto. They were sacrificed not to the queen but to circumstances. The ideas of Turgot had embraced a vast scheme of amelioration. They were not limited to an equable and territorial tax, but contained a free municipal system, and an assembly of the deputies of the provinces to supersede the parliament in their functions of consenting to new imposts. An edict issued to establish one of his principles, the free commerce of grain, unfortunately did not produce favourable results. The year being one of general scarcity, the want of corn was attributed to the edict, and Turgot's theories lost a great part of their influence.

A sedition broke out in Paris, occasioned by famine. Similar scenes took place throughout the kingdom, occasioned by the indigence, the unfixed and suffering state of the peasant population. The police, it seems, were not active to repress the tumult. Turgot declared that it was excited, not by the effects of his edict, but by his enemies. Maurepas represented this to the king as false and presumptuous. That minister already began to be disgusted with the popular ally that overshadowed him. This took place in 1775. In the following year, Turgot, who still held his ground, caused six edicts to be presented to the parliament. The chief ones ordered the abolition of the *corvée* as well as of certain monopolies and corporations. The parliament refused to register : the king overcame the opposition in a bed of justice ; but the clamours of the noblesse at court were too great for Louis to resist. "It is only Monsieur Turgot and I who love the people," said the monarch ; but the minister was nevertheless dismissed, and, as we have said, was followed in his retreat by Malesherbes.

An imitator of Turgot, one who had caught up the mania for reform, was the count de St. Germain. He was created minister at war, and his first act was to reorganise the army. He introduced the Prussian discipline ; and in his love of change broke up all the old regiments of household troops and *mousquetaires*, and much diminished the bodyguard. Such reductions, however called for by economy, had the effect of disgusting the noblesse, which exclusively composed those corps, with the very name of reform ; and was one of the great causes that accelerated the revolution, by disorganising the army, and leaving no force to resist the insurrectionary movements of the populace.

To Turgot succeeded Clugny in the department of finance. He re-established the *corvée*, to gratify those under whose auspices he was



TURGOT



elevated.<sup>1</sup> He died in a few months and was succeeded by Taboureau. Maurepas held still the place of prime minister, or rather that of favourite. Without principles or party, his sole object was to reign; and thus the true administrators of the government had to please not only a royal but a ministerial master. Those were stormy days, however, in which incapacity could not long hold the helm. Louis XVI was himself impatient at the difficulties of the government, and the feeble attempts of his ministry to surmount them. Necker was recommended as a financier capable of effecting wonders; and he was accordingly appointed director of the treasury, subordinate to the controller-general Taboureau.<sup>c</sup>

#### NECKER'S MINISTRY

Necker was a Genevan banker who had been established and naturalised in France for several years. He had acquired a large fortune which he put to a noble use. His honesty and loyalty were proverbial and his credit unlimited.

He had a power of another kind. His salon was one of the most influential and most select in Paris, thanks to Madame Necker, who presided over it with remarkable ability. A woman of cultivated mind and enthusiastic temperament, she had grouped round her a society of *littérateurs* like Marmontel, the abbé Raynal, Morellet; a society on which she impressed a code of manners, severe, grave, and even slightly pedantic. She shared her husband's ambition, which was extreme, and toiled no less actively than himself to satisfy it. Both, says Morellet,<sup>g</sup> had an insatiable desire for fame.

Necker, not content that as a banker he was rich and powerful enough to hold his own against the ministers, had been ambitious of the reputation of an author, and had made his literary début with a eulogy of Colbert, which the Academy crowned in 1773. Subsequently he wrote against Turgot's edicts on grains. He discussed the principles of the economists with much sagacity, practical intelligence, and independence. Necker was of too haughty a character to affiliate himself with a sect; he had the self-confidence of a man who had risen by his own exertions, who felt himself to be animated by upright and generous intentions, and supported, to use his own expression, on a basis of virtue (*un fonds de vertu*). His philanthropy, unlike that of Turgot, was pompous and showy, and with him the necessity of display was not less imperative than the necessity to act. "His writings," says Soulavie,<sup>d</sup> who draws his portrait with as much discernment as truth, "breathed throughout the language of humanity; they gave evidence of an exquisite sensibility, a republican tendency, a style analogous to that of Rousseau, a brilliant imagination. They were adorned with figures and a tone of sentiment alike unknown in works on administration and which distinguished them from all other books of this nature." Hitherto it had always been an intendant who had been placed at the head of the finances, never a banker. Necker began with a somewhat bombastic act of disinterestedness. He refused the salary of his office. He then broke with the traditions of his predecessors. He was of opinion that the finances would not be improved by changes of detail in the administration: that such methods were useless or had been exhausted.

Having suppressed the intendants of finance, on account of their powers which he found too extensive and their hostility which he feared, he ventured

[<sup>1</sup> Marmontel calls his ministry five "months of pillage, of which the king alone was ignorant."]

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on a great *coup*. On the 7th of January, 1777, he issued a considerable loan. He made this issue with ostentation and, as he did everything, in a startling manner. He divided his loan into two parts, the one consisting of ordinary annuities, repayable in annual instalments, and the other of life annuities. The day on which the treasury was opened, a long line of subscribers presented themselves; guards were posted to maintain order and the whole was subscribed for in one day, even before the edict had been laid before the parliament. The terms were moderate. Necker was aware of the skill with which the English had made use of the public credit and he intended that France should derive from it the same advantage. He drew on the personal confidence which he inspired and he was careful to maintain it by observing great regularity in the payments, especially in those to the king's household. With the money borrowed he paid off the existing deficit. Doubtless he mortgaged the future; but he maintained that the future could support the charge and that it was just to burden it because it would enjoy the advantage gained and the prosperity which the independence of the United States could not fail to create.

But opposition was inevitable. The novelty of the scheme awakened alarm. No reproach which could be made against the system of loans was spared. Was not the creation of life annuities an immoral speculation on the part of the state and one which should have been restricted instead of being extended? Was it necessary to recommence the system of handing France over to farmers of the revenue, bankers and merchants? Necker is also reproached with creating no new wealth and exhibiting the infertility of his mind. The former financiers exclaimed in their turn against what they called the invasion of bankers, and hurled criticisms at the "banker-minister."

The public taking sides for or against Necker, a terrific clamour awoke round his name. Among the arguments advanced in his favour, one of the most curious was that to increase the number of annuitants was to add to that of the government's supporters and those who dreaded its downfall. Nevertheless Necker did not succeed in quieting opposition. Nor did his character lend itself to this. An absolutist, as were all the innovating ministers of that time, he was lacking in flexibility and *sang-froid*; to this defect he added a theatrical manner and "an *amour-propre* which exceeded the ordinary measure of human vanity." Finally he was a man of money; as such his mind was bent on one subject exclusively: he believed the whole evil of the situation to reside in the finances. He imagined, and his friends repeated for him, that in paying off the deficit he was saving France.<sup>4</sup>

The antechambers of these princely dwellings laughed at the starving people and were far more deeply agitated with the results of the speculations on kings and governments, the tidings of which were wafted over to them by every ship that came from the shores of America. Here were the very questions which had filled the works of the Encyclopædists, carried out to the arbitrament of arms before their eyes: "No taxes without representation"; "no supreme power except by the will of the people"; "no dominant sect"; "no privileged birth"; "no inequality of condition." Here were the exact statements in their theoretical essays translated into the reality of life—a vast struggle fairly entered upon between the British colonies, swelling with those new ideas of universal freedom and fraternity, and the old British crown relying on prescription and experience.

In 1774, the year of the king's accession, a declaration of rights had been sent over to Europe along with other documents, by which the sympathies of all the generous and enlightened were demanded on behalf of the patriotic

cause. Already the American leaders had successfully resisted the Stamp Act of 1767. They had also opposed a newly imposed tax on tea and other commodities for the benefit of the mother country; and, as is generally the case between near relations, the quarrel became embittered by the identity of blood and character. Obstinate Jonathan would not hear reason, and obstinate John would not condescend to speak it.

Washington was now appointed commander-in-chief of all the colonial forces by the different provincial assemblies; war broke out and blood was shed in April, 1775, and on the 4th of July, 1776, congress issued a declaration of independence, and took the name of United States. Paris was in as high a state of excitement and exasperation as Boston or New York. The dreams of philanthropists had taken bodily shape, and it was indispensable for the glory of France and the dignity of human nature that the champions of liberty should be supported. Hundreds of young and ardent enthusiasts took out their coroneted swords from the chest crowned with armorial bearings, where their ancestors of the feudal times had laid them, to draw them in the cause of freedom, equality, and a republic. But a bolder step was soon forced on the unwilling king, and he despatched an emissary in the name of France with credentials to the congress of America, and soldiers in the uniform of France to support the insurrection. Twelve sail of the line, under the count d'Estaing, were their convoy across the Atlantic, and it must have been only with an affected surprise that Louis reaped the fruits of this interference, in a war with England.

In no other way, even by open hostilities, could he have equally benefited the men of Massachusetts and New York. The marquis de La Fayette, one of the highest of the old nobility, was foremost in the combats on their side, and the promulgation of their principles. He was citizen La Fayette, and scorned the title of marquis as a mark of the inferiority of his brother the smith or ploughman. Smiths and ploughmen in all parts of France began to hear, from returning soldiers, reports of the proceedings across the sea. They heard of the gradual progress of the popular cause; of battles where the English, when conquerors, were not inclined to pursue their advantage against their countrymen of the colonies, who only fought on American soil for the same privileges which their ancestors had won with the sword at home; of the necessity the English government accordingly experienced of employing mercenary troops of Hanoverians, Hessians, and other continental populations, to coerce the free-spirited inhabitants of the long-settled provinces on the Hudson, Delaware, and James, who had been as English in heart and feeling ten years before as the men of Warwickshire or Devon.

They discussed all these things in their shops and barns, and began to think what an oppressed and cowardly race they were to submit to a frippery peerage and worldly church, while people of their own class were achieving liberty and good government by courage and combination. Louis XVI, as king and liberal, was in a most painful and contradictory position. Every success his confederates won over his enemies was a fresh blow at the monarchic principles; every success gained by his enemies over his allies strengthened the hands of his declared and inveterate foe. If England was weakened, monarchy felt the stroke; if England was strengthened, France would feel her vengeance—an unhappy fate where failure or triumph was equally to be feared. But of the two, it was better to deprive England of her power to harm; and the whole strength of France was therefore roused to revenge the humiliation of the Seven Years' War. France had come out of it stripped of her ships and colonies. She had surrendered Canada and



[1776-1777 A.D.]

some of her western islands, and all her hopes in India. Her rival had planted her foot on the golden soil of Madras and Bengal, and was establishing an empire in the territories of the Great Mogul, whose very name was a mysterious sound of grandeur and wealth. From all that granary of riches and fame the French younger sons were kept out by the Treaty of Paris (1763), and they looked with disgust and hatred on the rapidly acquired fortunes of the civil servants of the English India Company, who went out poor, and came back with the fabulous treasures of oriental kings. The bitterness of international hatred had never been so great. In all quarters of the world France had been forced to succumb, and now was the opportunity to be revenged for lost America, for lost Hindustan, for lost Senegal, for the lost Rhine, and the re-established Pyrenees.<sup>b</sup>

### *Daresté's Account of the American Alliance*

Up to this time a profound antipathy had existed between France and America. The Americans had done all they could to bring about the loss to the French of their colonies in the New World, and their ideas of religious and political independence, their Protestantism, their love of self-government were absolutely contrary to the French system and the French spirit.

But when Franklin landed on the French shores, a common sentiment animated the two countries. America desired to shake off the British yoke; France wished to be avenged for her humiliations of 1763. What was called the "maritime tyranny" of the English weighed heavily on the French. For twelve years the government had been watching for an opportunity to take their revenge. There was all the greater anxiety to seize that which presented itself, because it was known that America was destined to a great development in the near future.

The French told themselves that success would be easy; that they had been quietly recovering their strength; that with all her apparent power England was very vulnerable, for she was crushed under the weight of her debt, incapacitated from levying new imposts, and little prepared to sustain a war whose least danger to her was that of bankruptcy. It was above all imperative that she should not be allowed time to settle her quarrel with America, the adjustment of which would leave her free to turn all her forces against France. The idea of reconquering Canada naturally presented itself but was speedily abandoned.

The struggle of the Americans against the English had, says Mignet,<sup>j</sup> agitated Europe and especially France. The "insurgents," as the revolted colonists were called, were the objects of an incredible interest. In the cafés and public places nothing was talked of but the justice and bravery of their resistance. All whose swords were idle and whose hearts loved noble adventures desired to enlist in their service. The sight of Franklin, the severe plainness of his costume, the refined simplicity of his manners, the attractive charm of his wit, his venerable aspect, modest self-confidence, and distinguished reputation made the cause of America all the fashion.

"At this moment," he wrote a little later, in reference to the lionising of which he was the object, "I am the most remarkable person in Paris." He added in another letter: "Americans are treated here with a cordiality, respect, and affection which they never encountered in England when they were sent there." It was in France that the celebrated line was written concerning him: *Eripuit cælo fulmen sceptrumque tyrannis*. Franklin

concealed under his apparent simplicity an extreme tenacity and a shrewd intelligence. Without appearing to do so he contrived to flatter the salons, the women, the *philosophes*; to talk beneficence and philanthropy and to conquer the Parisian public. This was the way to make himself embarrassing to the government. At first they avoided according him public recognition. The king had some scruple in breaking the treaties signed with England; but Vergennes remembered that England had never failed to support rebel in France. Eventually, certain sums of money were privately placed at the disposition of the rebels, Beaumarchais undertaking to forward these supplies to America. Then some officers were sent to them. Some tobacco they were anxious to sell was purchased.



A FRENCH OFFICER, EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

La Fayette was twenty years old. His house, a very ancient one, was allied with all the families about the court. Eager for excitement and anxious for warlike experiences, as we have said, he was seized with a noble enthusiasm for the American cause. "My heart was enlisted," he writes in his *Mémoires*.<sup>u</sup> He set out on the 26th of April, 1777, on board a vessel chartered at his own expense, with a little band of officers who attached themselves to his fortunes. The day was gone by in which young noblemen with nothing to do were accustomed to go to Hungary to act as volunteers in war against the Turks; the cause of Poland had aroused enthusiasm, but too late and when all was over; La Fayette embraced the cause of America and set the ball rolling.

If this had been a mere piece of youthful rashness, the matter might have been of small importance. But La Fayette, besides real military qualities, exhibited an energy of will, a tact, and a spirit of discretion which were remarkable. Amongst the Americans he found strong prejudices against the French; he managed to triumph over them. He desired, he says, to be more simple, more frugal, more austere than anyone. He conformed to the customs of his new allies; he embraced their ideas and passions, he finally won their confidence by force of his disinterested conduct and his devotion; he made them adopt him. Congress, which had at first hesitated to accept his services, gave him the title of major-general and he won the friendship of Washington.

The latter, by his firmness and wisdom, triumphed over the most perplexing difficulties. In his manœuvres against Howe with troops inferior in number, arms, and discipline, he showed himself to be a great general. A lost battle, that of Brandywine, delivered Philadelphia to the English. In spite of this check and of numerous defections, neither congress, which had retired further north, nor the general-in-chief was discouraged.

But it was not enough for America to show herself capable of resistance; she must also show herself capable of conquering. The English general Burgoyne, setting out with an army from Canada, invaded the state of New

[1777-1778 A.D.]

York. He entangled himself in a country which was almost a desert and denuded of the means of subsistence. The Americans, better trained for partisan warfare, harassed him, cut off his retreat, and compelled him to capitulate at Saratoga on the Hudson. The French government judged that the moment had come to throw off the mask.

It is true that there was no lack of partisans for peace. Necker declared that it was indispensable to the re-establishment of the finances. Turgot had maintained that America might without danger be left to struggle alone, seeing that even if reduced to obedience she would never be anything to the English but a burden and an encumbrance. Choiseul thought that the wisest course would be to allow the English and Americans to destroy each other. The contagion of American ideas also inspired some alarm; still this last consideration was not much heeded. All applauded the declarations of the United States, whether on account of their spirit of nobility and the pride of their sentiments, or from the joy naturally inspired by the humiliation of England; moreover, these feelings were shared by all Europe, even by the sovereigns who, like Frederick and Catherine, were glad to see England no longer in a position to interfere with their own affairs. Joseph II was perhaps the only one who refused to associate himself with the applause, saying that for his part it was his trade to be a royalist.

Franklin, all the time that he was being fêted by the most brilliant society in Paris, perseveringly pursued the object of his mission. Through the instrumentality of his secretaries, he conducted active negotiations with most of the courts of Europe. On the 6th of February, 1778, he signed two treaties with the cabinet of Versailles—the one a treaty of commerce and neutrality, the other for a defensive alliance. The commercial treaty comprised extremely important dispositions, such as the abolition of the right of aubaine,<sup>1</sup> the recognition of the rights of neutrals, the condemnation of paper blockades, and that of the right of search. The treaty of alliance was to take effect only in case of England's taking the initiative in an attack on France; but France and America undertook that, if that day should come, they would afford each other mutual aid and make no separate peace nor lay down their arms until after the recognition of the independence of the United States. The two treaties, although secret, were immediately known in London. The English took them as a declaration of war, hurled reproaches at Louis XVI, recalled their ambassador, and prepared for hostilities.

The alliance of France with America produced a great effect. It was curious to see Franklin, the ex-printer's apprentice, loaded with ovations at Versailles, and to behold the heir of the oldest monarchy in Europe acting as sponsor to the young republic which he commended to the good-will of other sovereigns. The principles of liberty which America was maintaining in the face of the world added to the strangeness. She had just declared that a nation has always the right to call its government to account, to participate in the legislative power, and even to rise in insurrection when such control is refused it. In reality the alliance rested solely on political, maritime, and commercial interests. It was not dictated by any sympathy of one people for another, nor by any community of ideas. La Fayette's enthusiasm was an isolated enthusiasm. Nevertheless, in the attitude of mind then prevailing in France, it was difficult for the theory of the rights of man not to find an echo; for it had a general character applicable to the Old World as well as to the New.

[<sup>1</sup> The *droit d'aubaine* was an old feudal claim by which the property of aliens dying in France fell to the king.]



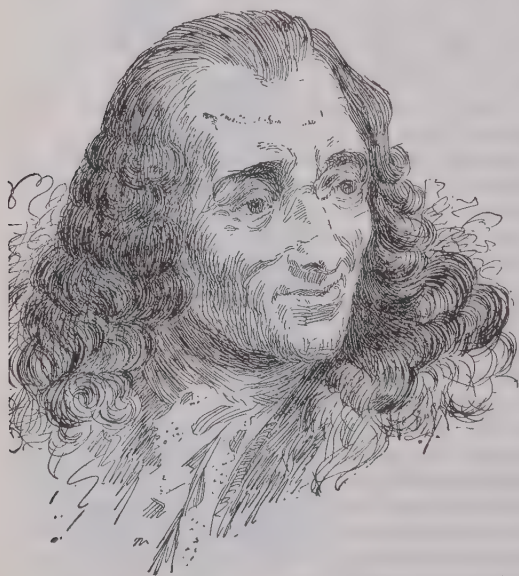
*Voltaire's Last Days*

The presence in Paris of Voltaire was causing at the same time an emotion of another kind. Voltaire was then more than an octogenarian. After twenty-five years of absence he solicited permission to reappear there and came to exhibit himself. An old man who, under the frosts of age, had still remained a mischievous child, he appeared to give his attention only to social and theatrical success, seeking for effect, lavishing satire or flattery to that end, stirred in short by a senile mania for ostentation. He desired to bless Franklin's grandson, laying his hands on his head and pronouncing the words: "God and liberty." He wished to kiss the hand of Turgot, that hand which had, he said, set its signature to the people's happiness.

Lodged in the hôtel of the marquis de Villette, he was there visited with the strangest eagerness of curiosity by a generation which devoured his

works without having ever seen himself. The queen and the count of Artois would have gone to see him had not Louis XVI forbidden it. The Academy violated its customs in order to send him a complimentary deputation. His bust was crowned at the Théâtre-Français.

It is asserted that the journey hastened his end. He fell ill and died on the 30th of May, 1778, amidst the clamour he occasioned. Clamour was his element; his diminished forces did not allow him to endure it. He was stifled by the enthusiasm of his admirers and the hatred of his enemies. His death had the effect of still further augmenting the agitation which was going on about his name; thus the boisterous



VOLTAIRE

popularity of his works has served to create an illusion as to the influence which he exercised. He propagated irreligion and contributed more than any other to destroy the sense of respect. Such is the terrible responsibility which weighs on his memory. But his enemies have added to it in accusing him as well as Rousseau of having made the Revolution. The Revolution, as Droz<sup>h</sup> has said, was the work neither of Voltaire nor of Jean-Jacques. It was the work of all, above all of the government which succeeded neither in foreseeing it, an easy matter, nor in preventing it, a thing which would have been possible if the reforms had been carried out on a definite plan and with wisdom and energy.<sup>i</sup>

*The Fall of Necker*

The events of the war, in the meantime, occupied the inquiet minds of the French people. The loans of Necker supported the war; and the government—for Necker, with the weight of affairs upon him, personally still

[1778-1781 A.D.]

held but a subordinate place—seemed inclined to repay him with little gratitude. Maurepas treated him with the proud airs of a superior, and was not the less jealous of the finance minister's talents and influence. Necker had dared to complain to the king of the insufficiency and profusion of M. de Sartinis, minister of marine, and even ventured to propose the marshal De Castries for his successor. To this offensive act of independence he added an unpardonable breach of ministerial etiquette, in publishing the *Compte Rendu*, or statement of revenue and expenditure.

Publicity was the requisite, the indispensable support of that credit, which was Necker's only resource for carrying on the government. The necessity was not taken into consideration, but the novelty was regarded as dangerous and treasonable. The noblesse, the courtiers joined in the clamour against the rigid minister, who checked the wonted liberalities of the king, and who threatened the reform of pension and private gratuity.

The usual mode of court vengeance, calumny, was employed to blacken Necker. Envy and spleen, however, no longer vented itself in the mirthful shape of epigram. Tempers had grown more serious; and the low libel, as a weapon, had succeeded the song and the witticism. Necker, who should have despised such attacks, was, on the contrary, most sensible to them. Popularity was his idol. He, therefore, demanded that his libellers, whom he had discovered to be in the service of the count of Artois, should be dismissed. Maurepas, of whom he made the demand, declared this impossible. "Then," said Necker, "if I am not to have this satisfaction, at least let there be given me some mark of the royal favour, in order to confound my enemies. Grant me entrance to the council." Maurepas objected that Necker was a Protestant. "Sully was one," urged the unorthodox minister; "and if my demand be not conceded, I must resign." It was not granted; and Necker, having at first sacrificed his pride by accepting the labour and responsibility of finance minister without its rank or rights, sacrificed this place to his vanity, at the very moment when his remaining in power would have been most beneficial (1781). Maurepas died a few months after. Had Necker remained in the ministry, he might have succeeded to the first place.

Necker during his ministry operated one important change, in realising the project imagined by Turgot of creating provincial assemblies in those parts of the kingdom that had not states of their own. As these assemblies were merely to be intrusted with the task of partitioning the imposts, thus exercising administrative rather than legislative power, Necker ordered that the number of the members chosen from the commons should be equal to those of the two privileged orders united. Thus the noblesse composed a fourth, the clergy a fourth, the burgesses and unennobled proprietors of land one half. This was a precedent that afterwards decided the great question how the states-general should be organised. By it was at once secured the predominance of the middle orders, who soon transferred to great legislative rights and questions the same share of influence that had been granted them merely in the office of regulating the levy of the taxes. Necker, who had few political ideas, did not see the tendency of his scheme. It equally escaped the jealous eyes of the court. The parliament had perspicacity enough to espy the importance of the measure, and it formed one great cause of their discontent against Necker. It will soon be seen how decisive the arrangement proved in giving a republican form to the representative assembly of the nation.

The year of Necker's dismissal was nevertheless a glorious one for France and America. The minister of marine, De Castries, chosen by him, proved

his talents by the successes which his combination and activity procured. A French army, wafted over the Atlantic, united with that of Washington, and outnumbered the British, whilst the French naval force, concentrated in the Chesapeake, was superior in those seas, and materially aided the operations of the land army. Sir Henry Clinton commanded in New York, Cornwallis in Virginia. Threatening both points, and thus preventing them from mutual aid, Washington and the French suddenly turned their combined force against the Virginian army. Cornwallis fortified himself in Yorktown; and he was soon attacked by the French on one side, and by the Americans on the other. The two gallant nations, rivalling each other in zeal, could not fail to be victorious; the English were beaten from their works, and Lord Cornwallis was reduced to the disgrace of capitulation.

Many noble names, soon to be famed in French annals, here first distinguished themselves. In addition to La Fayette and Rochambeau, were the duke de Lauzun, afterwards de Biron, who perished in the Revolution, Alexander Berthier, Matthew Dumas, the viscount de Noailles. Charles de Lameth, whose voice with that of La Fayette was heard in the French chamber of deputies, was wounded in the action.

At sea, too, the count de Grasse had the advantage over Hood. Spain wrested Minorca from England. In short, the last year of a mere courtier's administration, that of Maurepas, might have contented the thirst for glory and humbling of Britain that inspired Choiseul. The triumph was short, however. America, indeed, kept her advantages, and won honourable peace by victory; whilst France and Spain met with reverses to counterbalance her success. In April, 1782, the French and British fleets under Count de Grasse and Admiral Rodney, the former consisting of thirty-four, the latter of thirty-six sail, encountered each other in the West Indian seas. The action commenced on the morning of the 12th of April, the lines closing, and the French supporting the attack with intrepid valour. De Grasse had his ships full of troops, destined for the conquest of Jamaica. In a close engagement these might have proved an aid. They proved to the French admiral a source of embarrassment, the cannonade making dreadful havoc amongst their numbers, and communicating terror and confusion to the crews. Still for many hours Rodney in vain endeavoured to break through their line. This he effected in the afternoon, scattering and mastering the hostile squadron, the ships of which were overpowered one after the other. The count de Grasse, in the *Ville de Paris*, made a valiant resistance, combating, until night and the discomfiture of his crew, only three of the survivors of which remained without a wound, compelled him to surrender.

The united forces of France and Spain met with as marked a discomfiture in their attack upon Gibraltar, towards the close of the same year. Floating batteries of a new construction were employed, whilst an army of 20,000 awaited their effect to take the formidable fortress by assault. After a day spent in the hottest cannonade from both sides that ever had, perhaps, been witnessed, the failure of the enterprise became evident during the night, by the floating batteries taking fire. The French historians record with gratitude and admiration the generous conduct of Curtis, who at the risk of his life saved from perishing several hundreds of the enemy.

In the commencement of 1783, a treaty was concluded between Great Britain and the United States of America, whose independence was thus accomplished. Peace was at the same time restored between England and France.<sup>1</sup>

[<sup>1</sup> The war added to the French debt 1,400,000,000 livres.]



[1778-1783 A.D.]

The latter, in these negotiations, recovered the dignity that she had been obliged to waive when, under Madame de Pompadour, the Treaty of Paris was signed; the advantage and honour seemed on her side. England, besides the restitution of conquests, ceded Senegal and Tobago to France, and Minorca to Spain. The French soldiers in America had shown valour and reaped successes. If De Grasse had yielded after a well-fought struggle, De Suffren in the East supported and redeemed the honour of the French navy. The war, and the treaty which concluded it, would, in either of the former reigns, have been celebrated with popular acclamations, with medals, and panegyric verse; but now the nation was too dissatisfied with its internal state to abate of its censures, or be bribed by even partial victory into quiet and content.<sup>c</sup>

To have added so great a people to the family of nations was a subject of pride to the French of all ranks and conditions. But the sight of their handiwork reminded them painfully of the position still occupied by themselves. They tried to commence a new career of equal laws and constitutional government, when the very traditions of equity or law had died out from every mind. For the succeeding six years efforts were continually made to arrest the onward course of events; but all efforts were too late. Sometimes there was an attempt made by the oligarchs around the throne to reverse the wheels, and retravel the same space that had been traversed since the death of the last king. A persistence in the backward journey might succeed, it was fondly hoped, in landing them in the happy days of Louis XIV and undisputed power; and their measures were as impolitic as their desires were impossible.<sup>b</sup>

Maurepas had filled his office perfectly to his own and the monarch's satisfaction. To him, in influence over the royal mind, succeeded Marie Antoinette. The long estrangement of Louis from his queen had passed away: Maurepas had, from jealousy, contributed to it. The birth of their first child, afterwards the duchess d'Angoulême, in 1778, was at once a sign and a bond of conjugal affection. The dauphin's birth took place in 1781.<sup>c</sup>

## SOULAVIE ON THE SECOND EPOCH OF MARIE ANTOINETTE

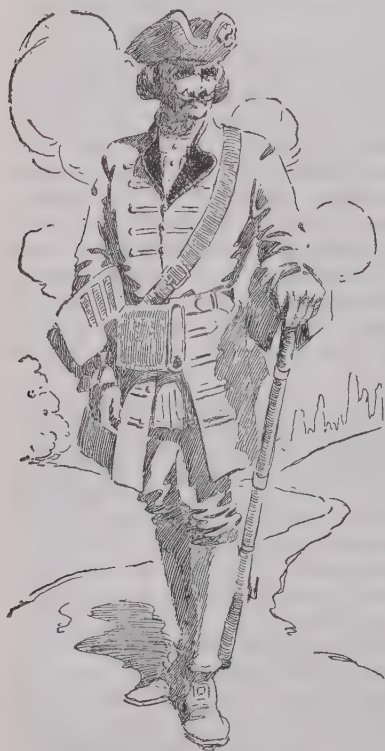
The birth of a dauphin might have changed the affairs and position of the queen. Had she been wiser and far-seeing, she would have profited from an event which attached her definitely to France, and gave her in a way a new existence. In case of the king's death, Marie Antoinette, as regent, would become queen of the first empire in Europe. This possibility alone made her interesting in the eyes of the French; but she only used this event, which subjugated the king and made her more powerful, as a means of abusing her power, and abusing the weakness of the king to get favours and places from him, from ministries down to exciseships.

The birth of the first dauphin, who died in 1789, was on October 22nd, 1781. The death of M. de Maurepas happened on the 11th of the following month. This event, delivering her from a minister to whom she owed a part of her misfortunes, made her hope that afterwards fewer obstacles would come in her way. It was just the contrary. Like Louis XIV, who was the first to notice the unpleasant truth, the queen in bestowing a place on one man made him an ingrate and twenty others malcontents. She succeeded in getting M. de Ségur into office as marshal of France and wanted to make minister of finance the archbishop of Toulouse, who for a long time had ardently coveted the office of a minister. She would have succeeded, if the

king had not found among the papers of her father that M. de Lomnie was a philosophical atheist. It was by her aid that the virtuous D'Ormesson was sent away. She called and declared herself the protectress of Calonne, whose easy disposition and morals made her hope for the greatest devotion to her interests. She would have liked to displace M. de Vergennes, who had a diplomatic system far removed from the ambitious views of the Viennese court, but here she found the king's affection for the minister unshakable.

Deep political reasons gave rise to the Asiatic splendour which surrounded the reigns of Louis XIV and XV. Magnificence had sustained the variety and

pre-eminence of the different ranks. The court of France became each day more deserted, and the centre of intrigue was established little by little in the capital. The royal family was obliged during the week to live at Versailles like an ordinary private family. The nobility cared no longer for that which they had once regarded as a favour—a visit thereunto. Marie Antoinette became tired of seeing the same retinue of servants at Versailles as at Paris, and imagined that the acquisition of St. Cloud, which would take her nearer the capital, would restore the old influence. She forgot that she was transporting her court, already so discredited, into the neighbourhood of a capital whence it had been transferred for strong political and social reasons in the best days of Louis XIV. Also, instead of seeking at St. Cloud the homage and affluence of the nobility, she went openly to the fêtes of the common people, who came there every year to aquatic sports. M. Lenoir alone knew what it cost each year to the police to pay for the banal cry of "*Vive la Reine!*" which he had to oppose to that of the Parisians, who openly said, as they left Paris and all along the road, "We are going to St. Cloud to see the fountains and the Austrian woman," or similar expressions.



A FRENCH INFANTRYMAN, TIME OF  
LOUIS XV

Thus Marie Antoinette gradually did away with the means devised by ancient monarchs to maintain the reserve and éclat necessary to impress the people. Versailles represented all that was dull to her; she established her pleasures and usual habitation at Trianon, where, despising the ornamental style of Le Nôtre and other celebrated artists in laying out parks in the French style, she went in for the picturesque form of the English garden. The country houses of Vincennes, of Compiègne and Fontainebleau, celebrated in history, and designed from olden times for courtly relaxation, the old forests round them giving an air of mystery, or even a fairy-like appearance, were almost abandoned. The queen only went to St. Cloud, a palace celebrated for the orgies of the house of Orleans and for being the rendezvous of crowds of Parisians; and no one will ever forget that she witnessed the

[1780-1789 A.D.]

games as a simple spectator, side by side with the bourgeoisie, who went every Sunday to St. Cloud.

The queen took advantage of all these circumstances to change and simplify our costumes, doing it to the prejudice of our national industry. The magnificence of court robes had formerly been a source of riches; and Lyons, the central silk manufactory, kept alive our southern provinces where cocoons were the chief source of wealth. Every year Lyons bought in Provence and Languedoc fifty millions' worth of silken goods. The French accused the emperor of being jealous of this richness, and accused the queen of having helped her brother in a scheme to destroy the commerce of Lyons. They accused her of trying to effect a revolution in France in habits and fashions, to the profit of the linen manufactures in the Netherlands, which her brother was interested in reviving. There was some truth in this accusation. When the queen accustomed her ladies to dress in white, Brussels grew rich and Lyons lost three-quarters of its trade.

Louis XIV had made all the courts of Europe dependent on Lyons goods. The capitals of all empires and kingdoms, and noblemen of every nationality spent annually in Lyons about 80,000,000 francs, buying superb stuffs, silken damask, and satin brocaded in gold and silver. The new queen's bad taste, and the revolutions she wrought in our fashions and arts, altered the style in all France and Europe (so great was our foreign influence). Thousands of weavers and artisans were thrown out of work and were in misery. Discontent broke out. The Lyons merchants, seeing their commerce vanishing, represented to the king's aunts the necessity of keeping up trade and forbidding the new sorts of goods which had been introduced in France to the detriment of our commercial prosperity.

These ladies received the petition, presented it to the king, and reproached the queen in polished terms of rebuke. She listened with a haughtiness foreign to the French court. Silk clothes — all that beauty of stuff and design, to which artists and women had contributed — were now worn only on high and solemn occasions. Long trains disappeared. A style as of courtesans and prostitutes appeared in the queen's private court, and never after this crowning fault did the old grandeur reappear. "It was impossible to distinguish a duchess from an actress," said Montjoie,<sup>k</sup> the panegyrist of this princess; and moreover, the French looms lost more than a hundred millions annually, and Joseph II gained as much by the exportations from the Low Countries. And when England, following suit, concluded a treaty with us which destroyed our best manufactures, the French spirit awoke in the people, in that class of citizens who are ingenious, active, brave, vigilant, and friends of their native country. They rose against a government which lowered and impoverished the nation to the profit of Austria and England.

To this craze for cambric and linen, succeeded the folly of having amateur theatricals. The king, serious by nature, avoided or was bored by them. But the queen, fond of acting, took parts — not great ones in which there might have been some dignity, but those of soubrettes, servants, and confidants. "Formerly," said Montjoie,<sup>k</sup> "even a plain gentleman would have lost in character if he had acted as a comedian even in his own home." The queen quite upset this wholesome prejudice by her example, and learned and acted rôles in comic opera. This rage spread in society, and manners did not improve therefrom. The queen played her parts awkwardly. She could hardly ignore the fact that she was not doing wisely when she saw how little pleasure her performances gave. "Put in your memoirs," said a lady to me, who had seen her intimately at Versailles and Trianon, "that she has the



manners and talent of a second-rate comedienne." This was a severe criticism, but if her conduct did not deserve it, she gave occasion for hasty judgment. But it is time to speak on this delicate subject.

One may imagine how the queen, having drawn on herself the enmity of the king's aunts, of monsieur, of madame, of madame d'Artois, and of the greater part of the great ladies, has been calumniated for her morals. Posterity, to get at the truth, ought to ignore nineteen-twentieths of the accusations against her; but as the ways of Roman empresses, like those of queens of the Middle Ages, are the mainspring of history, and as those of the French queens have had a powerful influence on state destinies, I will relate some facts that I have learned from those who knew the Old Régime well, and who confirmed them during the Revolution while I was writing these memoirs.

The queen, as long as Louis XV lived, conducted herself with more dignity than when she was queen of France. From that epoch, until the birth of madame,<sup>1</sup> she did nothing to hinder the complaints which were heard with regard to her. Edward, nicknamed *le beau Dillon*, and M. de Coigny passed as her lovers. They went so far as to put the count of Artois on the list. "We made this discovery by accident," said a lady to me, "for the count of Artois put his foot on that of madame de . . . thinking he had put it on that of Marie Antoinette." From 1774 to 1789 the court was a strange mixture. The queen was openly reproached with having the morals credited in history to several empresses.<sup>a</sup>

### *The Diamond Necklace*

All these scandals were to find an echo and one which even added to them though there were enough of them already. The prince of Guéménée, one of the Rohans, made a shameful bankruptcy. A short time after, another Rohan, Louis, archbishop of Strasburg, and a cardinal, a corrupt prelate and courtier, became, through his credulity, the victim of an intrigue which publicly compromised the queen. Ambitious of being made a minister, and desiring to gain the favour of Marie Antoinette, or rather to turn aside the enmity he had incurred, he bought a necklace for her which cost 1,600,000 francs. He permitted himself to be duped by an intriguing woman, the countess de la Motte-Valois, who promised to deliver it in his name. He was overwhelmed with debt, despite his ecclesiastical revenues which amounted to 1,200,000 francs. He could not pay the first instalment and the jewellers applied to the king. Vergennes and Miromesnil advised the hushing up of the affair, but Louis XVI preferred to follow the advice of two intimate friends of the queen, who wished to ruin the cardinal. He ordered De Rohan to be arrested and sent to the Bastille.

The Rohans cried out at this; the public, ignorant of what had happened, believed it an abuse of power and an act of vengeance on the part of Marie Antoinette. The cardinal demanded to be tried by the parliament. The clergy and the pope protested against what seemed to them a violation of ecclesiastical privileges. Notwithstanding this the trial took place. The evidence revealed an incredible series of scandals; the accused had been worked upon by the swindlers into whose power he had fallen through his folly; and these swindlers represented the queen as playing a supposed rôle of venality and love-making. At the end of ten months the attorney-general

[<sup>1</sup> That is, her daughter, afterwards the duchess d'Angoulême. The king's eldest daughter, the wife of his eldest brother (Monsieur), or the princess nearest the throne, was so called.]

[1786-1787 A.D.]

requested that sentence should be pronounced. The king and the court wished it. The parliament condemned the principal culprits, Madame de la Motte, to be branded and kept in confinement; her husband, who had sold the diamonds of the necklace in England, to confinement; and Villette, who had forged the signature of Marie Antoinette, to banishment,<sup>1</sup> but the cardinal was acquitted by a majority of five votes. The queen was so unpopular that this acquittal was received with public applause. There was a desire at any price to make her appear guilty. Exception was even taken to Louis XVI's action when he exercised an indisputable right in exiling Louis de Rohan to one of his abbeys, while demanding that he should resign the office of grand almoner, and forbidding him to appear at court, a disgrace as necessary as it was merited (1786). The result of this trial was thus a great scandal to the higher clergy, to the court, and finally to the queen, although no one could doubt her innocence.<sup>2</sup>

The queen, in the inconsiderate gaiety of youth, of innocence, and high place, gave those handles to calumny that dissolute hypocrisy would have avoided. Her influence over her husband was not less pernicious because of her innocence; whilst the popular rumours that denied this had the terrible effect of blackening the discontent against royalty into personal odium towards the sovereign and his consort.

To the place of Maurepas in the administration, though not to his influence, succeeded Vergennes: he tried if men of mediocre talents might not manage the routine of finance; moreover, he chose them from the benches of the parliament, in hopes of conciliating that body. Joly de Fleury, and after him D'Ormesson, was placed at the head of the treasury. The government came to a complete stand for want of funds during the ministry of the latter; and talent, or a character for talent, was again sought: it was difficult to find; Turgots and Neckers were rare: in default of such, a man of showy parts and high pretensions was chosen—a clerk, who aped the courtier. Such was Calonne. He improvised a theory by contradicting his predecessors; an obvious mode of being original. As economy had been cried up by Necker and by Turgot, the new minister declared that profusion formed the wealth of a state. He resolved to follow Turgot's plan, the only obvious one indeed, of equalising the taxes, and levying them alike on noblesse and clergy as well as on the commons. In order to effect this, which Turgot had failed in, and Necker had not attempted, Calonne proposed to call an assembly of notables, the chiefs, in fact, of the privileged orders. He hoped to move them, or shame them, or cajole them, to consent to his proposals; and the notables were accordingly summoned to meet in the commencement of the year 1787.

#### THE ASSEMBLY OF NOTABLES (1787 A.D.)

In February, the assembly of notables was opened at Versailles. Calonne, in a solemn discourse, disclosed his plans; and, to prove the necessity of reform, confessed a deficit of 112,000,000 francs. His plans alone for taxing the privileged orders were sufficiently distasteful to his hearers, especially to the clergy, who claimed and exercised the right of taxing themselves in their own synods. The deficit gave a handle for discontent; and Calonne, in unjustly throwing part of it upon Necker, called forth a triumphant exultation from that financier, whom he exiled in answer. Hence Necker's party,

[<sup>1</sup> Implicated in this scandal was that superlative charlatan, Cagliostro, who was acquitted, but banished.]

including the writers of the day, the ecclesiastics, and the greater portion of the noblesse, were in instant opposition to Calonne, whom they accused of seeking to despoil and humble the higher classes. They called for an account of the revenue and expenditure. After much struggle and reluctance, it was granted. The receipt amounted to 400,000,000 francs, whilst the annual expenditure exceeded that by 150,000,000. Such a contrast with the confidence and profusion of the minister afforded ample ground of censure against him. Calonne, whose only support lay in the count of Artois (afterwards Charles X), whose debts he had paid, and in the Polignacs, was obliged to succumb.

#### THE FINANCES OF BRIENNE

A new minister was now chosen from the triumphant notables. This was the archbishop of Toulouse, — Étienne Charles de Loménie de Brienne, “as weak a head,” says Madame de Staël, “as ever was covered by the peruke of a counsellor of state.” He had fought in behalf of privilege, although, in common with the assembly which he led, he affected to be merely actuated by indignation against the profligate Calonne. The notables dispersed, and left Brienne to enjoy the vanity and the difficulties of his pre-eminent station. The archbishop of Toulouse had now to keep his tacit promise of respecting the exemption of the privileged orders from general taxation; and yet, in order to gain the popular voice, he was obliged to affect the contrary policy. His vanity and love of place made him stoop to play so base and dangerous a part. The assent of the notables to Calonne’s plans of taxation and reform had no legislative force; but still its moral influence was so great that had Brienne immediately drawn up an edict for a territorial impost, and presented it to the parliament, the legists durst not have refused to sanction it. But Brienne hesitated, and manœuvred to gain time, sending to the parliament edicts establishing stamp duties and abolishing *corvées*, and bringing forward the vital question of the land tax but in their wake.

By this means the parliament were allowed both leisure and pretext for resistance. In that body there existed much diversity of opinion. The presidents and elders were attached to their own privileges, which they felt were allied to those of noblesse and clergy. The provincial assemblies proposed by Turgot, Necker, and Calonne were odious to them; and the great question of the territorial impost did not please them, since it was evident that its effect would be to raise the crown above all want to its ancient height of superiority. This last result was indeed dreaded on all hands, though avowed by none, and was the principal motive of that discontented and seditious spirit that opposed all reform, as saving the country from anarchy to plunge it into despotism. The parliament was embarrassed by these conflicting views and circumstances. One thing, however, was evident, that both notables and minister had cast off the onus of decreeing the territorial impost, or the odium of rejecting it, upon the parliament: and the parliament now sought to follow their example, in doing neither one nor the other. But how to escape?

There was no way except down a precipice; and they took it. They declared that they had no more right than the notables to sanction laws or taxes; thus contradicting their past pretensions for centuries, and abdicating at once their right to stand in the place of a national assembly. The king being unable to decree new laws or taxes, and the notables and parliament successively avowing their incompetence to aid him, the states-general became the only resource. This fearful name, that men dreaded to utter, was never-



[1787 A.D.]

theless uppermost in the thoughts of all. Necessity must have suggested it to the dullest. But it was unheard of, until a pert member, gathering audacity from the impulse of his wit, gave utterance to it in the shape of a pun. "It is not states of expenditure and income that we want," said he, "but states-general." When one thus had the audacity to speak the word, thousands found courage to re-echo it.

This sounded as a thunderclap to the court and to Brienne, who was prepared for the refusal or acquiescence of the parliament, but not for this detested alternative. He was enraged. The refractory body was summoned to a bed of justice at Versailles; and the two edicts of the stamp duty and land tax were forcibly registered, the minister losing sight of his deference towards the higher orders. The parliament returned to its sitting, protested, and declared the registry of the edicts null. Brienne exiled the body to Troyes. Justice was thus suspended; and the government yielded. The parliament was recalled; it gratified Brienne by registering a new loan to meet urgent necessities, and in return the archbishop promised that the states-general should be convoked within five years.

Thus were the cause and high pretensions of the court and higher orders betrayed (if submitting to necessity can be called treason) by the very ministers whom they raised to defend them. They discarded Turgot, and drove away Necker; yet Calonne, their minion, was obliged to adopt the liberal plans of his predecessors, and was in consequence superseded by a chief notable and high churchman. Vain precaution! this champion of the high orders was himself not only driven reluctantly to propose the hated laws and to compel their registry, but he was obliged in addition to capitulate and yield up everything in the important promise of calling an assembly of the nation. The chief maxim of an administration had hitherto been to sail between the two shoals of bankruptcy on one hand and the states-general on the other. Brienne struck the vessel of the state on the latter sand-bank. In more favourable circumstances, with more skilful pilots, it might have righted, and floated into port; but, the wind now menacing, the popular tempest soon broke loose, and the monarchy went to pieces.

Such were the events of the year 1787, in which the Revolution advanced with an awful stride. The high orders retreated before it. Louis XVI reformed his court, and dismissed a crowd of high officers; but the minister, despite his concessions, was still at war with the parliament. In the resistance offered to the bed of justice, the duke of Orleans had shown himself most forward. That prince had placed himself at the head of the violent and



A CAPTAIN OF ARTILLERY, REIGN OF  
LOUIS XVI

liberal, or what Weber<sup>1</sup> calls the American party. He was exiled in consequence. His friends now stirred in his behalf, and raised discussion as to the legality of *lettres de cachet*. Brienne perceived his blunder in first castigating the parliament and then yielding to them. He resolved to imitate Maupeou, and proceed to extremities. A plan was secretly matured and prepared for dismissing the parliament, and establishing other courts, provincial and metropolitan, in lieu, with a *cour plénière*, or body of peers, magistrates, and notables; in fact, to constitute a high court of appeal. The project was not kept sufficiently close. D'Esprémesnil, a councillor, obtained a copy of it from the printer; and, hurrying to the Palais de Justice, assembled his brethren.

On the morrow, the parliament was to be broken. They imitated the conduct of Charles I's parliament, when the usher was at the door, in voting a declaration. This set forth that the states-general had alone the right of granting taxes; that magistrates were irremovable; that no one should be arrested without immediate trial before his natural judge. On a par with these fundamental laws, they placed the hereditary right of succession in the crown. The minister replied to this manifesto by issuing a warrant to arrest D'Esprémesnil. He took refuge in the parliament. The usher employed, knowing not his person, asked which was he; and the councillors exclaimed that "they were all Esprémesnil." Nevertheless he surrendered. The king, in a bed of justice, compelled the registry of his edict, dissolving the parliament. The bailiwicks [*grands bailliages*] and plenary court [*cour plénière*] was instituted in its stead. The resistance was now general. Collisions took place universally in the provinces betwixt the troops and the people, who supported their ancient magistracy.

The treasury in the meantime grew empty. A loan was impossible. Brienne had recourse to his own order. He summoned a convocation of the clergy, and asked of them a subsidy. To his demands for supply, they gave in answer the universal echo, the states-general; and, as if impatient of ruin, requested the immediate convocation of the assembly. Overcome by this last blow, the minister yielded, and dared to hope from the commons that support to the throne which the noblesse, the parliament, and the clergy had successively and factiously denied. In August, 1788, appeared in consequence an *arrêt* of the council, convoking the states-general in the month of May of the following year.

Brienne hoped to preside over this assembly and direct its motions. "Are you not afraid to hold the states?" asked some one of him. "Sully held them," was the self-sufficient reply. But the archbishop was destined to proceed no further in the emulation of Sully. The treasury was without funds; and the day was at hand for the payment of dividends to the public creditors. The minister proposed paying part in bills. The Parisian *rentiers* were in a fury to find their income thus curtailed.<sup>1</sup> An insurrection was expected; several had lately taken place in the provinces—at Rennes, at Grenoble<sup>2</sup>—and Brienne feared for the consequences. He hurried, in tears, to the royal closet, and besought the interference of the queen to induce Necker to aid and enter office. Necker agreed to supersede Brienne, but refused to take office with him. The archbishop was accordingly sacrificed.

<sup>1</sup> The archbishop was burned in effigy, and many lives were lost.]

<sup>2</sup> "A large assembly of citizens of the three estates gathered at the hôtel-de-ville of Grenoble and decided that the states of Dauphiné, fallen into desuetude for many generations, should convene July 21st, 1788. Up to now, there had been special resistance from corporations and popular uprising; on this day was seen the national sovereignty in action for the first time. This act opened the French Revolution." — MARTIN.<sup>v</sup>]

[1788-1789 A.D.]

"If he did not make the fortune of the state," says Thiers,<sup>m</sup> "he at least made his own": he retired enormously rich; and even begged for a cardinal's hat in parting. In addition to the chaos and disorder to which the kingdom was reduced in his administration, his foreign policy, or rather lack of such, entailed disgrace. The popular party of the Dutch, favoured by the French, had rebelled against the stadholder. Prussia marched an army into Holland, despised the feeble menaces of Brienne, and re-established the power of the price of Orange.<sup>e</sup>

On August 25th, 1788, the king sent for Necker, and for the moment Paris was beside herself with joy. "It was almost a burlesque," says Mallet du Pan<sup>n</sup> "and serves as a thermometer of the distress. In a country of twenty-four million inhabitants, it was necessary to beg aid of a foreigner, a Protestant, a republican, dismissed seven years back, exiled last year, hated by the master, of principles and character diametrically opposed to the court."

#### MONTYON ON NECKER'S SECOND MINISTRY

When M. Necker returned to the ministry, instead of giving the people laws, he had to give them bread. He found only 500,000 francs in the exchequer. A number of payments were due and could not be made. The greater part of the money to come in was already anticipated and free use had been made of these anticipations. The creation of state promissory notes caused the greatest alarm; all speculation, all business, was suspended and paralysed; commerce was stagnant: state bankruptcy seemed inevitable, and yet was avoided without force, constraint, taxes, or loans, or state promissory notes — those notes so alarming, so ominous! He made no use at all of any of these: they did not even appear. He was provided for all the separate needs for the moment. All the expedients, transfers, bank resources in which M. Necker excelled were set in motion. A number of detailed means were employed, which would have been feeble alone, but were strong when united. It was exceedingly wise not to set any great force at work which would have met with obstacles in the weakened and discredited government, or in the power of people interested in contradicting.

There was no time in the administration of M. Necker when he showed so much courage, wisdom, talent, and sagacity. His well-chosen combinations and the success they obtained bordered on the miraculous. Yet this epoch of his administration is not that which has won the chief praise of his partisans, because men are more touched by and more grateful for good done than for evils averted, even when the service is greater. However sad, however alarming was the state of affairs, there was one bright point which gave M. Necker great satisfaction. He had always desired a convocation of the states-general, foreseeing this to be the only means by which he could carry out the great reforms he projected.

He thought of giving to the third estate [*tiers état*] a number of extraordinary representatives, double that of each of the other estates; this number of representatives would necessarily lead to the increase of suffrage; he presumed the preponderance which would result would be at the disposition of those to whom it was due. He believed he could support this audacious innovation by giving it the appearance of a national desire. But finding himself deprived of the means of authorizing by the vote of the nobles such an unusual and irregular design, he took up a plan which was most extraordinary, most audacious and unheard of, and which has



no counterpart in any history of any people. He freely expressed his opinion and gave it a publicity which he thought would second his ambitious views if the members of the third estate heard it as coming from the author of the prerogatives that had been conceded to them. This was an astonishing phenomenon in the administration of France, to see a minister substituting the promulgation of his personal intentions instead of those of the king, which alone ought to be made public. Necker usurped the office of both king and chancellor. He notified the intentions of the king, explained them, and even said in the name of his majesty what his majesty had neither said nor hinted at. He taught the states-general what was the object of their deliberations, what spirit should guide them, and constituted himself preceptor to the nation.

But that which was more surprising, even inconceivable, — that which was more unjustifiable than an irregularity or a usurpation of function, and which no consideration could justify, — was that M. Necker had dared in his speech to exceed and restrict the clauses of a decree of the council which went against his views. According to the decree, an authentic instrument of the king's will, the double representation conferred on the third estate gave it no augmentation of suffrages. Necker in his speech decided in the name of the king that in matters of general interest the third estate should have as many suffrages as representatives. He thought to give power to authorise a contradiction of what had been decreed in the council by an agreement obtained from the king by private effort, and consequently removed from all discussion and contradiction; a subversion alarming and fatal to the only barrier which had been given to kings against the surprises of an imprudent or unfaithful minister; a blow against the only pledge the nation possessed of the wisdom and justice of determinations emanating from the throne.

After a long, stormy, and sterile debate on the form of the deliberations of the states-general, the king declared to them what should henceforth be the state constitution. This constitution should have for its principal object the regulation of finance, which in the eighteenth century had formed the chief pivot on which all social conventions relative to the government had turned; no tax, no loan without the consent of the states-general; fixed times for sitting; and, to assure these sittings, taxation would only be valid from one sitting to another; all taxes to be supported equally by all classes; the states to have the right of assigning funds for each expense and to receive the accounts of same; public expenses to be published every year; in case of imminent danger the king to have a right of raising a temporary loan up to 100,000,000 francs and the command of military forces always to remain with the king.

This new state of things conformed to the plan traced by Necker, save for certain modifications and restrictions which made no essential change, nor hindered its main object. Therefore he ought to have tolerated these modifications. But he considered them as a failing in submission to his ideas. This he would not allow, and instead of following the ordinary route followed by even the firmest of ministers — who, when the king does not see fit to follow his counsel, puts the matter to the vote and retires from the ministry — Necker permitted himself the indiscretion of not appearing at that sitting when the king made known his will. However, he wished after this sitting to give in his resignation. He was retained by the king, sent away some days after, redemanded by the national assembly, and on this demand recalled and re-established in his place.

[1789-1790 A.D.]

We have already seen what was for the time his triumph. After his return, as the idol of France, he soon experienced on the part of the national assembly a contradiction which extended to every object, even the least important, even in matters in which his superior knowledge and experience made him the natural guide of the assembly. If he fixed the interest of a loan, and a smaller one than he had proposed was suggested, the loan fell through; but the assembly was not disposed to take his advice, and he became inconsiderable and of an absolute nullity. When in one of his orations he spoke of his virtues, he appeared ridiculous; having ventured to speak of his wife, he was received with roars of laughter; when, hurt by all the contradiction and humiliation, he publicly shed tears, the act was only regarded as showing weakness and want of character.

The principal personages of the states had conceived much vaster plans than those of Necker. But they recognised that their financial schemes must extend further than mere bank loans, hitherto the chief mainspring. They could not seek a resource in increased taxation, for that would have made the people discontented, and their favour and support were necessary. The state was discredited, no loans seemed practicable, but they opened two mines of wealth which produced enormous sums—the confiscation of clerical goods and those of French emigrants. They would give as security paper money, with which these goods could be bought, and which should be circulated as current coin. The facility of creating bonds by this paper, the rapacity of those who disposed of them, the falsifications they gave rise to, brought in such immense sums that they were soon clearly in excess of properties mortgaged. Much was lost in bills of exchange, but the more the paper money was discredited so much the more was it circulated, for it became absolutely necessary to get a large sum for state expenses. Necker was reduced to being an inactive spectator of so much disorder, folly, and injustice. Agent of the national assembly, involuntary executant of its decrees, ill-treated by his tyrannous master, overwhelmed with contradiction and humiliation, his health lost by excess of work, by continual anxieties about his private affairs, and sadness arising from his own situation and that of the state, he therefore determined to leave the ministry and France. The announcement of his retirement was received without regret, and his emigration met with neither disagreement nor danger.



NECKER

## CONVOCAION OF THE STATES-GENERAL

The assembly of the estates became the one thought of France. In what form should they assemble? Should the third estate take the same rank as in 1614 when it was so greatly humiliated, or should it on the contrary be

made dominant? Matters had greatly advanced in the course of two centuries. The third estate had become an order deriving consideration from its wealth, learning, activity, and the high functions filled by its chiefs in the government and administration of the country. Respect for the nobility had been greatly shaken, and in 1784, all, even the nobles themselves, had applauded the epigrams spoken on the state in Beaumarchais's *Figaro*: "Because you are a great lord you think yourself a great genius! You have taken the trouble to be born, that is all." Now in order that the third estate might occupy the place it merited, it would be necessary at least to double the number of its members and establish the vote by head instead of the vote by order. This course was supported by Necker and by all liberal-minded men.<sup>1</sup>

But the nobility resisted; that of Brittany, in particular, showed itself so unbending that at Rennes several sanguinary combats took place between the young bourgeois and the nobles. Necker endeavoured to obtain a solution to the question by means of an assembly of notables which refused to admit any change in the ancient system. Then he determined himself to put an end to a part of the difficulty; a decree of the council which established the double representation, without deciding anything as to the vote by head, summoned the estates to Versailles for the 1st of May, 1789.

It had long been said that the third estate paid with its goods, the nobility with its blood, the clergy with its prayers. Now the clergy of court and salon did little praying, and it was no longer the nobility alone who formed the royal army; but the third estate, faithful to its function in the body politic, continued paying more and more every year. Since its purse was the common treasury it was inevitable that the more prodigal of money the monarchy became the more it would bring itself into dependence on the bourgeoisie, and that a moment would arrive when the latter, weary of paying, would demand a reckoning. That day is called the Revolution of 1789.

In a celebrated pamphlet the abbé Sieyès examined the questions which all were then asking themselves, and said, "What is the third estate?—What has it been?—Nothing.—What ought it to be?—Everything." Thus to the phrase of Louis XIV., "I am the state" (*L'État, c'est moi*), Sieyès answered: "We are the state" (*L'État, c'est nous*). Indeed he reckoned the number of nobles of all ages and either sex at less than 110,000, and the clergy were not more numerous.

The court, especially the queen, the count of Artois, the princes of Condé and Conti, and the Polignacs would have liked the states-general to occupy themselves solely with matters connected with the finances, and would have desired that the deficit once made up and the debts paid the deputies should be sent back to their homes. But political reforms were the best pre-

<sup>1</sup> The "doubling" (*doublement*) of the third estate already existed in the states of Languedoc. As a rule the kings had opposed aristocratic influence in the provincial estates by looking for support to the third. At the states-general of Orleans of 1560, there were 393 deputies, of which 98 were from the clergy, 76 from the nobility, and 219 from the third estate; in 1576 at the states of Blois there were 329 deputies, 134 of them from the clergy, 75 from the nobility, 150 from the third estate; in 1588 at the second states of Blois, 505 deputies, of which 134 were from the clergy, 180 from the nobility, and 191 from the third estate. At the estates of the League there were only about 138 deputies, most of them from the third estate; and finally in 1614, at the estates of Paris, there were 464 deputies, 140 from the clergy, 132 from the nobility, and 192 from the third estate. In the four provincial assemblies planned or instituted by Necker in Berri, Upper Guienne, Dauphiné, and the Bourbonnais, the deputies of the third estate had half the votes. The first two of these assemblies remained in existence till 1789; twenty-two others were instituted in 1787 by Calonne, still according to the same principle.]



[1789 A.D.]

caution to take against the return of the deficit. The nation understood this and was resolved that they should be undertaken.

With the immense developments of industry, trade, science, public spirit, and personal wealth, France now possessed interests too complex and needs too numerous to allow of her delivering herself to the omnipotence of a single man, without any guarantee against the unhappy chances of royal births or the frivolity of incompetent ministers. The nation was ripe for the time when it would attend to its own affairs, and break through the half-torn wrapping which still encumbered its movements. Unfortunately peoples never break with their past save by cruel wrenches.

At the news of the convocation of the states-general the agitation already existing in France was redoubled. Societies, or "clubs" as they were called in imitation of the English, were formed on every side—among others the Breton club which gave rise to the ill-omened society of Jacobins. These associations were not all peaceable, and brought to light divisions which existed even in the midst of the privileged orders. The clergy had its democracy in the country curés; that of the nobility consisted of the small gentry. The latter were, in general, opposed to the Revolution and when they saw that some of the great lords, as La Fayette, La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, the counts of Montmorency and of Lally-Tollendal, the viscount de Noailles and others, favoured reform, they said proudly, "They are bartering away more of our rights." In Brittany the nobles and bishops preferred to appoint no deputies at all rather than admit a double representation of the third estate. The Breton curés, however, made a schism and thus commenced the division of the clergy.

In Provence the nobles protested against the decision of the king's council. An illustrious apostate, the count of Mirabeau, violently attacked their protest. Repulsed by the nobles who did not wish him to hold his seat among them, he hurled the following threatening words at them: "In every country, in every age, the aristocrats have mercilessly persecuted the friends of the people, and if by any chance such a friend had gone forth out of their own number, they have attacked him with particular violence, eager to inspire terror by the choice of their victim. Thus the last of the Gracchi perished at the hands of the patricians, but in dying he threw dust towards heaven, calling on the avenging gods to witness his death, and from this dust was born Marius—Marius, less great for having exterminated the Cimbri than for having overcome the aristocracy of the nobles in Rome." He went through the whole province, greeted by a populace dazzled by the first bursts of that eloquence which was destined to fill a still greater theatre. By his influence he quieted the disturbances which had broken out at Aix and Marseilles, where he was received with the noise of cannon and the sound of bells. His youth had been full of disorder, but he had suffered much from the unjust severity of his father and of the government, the latter having issued seventeen *lettres de cachet* against him. He had been imprisoned on the island of Ré, then in the château d'If, in the fortress of Joux, at Vincennes, and been condemned to death for an abduction. At the age of twenty he had written an *Essai sur le despotisme* with the following epigraph from Tacitus: *Dedimus profecto grande patientiæ documentum*. Later he obtained a living by his pen. His was a soiled name, but a superior spirit. His voice was to become the voice of the Revolution.

The following are the demands which were contested by no one and were found in nearly all the memorials (or *cahiers*) to the king. (1) Regarding the political system: sovereign power emanates from the people and can be

exercised only by the joint agreement of the national representatives and the hereditary chief of the state; necessity of giving a constitution to France; exclusive right of the states-general to make laws (which should obtain royal sanction before being executed), to control the public expenses, to impose taxes; abolition of the financial immunity and personal privileges of the clergy and nobility; suppression of the last remnants of bondage; eligibility of all citizens to public office; responsibility of the agents of executive authority. (2) For the moral system: freedom of religion and of the press; education by the state of poor and abandoned children. (3) For the judicial system: unity of legislation and jurisprudence; suppression of exceptional jurisdiction; publicity of debates; mitigation of the penal laws; reform of the laws of procedure. (4) For the administrative system: creation of provincial assemblies to control the administration of the royal deputies; unity of weights and measures; new division of the kingdom according to population and revenue. (5) In the economic system: freedom of industry; suppression of interior custom-houses; replacement of the various taxes by a tax on land and movable property, which was to affect fruits but never capital.

These demands, which comprised the whole Revolution, and characterised its labours at the start, show that the nation which was capable of formulating them deserved to obtain them.<sup>1</sup> They have been called by some "the Principles of '89." Napoleon named them more justly "the Truths of the Revolution."

On the 2nd of May all the deputies assembled at Versailles were presented to the king. On the 4th they marched in solemn procession to the church of St. Louis. The bishop of Nancy concluded his sermon on that day with these words: "Sire, the people over which you reign have given unequivocal proofs of patience. It is a people of martyrs, who seem to have been kept alive only that they might suffer the longer." All Paris was at Versailles. In the midst of an immense crowd the cortège appeared, the third estate at the head, as it was customary for the least important personages to lead. They were showered with applause. The nobles in their embroidered clothes passed amidst silence, except in the case of a few popular men who were applauded; the same silence greeted the clergy, who came next. Enthusiasm revived only for the king, who closed the procession.

The 5th of May the estates met in the *Salle des Menus* which was designated by the name of Hall of the Three Orders. The king was on the throne surrounded by the princes of the blood; on the steps was the court. The remainder of the hall was occupied by the three orders: at the right of the throne sat the clergy, counting 290 members, of whom 48 were archbishops or bishops, 35 abbots or canons, 204 curés and 3 monks; at the left were the nobles comprising 269 members, to wit: 1 prince of the blood, the duke of Orleans, 240 noblemen, and 28 magistrates of the superior courts; finally in the rear, on lower benches, was placed the third estate composed of 584 members, of whom 12 were noblemen, 2 priests, 18 mayors, 162 magistrates of the *bailliage* or *sénéchaussée*, 212 advocates, 16 physicians, 162 merchants or owners and cultivators of land.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> We can trace the national history by comparing in connection with this, the demands made by the estates in 1484, 1560, 1561, 1576, 1588, 1614, and it will be seen that the desire to avoid a revolution by instituting reforms was very old in France. When, in 1781, Calonne became a reformer, he remembered these repeated demands; in stating the reasons for one of his projects, he said: "It is a response to the estates of 1614."

[<sup>2</sup> Other estimates are: Clergy, 308; nobles, 285; third estate, 621, of whom only 10 were of the lower classes.]

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The king in a few well-chosen words expressed his hopes for the happiness of the nation, invited the estates to work towards that end, recommending to their attention the financial problem especially, and urging them to remedy the evils without being carried away by that exaggerated desire for innovation "which has taken hold of people's minds." Barentin, keeper of the seals, dilated upon the royal speech, seeming to reduce the functions of the estates to a vote on the taxes, to a discussion of a law against the press, and to a reform of the civil and criminal legislation. The floor was then given to Necker, general controller of the finances, and he tired everyone by the length of his discourse. Two passages in it, however, excited lively attention—that in which he admitted an annual deficit of 56,000,000 francs and of 260,000,000 in anticipation, and the one in which he declared that the king asked the estates to help him establish the prosperity of the kingdom on firm foundations. "Look for them," he said, "point them out to your sovereign, and you will find on his part the most generous assistance." Thus there was anarchy in the council itself. The keeper of the seals, the organ of the court, considered the present crisis to be a financial, rather than a political and social one, and the controller of the finances seemed to give full range to the states-general.

To establish the political and social unity of the nation by equality before the law and to guarantee it by liberty—this in two words was the whole spirit of 1789. Three societies were in existence; it was necessary that there should be but one. In the discussion raised in connection with the first question to be decided, the examination of the powers of the deputies, the third estate declared in favour of making this examination jointly, the clergy and nobility wished each order to examine the power of its members separately. The method of deliberation which would be adopted in other cases, and the vote by estates or by individuals depended upon the way in which they decided on this point. Were the vote to be by estates, the majority was assured to the clergy and nobility; were it to be by individuals, the third estate would have the largest number of votes, since it outnumbered the other estates by a majority of 584 to 561.

During five weeks the deputies of the third estate, who controlled the common hall, employed every means to get the first two orders to join in the sittings; they invited the clergy "in the name of God, in the name of peace, and in the name of public interest." The clergy was in a grievous position; its doctrines drew it one way, its interests another. As a privileged body it was hostile to the Revolution; as an exponent of the Gospels, it favoured it. Those of its members who profited least from its privileges led the defection. The 13th of June three curés from Poitou came to take their place among the third estate; in the days following, their example was followed by many others. Finally on the 17th of June, on the motion of abbé Sieyès, the commons constituted themselves into the national assembly, considering that "this assembly is already composed of deputies sent by at least 96 hundredths of the nation and that such a number of deputies cannot remain inactive on account of the absence of deputies from a few bailiwicks or of some classes of citizens." Three weeks afterwards, in order better to define its position, it added the word "constituent" to its title (July 9th).

This declaration, which opened the Revolution, threw terror into the court and into the ranks of the first two orders. Nevertheless the clergy, in spite of brilliant efforts on the part of the abbé Maury, decided in favour of attending the sittings, by a small majority caused by the curés (June 19th). The court, the more incensed, urged the king to adopt violent measures.<sup>2</sup>



*Louis Blanc's Picture of the Assembly*

The old feudal system had crumbled into dust. The national assembly became a constituent assembly [*assemblée constituante*]. It remained to be seen on what basis the new society would be raised. The assembly itself was divided. On the right-hand benches sat, in the pride of a rapidly passing splendour, archbishops, bishops, marquises, and barons, with a few deserters from the *tiers-état*. It is hardly possible that these phantoms of the past believed in the Revolution.

They spent their force in fanning with bravado and jest the last sparks of the old court spirit. Some, who professed to be thinkers, rejoiced greatly at the rapid progress of revolutionary feeling, believing that such rapidity would speedily insure its destruction. Others, younger, swore by their sword and the foreigner that the



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nobility would never give in, that they would march to their doom with firm eye and unlowered head, a smile of contempt on their lips; march triumphantly towards death, led by Cazalès and the abbé Maury — two great powers of the past — soldier and priest — the soldier a man of eloquent sensibility, whose vehemence was only an exaggeration of his tenderness; the priest a man of cold calculation, “on whose face,” says Carlyle,<sup>s</sup> “were depicted all the cardinal sins,” and who, more than anyone, provoked the gross apostrophe which came threateningly from the highest tribune: “Gentlemen of the clergy, you are being shaved. If you don’t keep still you will be cut.”

The centre of the assembly was occupied by a mass of men who had gained the sobriquet of Stick-in-the-mud or Bog-folk. Indecision charac-

terised this party. They had for mouthpiece, Lally-Tollendal; for agent, Malouet; and, for real director, Mounier. Mounier, the resolute general of a changeable army, had a soul above fear, intelligence without audacity, and brought a tireless energy to strengthen the timid opinions of others.

The popular party sat on the left. There were found persons each famous in different ways: the duke of Orleans, head of a party to which one doubts whether he really belonged; La Fayette, entirely wrapped up in courting favour; Duport, whom deep meditation and study had prematurely aged; Barnave, elegant and frivolous; Lameth, a type of courtier who sought popularity only to gain honours, and whose misplaced ambition sought through public office a place in the ministry. It is said of these last three that “Duport thought, Barnave talked, and Lameth acted.” But all agreed that the real thinker of the popular party was the abbé Sieyès. Much was expected of this grave personage who spoke so little and yet to such purpose. His thoughtful look, his keen eye, the light shed by his brief sentences on his method and aims, made him considered superior to any. One could

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not help admiring his firm mouth, or crediting him with wonderful power merely from his ways. He had serious reserve too, a reserve which might be interpreted into a wise contempt or too great modesty.

It was not for him, however, to lead the Revolution. Robespierre was there! Not that the future ascendancy of Robespierre was then guessed at. Indeed the Arras advocate was frequently an object of ridicule in the eyes of those gentlemen who adopted the Greek rôle with languid ease and wit. He was not yet transformed by the revolutionary spirit. His speech was awkward and hesitating. His appearances on the tribune which later on made men tremble now provoked only smiles. Nothing in the man's outward appearance indicated his real power. Yet he alone, in each debate, sifted each question thoroughly. Alone in the midst of men tossed hither and thither by contrary opinions, he went straight forward fearlessly, unhesitatingly, with no regard for what others thought of him, his eyes fixed on the future. But those around him did not comprehend this man. His passion for ruling was of the head rather than the heart. With a keen intellect he had firm beliefs, but was as cold as steel. His convictions were unshakable but melancholy. No one guessed the power he possessed and only the Revolution revealed it. Even when he had sometimes given utterance to his deep thoughts in inflexible formulas, only insulting laughter arose from every part of the hall. Yet, in listening to his stubborn argument, in running counter to his unbendable faith, in wondering what meant the keen gaze of his curious blue eyes, in looking at that face whose green tinge often resembled that of the sea, many had a confused presentiment that the man was born to be heard. "This man," said Mirabeau once in an excess of involuntary emotion, "will do something great; he believes in his own words."

There was also in the assembly a fourth party of which the elements changed every hour, who acted on the impulse or inspiration of the moment; which by turns made itself accepted, admired, feared, despised, or compelled submission. This party was one man alone, and that man Mirabeau.

But the assembly taken in its entity — what was it? First, it must be remembered that three orders composed it. The clergy alone had 308 representatives; the nobility sent 266 *gentilshommes* and 19 magistrates; also there were 160 parliamentarians of different degrees. Fifteen *gentilshommes* and four priests were included in the third estate. It would indeed have been wonderful if an assembly so formed had not been subject to disturbance, internal strife, and occasional downfalls. The assembly had to control a tempest which threatened to burst the walls of the room, a tempest of which it hardly grasped the tremendous force. It is true that a certain unity ruled among the divisions and contrary opinions. In the midst of passions and hostile interests certain leading tendencies stood out. But what were these tendencies? Those which the philosophy of the eighteenth century had begotten, stopping at Montesquieu and not going beyond Voltaire; originating with the majority, the third estate, that is, the phalanx of merchants, writers, advocates, sceptical *gentilshommes*, discontented priests, who trembled at having to yield to popular opinion the place they themselves had so largely occupied in the fray. There are parvenues in power no less than in riches, and the characteristic vices of exclusiveness, injustice, and pride exist no less in the middle class than in the upper. On the débris of feudal power in decay, what the majority of the constituents really considered themselves called upon to found was the power of the middle classes and nothing else.

But the constituent assembly is shown as furnishing, above and beyond its chosen work, the stamp of an often brilliant career. Have we not already seen signs of it sufficient to command respect? Its oath of the *Jeu de Paume* [oath of the tennis court], its serenity among bared swords, its strong, inflexible will in the drama of its conquered unity, its intrepid deliberations with the dragons raised by the court on one side and a people pulling down the Bastille on the other. All that bore an indelible seal; all that was worthy of the new era then opening.

It was because the people were there and fought with the assembly. Behind that third estate, that grew weaker every time it consulted its own interests alone, the great and incomparable Revolution was working, urging it forward, animating and enveloping it with its fiery breath. If it paused, a voice, a startling voice, a voice one-toned though formed, like ocean roaring, of countless murmuring waves, cried: "Advance yet and always!" If the members drooped discouraged, a thunder-clap awakened them. This explains the double character that one notices in the acts of this constituent assembly. It shut itself in the narrow path of duty, and rose occasionally to sublime heights. It made a perishable constitution and proclaimed immortal truths, because it was upheld by two distinct forces, coming from itself and from the people.

These facts are undeniable. Those modern historians who have reproached the assembly with being completely subservient to the Palais Royal and its wire-pullers have missed the mark entirely. Not only did the national assembly resist street clamours, but came, as we shall see, to do its duty under the domination of the false idea that it was the nation. This much is true. It experienced in many circumstances a mysterious pressure unaccountable to itself. This is also true that the chief mainspring of action in deceiving its egotism of caste was a passion, then new to France, of popularity. In reality, the assembly feared the threats though it sought the praise of the Palais Royal. Bearing this in mind one can follow its actions more clearly.

It was general, moreover—this rivalry in seeking public applause. Each century has idols that it presents for human worship. Liberty and equality were the divinities of the day, though as yet veiled and only half comprehended. One had to offer incense, even at a distance, or be deemed behind the times. So it resulted that many supported the Revolution to gain public favour, a favour almost indispensable to a successful career, even an empty one. What said opinion in the faubourgs? What did the news-mongers think? Thus the spirit of flattery descended gradually from the high spheres it had lately inhabited. Sovereignty displaced, had, in its turn, displaced court flatterers. Now the people had for flatterers those who had once insolently deemed themselves the masters. They were avenged. It is a calumny to depreciate the revolutionary force because it influenced frivolous passions and cowardly thoughts; because innumerable impurities are in the wide bosom of the ocean is it less imposing? Because millions of individuals are represented in the work of humanity, is it less majestic? When truth is fiery, passionate, the story of her triumph is not dimmed by the baseness of those who serve her. Men are insignificant. Man is great.<sup>t</sup>





## CHAPTER VI

### THE FALL OF THE BASTILLE AND OF THE OLD RÉGIME

[1789 A.D.]

If Germany was the cradle of reform, England was its citadel ; but France was the country of revolution and remained its hearthstone. She proclaimed all its principles and suffered all its excesses.

—PRÉVOST PARADOL.

A GENERAL anxiety seemed to possess everyone, a vague desire for change. Hitherto the Frenchman had been under a vigilant and severe police system, which controlled his movements, spied out his very thoughts. He had been a stranger to political combinations ; had not even primitive ideas on the rights of a nation or a king, even of different classes of citizens, and followed errors because they seemed more gigantic and imposing. He abandoned himself to intemperance in ideas and words which might almost make one believe that this people, suddenly emerging from long enchantment, had just recovered the faculty of speaking and thinking. It was in the cafés of the Palais Royal that this new development of the national character first showed itself. A curiosity to hear and tell everything led crowds to these places. One would present himself armed with a constitution which he assured everyone with confident gaiety ought to be the subject of the states-general ; another emphatically declaimed the same thing with variations. One ran down the ministers, nobles, and priests, and moulded opinions to his own will, whilst a fourth climbed on to a table and argued concerning the great question of personal representation, proposing chimerical plans for the administration. Each had his audience to approve or blame.

One event, to which not enough attention was paid, had caused well-founded alarm to people who, reflecting on this political effervescence, could not but be uneasy at the general restlessness. On the 27th of April five or six thousand men and women, many of them working people, and excited by leaders who kept themselves in the background, had gone to a man named Réveillon, a rich papermaker in the faubourg St. Antoine. They cried out that he was the people's enemy, that he wished to make them die of hunger ; that he had said to the primary assembly in his district it was quite enough if a workman gained fifteen sous a day ; they intended, they

added, to kill Réveillon, his wife and his children. There were races that day at Charenton, a fact known and taken advantage of. The people attacked the house, burned his stores, broke the glasses, pictures, sofas, cupboards, secretaries, carried off money and bank-notes. They staved in casks and got drunk on wine, brandy, and liquors. There were some who drank whole bottles of absinthe and were found dead next day in the cellars.

Another set stopped everyone returning from the races at the St. Antoine gate, asking them if they were for the nobility or the third estate. They insulted those who declared themselves nobles, made their wives get out of their carriages and cry, "*Vive la Tiers État!*" The duke and duchess of Orleans were alone exempted from this humiliation. The people greeted them with applause, repeating with enthusiasm, "*Vive Monseigneur et Madame la Duchesse d'Orléans!*"

A chain of circumstances had made this prince the idol of the people and the leader of a party composed of nobles discontented with the court; of philosophers desirous of all sorts of goods and honours, who were fretted by their inferior position — adventurers, insolvent men, who all, after the convocation of the states-general and the rapid march of public opinion, were open to any change or hope. The duke, aged by a sensual life, by an avarice which would have been bad enough in a private person but was shameful and degrading in a prince, had all the vices which nourish crime and none of those brilliant qualities which make men illustrious in the eyes of posterity. It was necessary to animate this moral corpse, to give it a will. They showed him supreme power under the name of "lieutenant-general of the kingdom," with all the public treasure at his disposal, and, in a future that would surely be his, the crown for his children and he perhaps himself the beginner of a new dynasty.

A voyage in England, relations with the prince of Wales and opposition leaders, had made him suspected at court. They profited by this disfavour to make him more popular with the people, always ready to judge favourably of those who opposed the dominant authority.<sup>b</sup>

It will perhaps save no little confusion in the chronicle of confusion that follows if we detach here for a moment this duke of Orleans and tell his story in completeness, showing the end of him and the story of his family which has played in France a part so large and yet so ill-understood abroad.<sup>a</sup>

#### THE DUKE OF ORLEANS AND THE REVOLUTION

The son of the regent, Louis (1703-1752), who succeeded him as duke of Orleans, played no part in politics, though his name frequently occurs in the social history of the time. His son, Louis Philippe (1725-1785), was equally adverse to politics; his great delight was the theatre, and his place is rather in the history of the Paris green-rooms than in the history of France. But to Louis Philippe Joseph (1747-1793), son of the preceding, a more adventurous life was allotted, and his part in the history of the French Revolution is one of the most difficult problems to solve of that exciting period. In 1769 he married Louise, the only daughter and heiress of the duke of Penthièvre, grand admiral of France, and the richest heiress of the time. Her wealth made it certain that he would be the richest man in France; and he determined to play a part equal to that of his great-grandfather, the regent, whom he resembled in character and debauchery. As duke of Chartres he opposed the plans of Maupeou in 1771, and was promptly exiled to his country estate of Villers-Cotterets (Aisne).

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When Louis XVI came to the throne in 1774 Chartres still found himself looked on coldly at court. Marie Antoinette hated him, and envied him for his wealth, wit, and freedom from etiquette, and he was not slow to return her hatred with scorn. In 1778 he served in the squadron of D'Orvilliers, and was present in the naval battle of Ushant. He hoped to see further service, but the queen was opposed to this, and he was removed from the navy, and given the honorary post of colonel-general of hussars. He then abandoned himself to pleasure; he often visited London, and became an intimate friend of the prince of Wales (afterwards George IV); he brought to Paris the "anglomaniæ," as it was called, and made jockeys as fashionable as they were in England. He also made himself very popular in Paris by his large gifts to the poor in time of famine, and by throwing open the gardens of the Palais Royal to the people.

Before the meeting of the notables in 1787 he had succeeded his father as duke of Orleans, and showed his liberal ideas, which were largely learned in England, so boldly that he was believed to be aiming at becoming constitutional king of France. In November he again showed his liberalism in the *lit de justice*, which Brienne had made the king hold, and was again exiled to Villers-Cotterets. The approaching convocation of the states-general made his friends very active on his behalf; he circulated in every *bailliage* the pamphlets which Sieyès had drawn up at his request, and was elected in three — by the noblesse of Paris, Villers-Cotterets, and Crépy-en-Valois. In the estate of the nobility he headed the liberal minority under the guidance of Adrien Duport, and led the minority of forty-seven noblemen who

seceded from their own estate (June, 1789) and joined the third estate.

The part he played during the summer of 1789 is one of the most debated points in the history of the Revolution. The court accused him of being at the bottom of every popular movement, and saw the "gold of Orleans" as the cause of the Réveillon riot and the taking of the Bastille, as the republicans later saw the "gold of Pitt" in every germ of opposition to themselves. There can be no doubt that he hated the queen, and bitterly resented his long court disgrace, and also that he sincerely wished for a thorough reform of the government and the establishment of some such constitution as that of England; and no doubt such friends as Adrien Duport and Choderlos de Laclos, for their own reasons, wished to see him king of France. The best testimony for the behaviour of Orleans during this summer is the testimony of an English lady, Mrs. Grace Dalrymple Elliott, who shared his heart with Comtesse de Buffon, and from which it is absolutely certain that at the time



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of the riot of the 12th of July he was on a fishing excursion, and was rudely treated by the king on the next day when going to offer him his services.

He indeed became so disgusted with the false position of a pretender to the crown, into which he was being forced, that he wished to go to America, but, as Comtesse de Buffon would not go with him, he decided to remain in Paris. He was again accused, unjustly, of having caused the march of the women to Versailles on October 5th. La Fayette, jealous of his popularity, persuaded the king to send the duke to England on a mission, and thus get him out of France, and he accordingly remained in England from October, 1789, to July, 1790. On July 7th he took his seat in the assembly, and on October 2nd both he and Mirabeau were declared by the assembly entirely free of any complicity in the events of October. He now tried to keep himself as much out of the political world as possible, but in vain, for the court would suspect him, and his friends would talk about his being king. The best proof of his not being ambitious of such a doubtful piece of preferment is that he made no attempt to get himself made king, regent, or lieutenant-general of the kingdom at the time of the flight to Varennes in June, 1791. He, on the contrary, again tried to make his peace with the court in January, 1792, but he was so insulted that he was not encouraged to sacrifice himself for the sake of the king and queen, who persisted in remembering all old enmities in their time of trouble. In the summer of 1792 he was present for a short time with the army of the north, with his two sons, the duke of Chartres and the duke of Montpensier, but had returned to Paris before August 10th.

After that day he underwent great personal risk in saving fugitives; in particular, at the request of Mrs. Elliott, he saved the life of the count of Champcenetz, the governor of the Tuileries, who was his personal enemy. It was impossible for him to recede, and, after accepting the title of Citoyen Égalité, conferred on him by the commune of Paris, he was elected twentieth and last deputy for Paris to the convention. In that body he sat as quietly as he had done in the national assembly, but on the occasion of the king's trial he had to speak, and then only to give his vote for the death of Louis. His compliance did not save him from suspicion, which was especially aroused by the friendship of his eldest son, the duke of Chartres, with Dumouriez; and when the news of the desertion of Chartres with Dumouriez became known at Paris, all the Bourbons left in France, including Égalité, were ordered to be arrested on April 5th.

In prison he remained till the month of October, when the Reign of Terror began. He was naturally the very sort of victim wanted, and he was decreed "of accusation" on October 3rd. He was tried on November 6th and was guillotined on the same day, with a smile upon his lips and without any appearance of fear.

No man ever was more blamed than Orleans during the Revolution, but the faults of ambition and intrigue were his friends', not his; it was his friends who wished him to be on the throne. Personally he possessed the charming manners of a polished grand seigneur: debauched and cynical, but never rude or cruel; full of gentle consideration for all about him but selfish in his pursuit of pleasure, he has had to bear a heavy load of blame, but it is ridiculous to describe the idle and courteous voluptuary as being a dark and designing scoundrel, capable of murder if it would serve his ambition. The execution of Philippe Égalité made the friend of Dumouriez, who was living in exile, duke of Orleans. Louis Philippe (1773-1850) was known as duke of Orleans throughout his long emigration, and under the

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Restoration; and as duke of Orleans he was called upon to become king of the French in 1830. His eldest son, Ferdinand Louis Philippe Charles Henri (1810–1842), at once took the title of duke of Orleans.<sup>e</sup>

## THE KING'S RESISTANCE

The crisis was calculated to cement the reconciliation of the court and the aristocracy. The danger was equal for both. The parliament offered to render the states unnecessary, by undertaking to sanction all the taxes. The king was surrounded by the princes and the queen; the emergency was too great for his weakness, and he was ultimately drawn to Marly, in order that a vigorous measure might be wrung from him.

The minister Necker, attached to the popular cause, proposed that the monarch should hold a royal sitting, and ordain the junction of the orders, but only for measures of general interest; that he should assume to himself the sanction of all the resolutions passed by the states-general; that he should disallow beforehand every establishment contrary to a limited monarchy, such as that of a single assembly; and that he should promise the abolition of privileges, the equal admission of all Frenchmen to civil and military offices, etc. The council had followed the king to Marly. There the plan of Necker, at first approved of, was again brought under discussion. His plan was completely altered, and the royal sitting was fixed for the 22nd of June.

It was only the 20th of the month, and the hall of the states was already closed, under the pretence of preparations being in progress for the presence of the king. These preparations might have been easily made in half a day; but the clergy had resolved the day before to join the commons, and it was determined to prevent the junction. An order of the king accordingly suspended the sittings until the 22nd. Bailly, deeming himself obliged to obey the assembly, which on Friday, the 19th, had adjourned to Saturday, the 20th, proceeded to the door of the hall. Some of the French guards were gathered around it, with orders not to admit any entrance. The officer on duty received Bailly with respect, and permitted him to advance into a court to record a protestation. Some young and ardent deputies attempted to force the guard; Bailly ran to the spot, appeased their fiery spirit, and led them away with him, in order that they might not compromise the generous officer who executed his orders with so much moderation. The members rushed tumultuously together, and persisted in holding a meeting. Some spoke of assembling under the very windows of the king; others proposed the hall of the tennis court [*jeu de paume*]. They immediately proceeded thither, and the proprietor joyfully granted the use of it.

This hall was spacious, but its walls were dark and bare, and there were no seats. A chair was offered to the president, who refused it, preferring to remain on his legs with the general body. A bench served as a desk; two deputies were placed at the door as a guard, but were soon relieved by the attendants of the place, who came to offer their services. The people flocked in crowds, and the debates commenced. Extreme measures began to suggest themselves to the heated imaginations. It was proposed to proceed to Paris; this opinion, hailed with warmth, was eagerly discussed, and a motion was even made to march there in a body, and on foot. Bailly was fearful of the outrages that the assembly might experience on the road, and apprehensive likewise of originating a schism; therefore he opposed the project.

Thereupon Mounier moved that the deputies bind themselves by oath not to separate before the establishment of a constitution. This motion was received with enthusiasm, and the form of the oath was instantly drawn up. Bailly solicited the honour of swearing first, and read the formula, thus couched: "You take a solemn oath never to separate, to assemble wherever circumstances may require, until the constitution of the kingdom shall be established and confirmed upon solid foundations." This formula, pronounced in a loud and distinct tone, was heard beyond the walls of the building. Immediately all mouths uttered the oath, all arms were stretched towards Bailly, who, erect and stern, received this solemn engagement to secure by laws the exercise of national rights.

The whole body afterwards raised cries of "Long live the assembly! Long live the king!" as if to prove that it claimed the recovery of what was due to the nation, without anger or hatred, but from a sense of duty. The deputies subsequently proceeded to sign the declaration which they had just made by word of mouth. One alone, Martin d'Auch, added to his name the title of "opposer." Considerable tumult ensued around him. Bailly, in order to be heard, mounted on a table, addressed the deputy in a tone of moderation, and represented to him that he had an undoubted right to refuse his signature, but none to record his opposition. The deputy was obstinate, and the assembly, from respect for freedom of opinion, allowed the phrase, and let it remain on the minutes.

This new act of energy struck terror into the nobles, who the next day carried their sorrows to the foot of the throne, expressed their contrition in some degree for the restrictions wherewith they had shackled the royal plan of conciliation, and craved the king's assistance. The minority of the nobility protested against this step, alleging most reasonably that it was the height of folly to ask the royal intervention after having so indiscreetly spurned it. This minority, too little attended to by its colleagues, was composed of forty-seven members, amongst whom were some military men and enlightened magistrates. It numbered the duke de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, the faithful friend of his king and of liberty; the duke de la Rochefoucauld, distinguished for unshaken virtue and an accomplished mind; Lally-Tollendal, already celebrated by reason of the misfortunes of his father, and his eloquent protestations; Clermont-Tonnerre, remarkable for his oratorical talent; the brothers Lameth, young colonels, known for their spirit and valour; Duport, already mentioned for his comprehensive intellect and the firmness of his character; and lastly, the marquis de la Fayette, the defender of American liberty, who united to French vivacity the resolution and simplicity of Washington.

Intrigue paralysed all the energies of the court. The sitting, fixed originally for Monday the 22nd, was postponed till the 23rd. Petty expedients, the ordinary resource of weak authority, were resorted to for the purpose of preventing the assembly meeting on the 22nd. The princes caused the tennis court to be retained, in order to play on it that morning. The assembly proceeded to the church of St. Louis, where it received the majority of the clergy, at whose head appeared the archbishop of Vienne. This junction, effected with imposing dignity, excited the liveliest emotions of joy. The clergy announced that they came there to submit to the common verification.

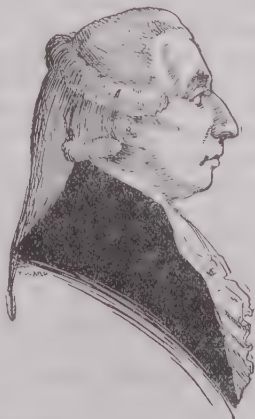
The next day, the 23rd, was fixed for the royal sitting. The deputies of the commons were appointed to enter the hall by a side door, apart from the entrance reserved for the nobility and clergy. With the exception of violence, every species of indignity was heaped upon them. Exposed to a



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heavy fall of rain, they waited patiently for a long time; the president, compelled to knock at this door, which was kept closed, had to repeat his knocks several times, and the only reply he obtained was that the time had not arrived for opening it. The deputies were about to retire in disgust, when Bailly gave another summons: at length the door was opened, the deputies entered and found the two orders in possession of their seats, which they had secured by the precaution of forestalling them. The sitting was not like that of the 5th of May, at once majestic and affecting by a certain effusion of feelings and hopes. A numerous guard and a mournful stillness distinguished it from that first solemnity. The deputies of the commons had resolved to observe a profound silence.

The king pronounced a harangue, and betrayed the influence that had worked upon him, by using expressions much too energetic for his character. He was made to deal out reproaches and impose injunctions. He commanded the separation into orders, annulled the previous resolutions of the third estate, but promised to sanction the abolition of pecuniary privileges, when their possessors had declared it. He retained all the feudal rights, both practical and honorary, as inviolable possessions. Thus he enforced the obedience of the commons, whilst he contented himself with taking that of the aristocracy for granted. He left the nobility and clergy sole judges of what concerned them peculiarly, and concluded by saying that, if he encountered fresh obstacles, he would take the welfare of the people into his own hands, and consider himself as their only representative. This tone and language exasperated all minds, not against the king, who had feebly vented passions not his own, but against the aristocracy whose instrument he had consented to become.



BAILLY

The instant his discourse was finished, he ordered the assembly forthwith to separate. The nobility followed him, with a part of the clergy. The greater number of the ecclesiastical deputies remained, and the commons also continued stationary, still observing a profound silence. Mirabeau, who was always the first to take the lead, arose. "Gentlemen," said he, "I confess that what you have just heard might be for the safety of the country, if the gifts of despotism were not always suspicious. A parade of arms, a violation of the national temple, to command you to be happy! Where are the enemies of the nation? Is Catiline at our gates? I call upon you, by the investiture of your dignity and of your legislative functions, to respect the sacred obligation of your oath; recollect it does not permit you to separate until the constitution is established."

The marquis de Brézé, grand-master of the ceremonies, entered at this moment, and addressed himself to Bailly. "Have you heard," he asked, "the orders of the king?" and Bailly answered, "I am about to take those

of the assembly." Mirabeau advanced. "Yes, sir," he exclaimed, "we have heard the views wherewith the king has been prompted; but you have here no voice, or place, or right to speak. However, to avoid delay, go to your master, and tell him that we are here by the power of the people, and that we will not be driven forth but by the power of bayonets." M. de Brézé withdrew. Sieyès then uttered these words: "We are to-day what we were yesterday: let us deliberate." The assembly disposed itself to debate upon the maintenance of its previous resolutions. "The first of these resolutions," said Barnave, "declares what you are; the second refers to the taxes, which you alone have the right to sanction; the third is the oath to do your duty. None of these measures needs the royal assent. The king cannot abrogate what his consent would not fortify."

At this instant, workmen came to remove the benches, armed soldiers traversed the hall, others encompassed it outside, and the bodyguards advanced even to the door. The assembly, without concerning itself with the interruption, remained upon the seats and collected the votes; there was no dissentient voice against adhering to all the previous resolutions. Nor was this all. In the heart of a royal city, in the midst of court retainers, and deprived of the aid of that people afterwards so formidable, the assembly was exposed to intimidation. Mirabeau repaired to the tribune, and proposed to decree the inviolability of each deputy. The assembly, merely able to oppose a majestic expression to brute force, instantly declared each of its members inviolable, and all who should do injury to their persons, traitors.

In the meantime, the nobility, who believed the state saved by this bed of justice, offered their congratulations to the prince who had suggested it, and carried them from the prince to the queen. The queen, holding her son in her arms, and showing him to these enraptured servants, received their homage, and gave way to a blind and fatal confidence. At that very instant shouts were heard; all hastened towards the noise, and the intelligence was soon spread that the people, gathered into a crowd, were applauding Necker for not appearing at the royal sitting. Alarm immediately succeeded to joy. The king and queen caused Necker to be called, and those august personages were compelled to entreat him to retain his portfolio. The minister consented, and restored to the court some portion of the popularity he had preserved by absenting himself from that disastrous sitting.

#### THE REVOLUTION BEGINS

Thus was the first revolution brought about. The third estate had obtained the legislative power, and its adversaries had lost it by too great eagerness to grasp it all. In a few days this legislative revolution was consummated. Certain petty annoyances were again resorted to, such as impeding the internal communications in the halls of the states; but they were too contemptible to have any effect. On the 24th the majority of the clergy repaired to the assembly, and demanded the verification in common, with the view of afterwards deliberating upon the propositions advanced by the king in the sitting of the 23rd of June. The minority of the clergy continued to occupy their peculiar chamber. Every day brought with it fresh junctions, and the assembly saw the number of its members perpetually on the increase. Addresses poured in from all quarters, conveying the sympathy and approbation of the towns and provinces. The plaudits of the galleries, though often annoying to the assembly, had nevertheless served to animate it in its course, and it ventured not to forbid them.

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The majority of the nobility continued its sittings amid tumult and the most violent exasperation. Apprehensions spread amongst those who ruled that order, and the motion for a junction came from those very members who had formerly induced its resistance. But its passions, already too excited, were not easily controlled. The king was obliged to write a letter; the court and its high functionaries were reduced to entreat. "The junction will be but transitory," said they to the most stubborn; "troops are approaching: yield to save the king." Acquiescence was wrung from them in the midst of disorder, and the majority of the nobles, accompanied by the minority of the clergy, repaired on the 27th of June to the general assembly. The duke of Luxemburg, speaking in the name of all, said that they came to give the king a proof of respect, and to the nation an evidence of patriotism. "The family is now complete," answered Bailly. Assuming that the union was consummated, and that the question as to verification was disposed of, and that it remained for them only to deliberate in common, he added, "We shall now be able to proceed, without intermission and without distraction, with the regeneration of the kingdom and the public welfare."

More than one silly expedient was employed to support an appearance of not having done what necessity had superinduced. The new-comers always entered after the opening of the sittings, all in a body, and so as to uphold their character as an order. They affected to remain standing behind the president, and in a manner to avoid the appearance of sitting. Bailly, with infinite address and firmness, succeeded in subduing their repugnance, and inducing them to take their seats. They wished likewise to dispute his right to the presidency, not by an open demonstration, but by secret intrigue or by despicable trickery. Bailly was resolute in his retention, not from ambition, but from duty; and men beheld a simple citizen, known for no qualifications more imposing than virtue and talent, presiding over all the magnates of the kingdom and the church. It ought to have been palpable to all understandings that the legislative revolution was achieved.

The object of the new convocation was the reform of the state, that is to say, the establishment of a constitution, of which France was utterly devoid, in spite of all that may be said to the contrary. If that name be applied to every species of relation between the governed and the governors, France unquestionably possessed a constitution; it had a king who commanded, and subjects who obeyed; ministers who imprisoned at pleasure; farmers of the revenue who wrung the last farthing from the people; and parliaments which condemned unfortunates to the wheel. The most barbarous nations have such orders of constitutions. There was in France an institution called states-general, but without precise functions, without fixed periods for assembling, and when convoked, invariably without result. There was a royal authority which had been alternately powerless and absolute. There were tribunals or supreme courts, which had often joined legislative to judicial power; but there was no law which secured the responsibility of the agents of power, the liberty of the press, the freedom of person, or any of those guarantees, in fine, which, in the social state, make amends for the fiction of natural liberty.

The necessity for a constitution was confessed and generally felt; all the instructions had energetically asserted it, and had even formally laid down the fundamental principles upon which that constitution should be based. They had unanimously prescribed a monarchical government, hereditary descent from male to male, the exclusive attribution of executive power to the king, the responsibility of all his agents, the concurrence of the nation



and the king in the enactment of laws, the voting of taxes, and individual liberty. But they were divided as to the creation of one or of two legislative chambers; as to the duration, the prerogations, and the dissolution of the legislative body; as to the political existence of the clergy and the parliaments; and as to the extent of the liberty of the press. So many questions, either solved or started by the instructions, show sufficiently how the public mind was then awakened in all quarters of the kingdom, and how general and emphatic was the determination of France for liberty. But to frame a perfect constitution amidst the mouldering ruins of an antiquated legislation, in spite of all resistance, and with the unruly theories abroad, was a laborious and difficult task. Besides the dissensions inevitably arising from the diversity of interests, the natural divergences of opinion were likewise to be apprehended. An entire legislation to frame for a great people so powerfully excites all minds, inspires them with projects so vast, hopes so chimerical, that measures either vague or exaggerated, and often antagonistic, were to be anticipated. To infuse order into the labours, a committee was named, with instructions to investigate their extent, and to apportion their distribution. This committee was composed of the most moderate members of the assembly. Mounier, a sagacious though obstinate man, was its most indefatigable and influential member; he it was who arranged the order of proceeding.

The difficulty of framing a constitution was not the only one this assembly had to encounter. Between a government hostilely disposed and a people famishing, who required prompt relief, it was almost impossible to avoid interfering with administration. Distrustful of authority, and pressed to succour the people, it was impelled, without any impulse of ambition, gradually to encroach upon the executive power. The clergy had already given an example of this tendency, by its insidious proposition to the third estate to enter forthwith upon the affair of provisions. The assembly was scarcely formed ere it named a committee on the necessities of life.

A very short space separates Paris from Versailles, and it may be traversed several times in a day. All the movements in Paris were consequently immediately felt at Versailles, at court, and in the assembly. Paris at that time presented a new and extraordinary spectacle. The electors, collected into sixty districts, had refused to separate after the elections, and had remained assembled, either for the purpose of giving instructions to their deputies, or from that craving for union and agitation which is inherent in men, and which breaks out with a violence proportioned to the length of its suppression. They had experienced the same fate as the national assembly, the place of their sittings had been closed, and they were driven to seek another. They had ultimately obtained access to the town hall (*hôtel-de-ville*), and there they continued to meet, and to correspond with their deputies.

No public journals yet existed which reported the debates of the national assembly, and it was necessary to gather together in order to discuss and be apprised of events. The garden of the Palais Royal was the scene of the most crowded congregations. That magnificent garden, surrounded by the most gorgeous shops in Europe, and forming an appurtenance to the palace of the duke of Orleans, was the general resort for strangers, for the idle, and the dissipated, but, above all, for the most furious demagogues. The most daring speeches were delivered in the coffee-houses, or in the garden itself. An orator was ever and anon seen to mount on a table, and, gathering a crowd around him, to inflame with words of the greatest violence — words always uttered with impunity, for the mob reigned there with sovereign sway.

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Men who were supposed devoted to the duke of Orleans showed themselves the most ardent. The wealth of that prince, his known profuseness, his enormous loans, his vicinage, his ambition, though vague, all conspired to insure his accusation. History, without designating individuals, can assert that gold was certainly distributed. If the sound part of the nation ardently desired liberty, if the uneasy and suffering populace was disposed to agitation, and anxious to better its condition, there were also instigators who sometimes excited that populace, and possibly directed some of its enterprises. But such an influence is not to be reckoned amongst the causes of the Revolution, for it is not with a handful of gold and secret manœuvres that a nation of twenty-five millions of men is stimulated to action.

An occasion for troubles soon presented itself. The French guards, chosen troops destined to form the king's guard, were at Paris. Four



THE BASTILLE

companies were alternately detached, and proceeded to do duty at Versailles. In addition to the extreme severity of the new discipline, these troops had also reason to complain of that of their colonel. During the pillage of Réveillon's house, they had indeed exhibited some ferocity against the people, but had afterwards been touched with remorse on that account, and, mingling every day with the citizens, they had yielded to their blandishments. Furthermore, soldiers and sub-officers felt that every chance of promotion was closed against them; they were irritated at seeing their young officers perform scarcely any duty, appear only on days of parade, and after the reviews not even accompany them to barracks. There was in the army, as well as in civil life, a third estate, which bore all burdens and participated in no benefit. A spirit of disobedience was not long in being manifested, and some of the guards were imprisoned in the Abbaye.

A general rush ensued to the Palais Royal: "To the Abbaye!" was the universal shout; and the multitude hastened thither. Its gates were

forced, and the soldiers being released were borne away in triumph (June 30th). The assembly could not avoid interfering. Adopting a course at once adroit and prudent, it expressed to the Parisians its wishes for the maintenance of good order, recommending them not to disturb it; and at the same time sent a deputation to the king, to implore his clemency, and the infallible means of restoring concord and tranquillity. The king, moved by the moderation of the assembly, promised clemency when order should be re-established. The French guards were immediately conducted back to prison, and a royal pardon set them forthwith at liberty.

#### THE KING GATHERS TROOPS

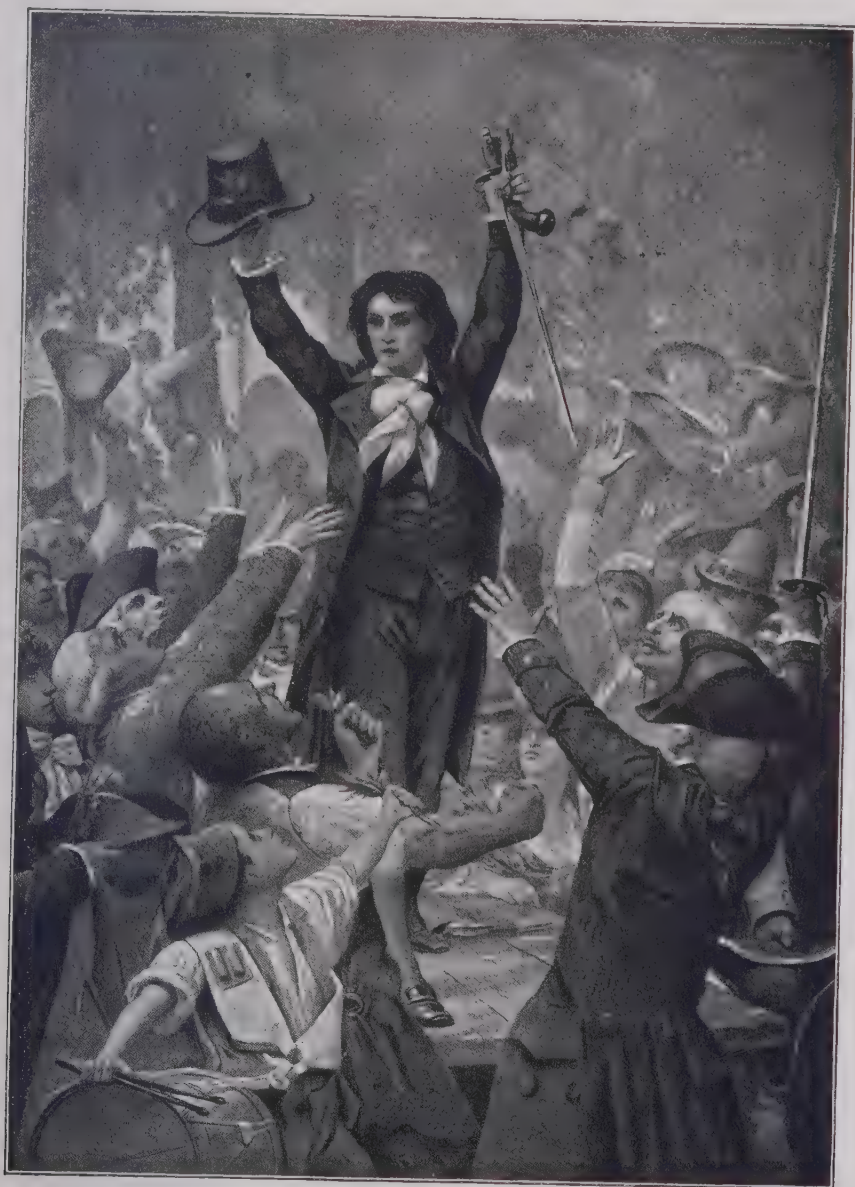
All was going well up to this time; but the nobility, when coalescing with the two orders, had succumbed with reluctance, and on the promise that the junction should be of short duration. Necker had been retained merely to cover by his presence the secret plots that were hatching.

Troops were drawing near; the old marshal de Broglie had been named to the command-in-chief, and the baron de Besenval had received the particular command of those which surrounded Paris. Fifteen regiments, for the most part foreign, were in the vicinity of the capital. The boasting of the courtiers revealed the danger, and those conspirators, somewhat too prompt in their menaces, compromised their own schemes. The popular deputies were highly exasperated, and looked around for means of resistance. It is unknown, and will probably forever remain unknown, what share secret arrangements had in the insurrection of the 14th of July; but the matter is of trifling moment. The aristocracy were plotting, and the popular party might very naturally plot also. The means employed being the same, the only question is as to the justice of the cause; and justice was assuredly not with those who desired to subvert the union of the orders, to dissolve the national representation, and wreak vengeance on its most courageous deputies.

Mirabeau conceived that the surest means of intimidating the court was to compel it to a public discussion of the measures which it was palpably projecting. For this purpose it was necessary to make a public denunciation. If it hesitated to answer, if it evaded the subject, it was convicted, and the nation was apprised and roused. Mirabeau caused the labours upon the constitution to be suspended, and moved that the king be requested to withdraw the troops. He mingled in his speech sentiments of respect for the monarch, with the most severe invectives against the government. He said that every day fresh troops were advancing; that all the communications were intercepted, the bridges and walks changed into military posts; that both notorious and secret facts, hurried orders and counter orders struck all eyes, and announced war. Adding bitter reproaches to these details, he exclaimed, "They bring more soldiers to intimidate the nation than an enemy would probably encounter upon an invasion, and a thousand times more, at least, than they were able to collect in aid of friends, martyrs to their fidelity, and especially to maintain that alliance with the Dutch, so valuable, so dearly acquired, and so shamefully lost."

His discourse was greeted with enthusiastic applause, and the address he proposed instantly adopted, modified only in one particular. When soliciting the removal of the troops, Mirabeau had proposed that they should be replaced by burgher guards, which paragraph was struck out. The address was then voted, only four voices dissenting. In this still celebrated document





CAMILLE DESMOULINS AT THE PALAIS ROYAL



[1789 A.D.]

which it is said he did not himself compose, but had furnished all its ideas to one of his friends, Mirabeau predicted almost all that was about to happen: the insurrection of the multitude, and the defection of the troops from their friendly intercourse with the citizens. As bold as he was sagacious, he dared to assure the king that his promises should not be vain.

The address was presented by a deputation of twenty-four members. The king, declining to explain himself, replied that this assembling of troops had no other object than the maintenance of public tranquillity, and the protection due to the assembly; and that, moreover, if that body had still any apprehensions, he would transfer it to Soissons or Noyon, and go himself to Compigné. The assembly could scarcely feel satisfaction at such a reply, especially at the offer to remove it to a distance from the capital, and plant it between two camps. The count de Crillon argued that implicit faith should be placed on the word of a king and an honest man. "The word of an honest king," retorted Mirabeau, "is but a sad guarantee for the conduct of his ministry; our blind confidence in our kings has been our ruin: we asked the retreat of the troops, and not our flight before them. We must still insist on that measure without a moment's relaxation." This opinion was not supported. Mirabeau sufficiently urged open operations to induce his secret machinations to be pardoned, if it be true that any such were employed.

Necker had repeatedly told the king that if his services were disagreeable to him, he would cheerfully resign. "I rely upon your word," the king had upon such occasions replied. On the afternoon of the 11th of July, Necker received a note, in which the king called upon him to keep his word; urged him to depart; and added that he had sufficient confidence in him to hope that he would conceal his departure from all the world. Necker, justifying the honourable confidence of the monarch, set off without saying a word to his friends, or even to his daughter, and in a few hours was several leagues from Versailles. The next day, July 12th, was a Sunday.

A rumour was spread at Paris that Necker had been dismissed, as also Montmorin, La Luzerne, Puységur, and Saint-Priest. As their successors, were announced De Breteuil, La Vauguyon, De Broglie, Foulon, and Darnécourt, almost all notorious for their opposition to the popular cause. Alarm became predominant in Paris. The Palais Royal was thronged. A young man, afterwards known for his republican enthusiasm, Camille Desmoulins, sprang upon a table, drew forth pistols, with an exhortation to arm, tore a leaf from a tree, which he converted into a cockade, and induced everyone to follow his example.

#### THE PEOPLE TAKE UP ARMS (1789 A.D.)

The trees were instantaneously stripped, and the crowd repaired to a museum containing busts in wax. They seized upon those of Necker and the duke of Orleans, who was said to be menaced with exile, and then spread themselves over the quarters of Paris. This mob was passing along the street St. Honoré, when it met near the square Vendôme a detachment of the royal German regiment, which fell upon it, wounded several persons, and amongst others a soldier of the French guards. The latter, already disposed in favour of the people and against the royal Germans, with which regiment they had had a contest some days before, were quartered near the place Louis XV, and now fired upon their opponents.<sup>1</sup>

[<sup>1</sup> Croker insists that the dismissal of Necker was only the excuse for an outbreak previously preparing; he emphasises the influence of the duke of Orleans as the procurer and payer of much violence.]



In the meantime, the troops which surrounded Paris concentrated on the Champ de Mars and the place Louis XV. The alarm then became unbounded, and changed to fury. The people rushed through the town with cries of "To arms!" The town hall was beset with applications for weapons. The electors composing the general assembly were collected there. They yielded the arms they had no power to refuse, and which were already seized, indeed, when they decided upon delivering them. These electors formed at that moment the only constituted authority. Deprived of an active power, they assumed such functions as circumstances required, and now summoned a convocation of the districts.

All the citizens repaired thither to deliberate upon the means of preserving themselves — on the one hand, from the fury of the multitude, and on the other, from the attack of the royal troops. During the night, the populace



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always attracted to what chiefly interested it, forced and burned the barriers,<sup>1</sup> put the keepers to flight, and threw all the avenues open and free. The shops of the gunsmiths were also broken into and rifled. Those brigands, already signalised by their activity at Réveillon's, and who were seen on all occasions starting forth as if from the bowels of the earth, now made their appearance, armed with pikes and clubs, and carried terror into all quarters.

These events occurred in the course of Sunday, the 12th of July, and during the night following. On Monday morning, the electors, still sitting at the town hall, deemed it expedient to give a more legal aspect to their authority, and consequently despatched an invitation to the provost of the trades, the ordinary administrator of the city. This functionary would not consent

to join them, except upon a formal requisition. This was complied with, and a certain number of electors was united with him, thus composing a municipality invested with all necessary powers. This municipality summoned the lieutenant of police before it, and in a few hours digested a plan of enrolment for a citizen militia. This militia was to be composed of forty-eight thousand men, furnished by the districts. The distinguishing symbol selected was the Parisian cockade, red and blue, instead of the green one of Desmoulins. Every person found in arms and wearing this cockade, without having been enrolled by his district in the citizen guard, was ordered to be arrested, disarmed, and punished.

Such was the origin of the national guards. This plan was adopted by all the districts, and they hastened to put it in execution. In the course of the same morning, the populace had plundered the convent of St. Lazarus in search of corn, and had likewise broken into the *garde-meuble*, or armoury

[<sup>1</sup> At these barriers duties were collected on articles entering Paris.]

[1789 A.D.]

in pursuit of arms, the antique and curious weapons with which it was stored being torn down and carried off. A motley crew, bearing helmets and pikes of by-gone times, issued forth and overspread the town. The populace showed itself upon this occasion opposed to robbery; with its usual fickleness, it affected disinterestedness, leaving money untouched, taking nothing but arms, and even assisting to apprehend the brigands. The French guards and soldiers of the watch had offered their services, and they were accordingly enrolled in the citizen guard.

More arms were still demanded with loud shouts. The provost, Flesselles, who had at first refused to co-operate with his fellow-citizens, now evinced great zeal, and promised twelve thousand muskets that very day, and an additional number for the succeeding days. He asserted that he had made a contract with an unnamed gun-manufacturer. The thing appeared improbable, considering the shortness of the time that had elapsed. However, towards evening, the chests of arms announced by Flesselles were conveyed to the town hall; they were eagerly opened, and found to be full of old linen. At this unexpected disappointment, the multitude growled indignantly at the provost, who stated, in exculpation, that he had been deceived. To appease them further, he directed them to the Carthusian monastery, with the assurance that they would find arms there. The astounded monks received the infuriated rabble, led them through their quiet domicile, and convinced them that they possessed no such articles as had been mentioned by the provost. The people, more exasperated than ever, returned with cries of treachery. To satisfy them, the fabrication of fifty thousand pikes was forthwith ordered. Some barrels of powder destined for Versailles were descending the Seine in boats; these were seized, and an elector distributed the contents amidst the greatest danger.

Horrible confusion prevailed at this same town hall, the seat of the authorities, the headquarters of the militia, and the centre of all operations. Simultaneous demands were made on all in authority to provide for external security menaced by the court, for internal security menaced by the brigands, for calming the suspicions of the people, who thought themselves every instant betrayed, and for saving from their fury those who were the objects of their distrust. Around the hall were accumulated arrested carriages, intercepted convoys of wagons, and travellers waiting for permission to resume their journey. The citizens retired to their homes, held themselves in readiness for all attacks; they had unpaved the streets, dug trenches, and taken all possible measures for resisting a siege.

During these troubles in the capital, the assembly was a prey to the most serious alarms. On the morning of the 13th, the members repaired to the hall, full of apprehensions for impending events, and as yet ignorant of what had occurred at Paris. The discussion was proceeding when information was brought of the disturbances at Paris on the morning of the 13th, and the evils with which the capital was threatened, between undisciplined Frenchmen, who, according to the expression of the duke de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, were in the hands of no one, and disciplined foreigners who were in the hands of despotism. It was instantly resolved to send a deputation to the king, for the purpose of laying before him the desolation of his capital, and entreating him to order the withdrawal of the troops and the enrolment of citizen guards.

The king returned a cold and tranquil answer, little in accordance with his real feelings, and repeated that it was not possible for Paris to guard itself. Thereupon the assembly, exalted by the noblest heroism, passed a

memorable resolution, in which it insisted upon the removal of the troops and the establishment of citizen guards, declared the ministers and all the agents of power personally responsible, put upon the councillors of the king, "of whatever rank they might be," the responsibility of the misfortunes which impended; consolidated the public debt, denounced the utterance of the execrable word "bankruptcy," reasserted its preceding resolutions, and ordained the president to convey its regret to M. Necker, as also to the other ministers displaced.

After these measures, so indicative of prudence and energy, the assembly in order to preserve its members from all personal violence, declared itself permanent, and named M. de la Fayette vice-president, for the purpose of relieving the estimable archbishop of Vienne, whom his age did not allow to sit both night and day.

The night between the 13th and 14th was thus passed amidst excitement and alarm. Every instant some dismal intelligence was announced and contradicted. Though all the projects of the court were not fathomed, it was nevertheless sufficiently notorious that several deputies were threatened; that violence was about to be employed against Paris and the most distinguished members of the assembly. Suspended for a fleeting interval, the sitting was resumed at five in the morning of the 14th. With an imposing and truly dignified composure, the assembly returned to its labours on the constitution, and discussed with infinite judgment the means of accelerating its execution, and preparing for it with prudence. A committee was named to frame the resolutions. The morning thus elapsed. Rumours more and more sinister were brought to the assembly; the king, it was said, would leave that night, and the assembly remain at the mercy of foreign regiments; that a grand scheme was prepared for the night of the 14th and 15th; that Paris was to be attacked at seven points, the Palais Royal surrounded, the assembly dissolved, and the declaration of the 23rd of June carried to the parliament; and that the exigencies of the treasury were to be surmounted by bankruptcy and state notes.

In the afternoon the terrors of the assembly were redoubled; the distant noise of a cannonade was heard, and the members laid their ears to the ground to catch the faintest sounds. Two members of the assembly, late arrived in all haste from Paris, brought intelligence that slaughter was at work in that city.

The night was beginning to fall, when the arrival of two electors was announced. The deepest stillness reigned in the hall; the noise of their steps was heard amid the darkness; and from their mouths it was learned that the Bastille had been attacked, cannon fired, and blood shed, and that the most frightful calamities threatened to ensue. A new deputation was immediately named before the preceding one had returned. Whilst preparing to depart, the first arrived and brought back an answer from the king. He had ordered, he said, the removal of the troops encamped in the Champ de Mars to a greater distance, and having been informed of the formation of citizen guards, he had nominated officers to command them.

Upon the arrival of the second deputation, the king, in great agitation, had addressed it in these words: "Gentlemen, you tear my heart more and more by the account you give me of the calamities of Paris. It is not possible that the orders given to the troops can have caused them." Only the removal of the army to a greater distance had been as yet obtained. It was two hours after midnight. The sitting was suspended for a short period, in the interim the events of the 14th of July were made fully known.<sup>d</sup>



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## CARLYLE'S ACCOUNT OF THE FALL OF THE BASTILLE

What a Paris, when the darkness fell! A European metropolitan City hurled suddenly forth from its old combinations and arrangements; to crash tumultuously together, seeking new. Use and wont now no longer direct any man; each man, with what of originality he has, must begin thinking; or following those that think. Seven hundred thousand individuals, on the sudden, find all their old paths, old ways of acting and deciding, vanish from under their feet. And so there go they, with clangour and terror, they know not as yet whether running, swimming, or flying — headlong into the New Era. With clangour and terror: from above, Broglie the war-god impends, preternatural, with his red-hot cannon-balls; and from below a preternatural Brigid-world menaces with dirk and firebrand: madness rules the hour.

On Monday, the huge City has awoken, not to its week-day industry; to what a different one! The working man has become a fighting man; has one want only: that of arms. The industry of all crafts has paused; — except it be the smith's, fiercely hammering pikes; and, in a faint degree, the kitchener's, cooking offhand victuals, for *bouche va toujours*. Women too are sewing cockades; — not now of green, which being D'Artois colour, the Hôtel-de-Ville has had to interfere in it; but of red and blue, our old Paris colours: these, once based on a ground of constitutional white, are the famed tri-colour — which (if Prophecy err not) “will go round the world.”

All shops, unless it be the Bakers' and Vintners', are shut: Paris is in the streets — rushing, foaming like some Venice wine-glass into which you had dropped poison. The tocsin, by order, is pealing madly from all steeples. Arms, ye Elector Municipals; thou Flesselles with thy Echevins, give us arms! Flesselles gives what he can: fallacious, perhaps insidious promises of arms from Charleville; order to seek arms here, order to seek them there. The new Municipals give what they can; some 360 indifferent firelocks, the equipment of the City-Watch: “a man in wooden shoes, and without coat, directly clutches one of them, and mounts guard.” Also as hinted, an order to all Smiths to make pikes with their whole soul.

Heads of Districts are in fervent consultation; subordinate Patriotism roams distracted, ravenous for arms. At the so-called Arsenal, there lies nothing but rust, rubbish, and saltpetre — overlooked too by the guns of the Bastille. His Majesty's Repository, what they call *Garde-Meuble*, is forced and ransacked: tapestries enough, and gauderies; but of serviceable fighting-gear small stock! Two silver-mounted cannons there are; an ancient gift from his Majesty of Siam to Louis XIV; gilt sword of the Good Henri; antique Chivalry arms and armour. These, and such as these, a necessitous Patriotism snatches greedily, for want of better. Among the indifferent firelocks are seen tourney-lances; the princely helm and hauberk glittering amid ill-hatted heads — as in a time when all times and their possessions are suddenly sent jumbling!

Look also at the Châtelet Prison. The Debtors' Prison of La Force is broken from without; and they that sat in bondage to Aristocrats go free: hearing of which the Felons at the Châtelet do likewise “dig up their pavements,” and stand on the offensive; with the best prospects — had not Patriotism, passing that way, “fired a volley” into the Felon-world; and crushed it down again under hatches. Patriotism consorts not with thieving and felony: surely also Punishment, this day, hitches (if she still hitch) after Crime, with frightful shoes-of-swiftness! “Some score or two” of wretched persons, found prostrate with drink in the cellars of that Saint-Lazare, are

indignantly haled to prison; the Jailor has no room; whereupon, other place of security not suggesting itself, it is written, "*on les pendit*" (they hanged them). Brief is the word; not without significance, be it true or untrue!

In such circumstances, the Aristocrat, the unpatriotic rich man is packing up for departure. But he shall not get departed. A wooden-shod force has seized all Barriers, burnt or not: all that enters, all that seeks to issue, is stopped there, and dragged to the Hôtel-de-Ville: coaches, tumbrils, plate furniture, and says Dusaulx, "many meal-sacks," in time even "flocks and herds" encumber the Place de Grève.

And so it roars, and rages, and brays; drums beating, steeples pealing; criers rushing with hand-bells: "Oyez, oyez, All men to their Districts to be enrolled!" The Districts have met in gardens, open squares; are getting marshalled into volunteer troops. No red-hot ball has yet fallen from Besen-

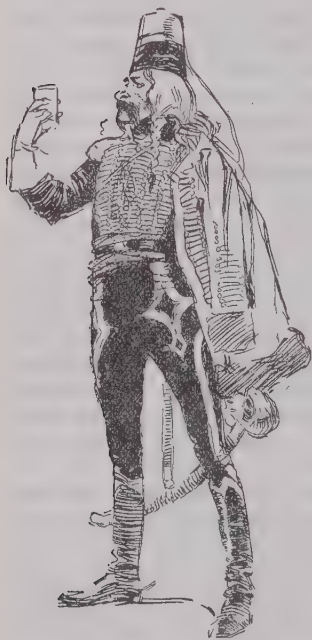
val's Camp; on the contrary, Deserters with their arms are continually dropping in: nay now, joy of joys, at two in the afternoon, the Gardes Françaises, being ordered to St. Denis, and flatly declining, have come over in a body! It is a fact worth many. Three thousand six hundred of the best fighting men, with complete accoutrement; with cannoneers even, and canon! Their officers are left standing alone; could not so much as succeed in "spiking the guns." The very Swiss, it may now be hoped, Château-Vieux and the others, will have doubts about fighting.

Our Parisian Militia, which some think it were better to name National Guard, is prospering as heart could wish. It promised to be forty-eight thousand; but will in a few hours double and quadruple that number: invincible, if we had only arms!

Meanwhile, the faster, O ye black-aproned Smiths, smite; with strong arm and willing heart. This man and that, all stroke from head to heel, shall thunder alternating, and ply the great forge-hammer, till stithy reel and ring again; while ever and anon, overhead, booms the alarm-cannon—for the City has now got gunpowder. Pikes are fabricated; fifty thousand of them, in six-and-thirty hours: judge whether the Black-aproned have been idle. Dig trenches, unpave the streets,

ye others, assiduous, man and maid; cram the earth in barrel-barricades, at each of them a volunteer sentry; pile the whinstones in window-sills and upper rooms. Have scalding pitch, at least boiling water ready, ye weak old women, to pour it and dash it on Royal-Allemand, with your old skinny arms: your shrill curses along with it will not be wanting!—Patrols of the newborn National Guard, bearing torches, scour the streets, all that night; which otherwise are vacant, yet illuminated in every window by order. Strange-looking; like some naphtha-lighted City of the Dead, with here and there a flight of perturbed Ghosts.

O poor mortals, how ye make this Earth bitter for each other; this fearful and wonderful Life fearful and horrible; and Satan has his place in all hearts! Such agonies and ragings and wailings ye have, and have had, in



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OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

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all times: — to be buried all, in so deep silence; and the salt sea is not swoln with your tears.

Great meanwhile is the moment, when tidings of Freedom reach us; when the long-enthralled soul, from amidst its chains and squalid stagnancy, arises, were it still only in blindness and bewilderment, and swears by Him that made it, that it will be free! Free? Understand that well, it is the deep commandment, dimmer or clearer, of our whole being, to be free. Freedom is the one purport, wisely aimed at, or unwisely, of all man's struggles, toilings, and sufferings, in this Earth. Yes, supreme is such a moment (if thou have known it): first vision as of a flame-girt Sinai, in this our waste Pilgrimage, — which thenceforth wants not its pillar of cloud by day, and pillar of fire by night! Something it is even, — nay, something considerable, when the chains have grown corrosive, poisonous — to be free "from oppression by our fellow-man." Forward, ye maddened sons of France; be it towards this destiny or towards that! Around you is but starvation, falsehood, corruption and the calm of death. Where ye are is no abiding.

Imagination may, imperfectly, figure how Commandant Besenval, in the Champ de Mars, has worn out these sorrowful hours. Insurrection raging all round; his men melting away! From Versailles, to the most pressing messages, comes no answer; or once only some vague word of answer which is worse than none. A Council of Officers can decide merely that there is no decision: Colonels inform him, "weeping," that they do not think their men will fight. Cruel uncertainty is here: war-god Broglie sits yonder, inaccessible in his Olympus; does not descend terror-clad, does not produce his whiff of grapeshot; sends no orders.

Unfortunate old military gentlemen, it is your hour, not of glory! Old Marquis de Launay too, of the Bastille, has pulled up his drawbridges long since, "and retired into his interior"; with sentries walking on his battlements, under the midnight sky, aloft over the glare of illuminated Paris; — whom a National Patrol, passing that way, takes the liberty of firing at: "seven shots towards twelve at night," which do not take effect. This was the 13th day of July, 1789; a worse day, many said, than the last 13th was, when only hail fell out of Heaven, not madness rose out of Tophet, ruining worse than crops!

But, to the living and the struggling, a new Fourteenth morning dawns. Under all the roofs of this distracted City is the nodus of a drama, not untragical, crowding towards solution. From earliest light, a sleepless Permanent Committee has heard the old cry, now waxing almost frantic, mutinous: "Arms! Arms!" Arms are the one thing needful: with arms we are an unconquerable man-defying National Guard; without arms, a rabble to be whiffed with grapeshot. Happily the word has arisen, for no secret can be kept — that there lie muskets at the Hôtel des Invalides.

In any case, behold about nine in the morning, our National Volunteers rolling in long wide flood, southwestward to the Hôtel des Invalides: in search of the one thing needful. The King's muskets are the Nation's. The walls are scaled, no Invalides firing a shot; the gates must be flung open. The arms are found; all safe there; lying packed in straw — apparently with a view to being burned! and eight-and-twenty thousand sufficient firelocks are on the shoulders of as many National Guards, lifted thereby out of darkness into fiery light.

Let Besenval look at the glitter of these muskets, as they flash by! Gardes Françaises, it is said, have cannon levelled on him; ready to open,



if need were, from the other side of the River. Motionless sits he; "astonished," says Besenval, "at the proud bearing (*fière contenance*) of the Parisians."—And now, to the Bastille, ye intrepid Parisians! There grapeshot still threatens: thither all men's thoughts and steps are now tending.

Old De Launay, as we hinted, withdrew "into his interior" soon after midnight of Sunday. He remains there ever since, hampered, as all military gentlemen now are, in the saddest conflict of uncertainties. The Hôtel-de-Ville "invites" him to admit National Soldiers, which is a soft name for surrendering. On the other hand, His Majesty's orders were precise. His garrison is but eighty-two old Invalides, reinforced by thirty-two young Swiss; his walls indeed are nine feet thick, he has cannon and powder; but, alas, only one day's provision of victuals. The city too is French, the poor garrison mostly French. Rigorous old De Launay, think what thou wilt do!

Woe to thee, De Launay, in such an hour, if thou canst not, taking some one firm decision, rule circumstances! Soft speeches will not serve; hard grapeshot is questionable; but hovering between the two is unquestionable. Ever wilder swells the tide of men; their infinite hum waxing ever louder, into imprecations, perhaps into crackle of stray musketry,—which latter, on walls nine feet thick, cannot do execution. The Outer Drawbridge has been lowered for Thuriot; new deputation of citizens (it is the third, and noisiest of all) penetrates that way into the Outer Court: soft speeches producing no clearance of these, De Launay gives fire; pulls up his Drawbridge. A slight sputter;—which has kindled the too combustible chaos; made it a roaring fire-chaos! Bursts forth Insurrection, at sight of its own blood (for there were deaths by that sputter of fire), into endless rolling explosion of musketry, distraction, execration;—and over head, from the Fortress, let one great gun, with its grapeshot, go booming, to shew what we could do. The Bastille is besieged!

On, then, all Frenchmen, that have hearts in your bodies! Roar with all your throats, of cartilage and metal, ye Sons of Liberty; stir spasmodically whatsoever of utmost faculty is in you, soul, body, or spirit; for it is the hour! Smite, thou Louis Tournay, cartwright of the Marais, old-soldier of the Regiment Dauphiné; smite at that Outer Drawbridge chain, though the fiery hail whistles round thee! Never, over nave or fellow, did thy axe strike such a stroke. Down with it, man; down with it to Orcus: let the whole accursed Edifice sink thither, and Tyranny be swallowed up forever! Mounted, some say, on the roof of the guard-room, some "on bayonets stuck into joints of the wall," Louis Tournay smites, brave Aubin Bonnemère (also an old soldier) seconding him: the chain yields, breaks; the huge Drawbridge slams down, thundering (*avec fracas*). Glorious: and yet, alas, it is still but the outworks. The Eight grim Towers, with their Invalide musketry, their paving stones and cannon-mouths, still soar aloft intact;—Ditch yawning impassable, stone-faced; the inner Drawbridge with its back towards us: the Bastille is still to take!

To describe this Siege of the Bastille (thought to be one of the most important in History) perhaps transcends the talent of mortals. Could one but, after infinite reading, get to understand so much as the plan of the building! But there is open Esplanade, at the end of the Rue Saint-Antoine; there are such Forecourts, *Cour Avancé*, *Cour de l'Orme*, arched Gateway (where Louis Tournay now fights); then new drawbridges, dormant-bridges, rampart-bastions, and the grim Eight Towers: a labyrinthic Mass, high-frowning there, of all ages from 20 years to 420;—beleaguered

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in this its last hour, as we said, by mere Chaos come again ! Ordnance of all calibres ; throats of all capacities ; men of all plans, every man his own engineer : seldom since the war of Pygmies and Cranes was there seen so anomalous a thing. Frantic Patriots pick up the grapeshots ; bear them, still hot (or seemingly so), to the Hôtel-de-Ville : — Paris, you perceive, is to be burnt ! Paris wholly has got to the acme of its frenzy ; whirled, all ways, by panic madness. At every street-barricade, there whirls simmering a minor whirlpool — strengthening the barricade, since God knows what is coming ; and all minor whirlpools play distractedly into that grand Fire-Mahlstrom which is lashing round the Bastille.

And so it lashes and it roars. Cholat the wine-merchant has become an impromptu cannoneer. See Georget, of the Marine Service, fresh from Brest, ply the King of Siam's cannon. Singular (if we were not used to the like) : Georget lay, last night, taking his ease at his inn ; the King of Siam's cannon also lay, knowing nothing of him, for a hundred years. Yet now, at the right instant, they have got together, and discourse eloquent music. For, hearing what was toward, Georget sprang from the Brest Diligence, and ran. Gardes Françaises also will be here, with real artillery : were not the walls so thick !

Upwards from the Esplanade, horizontally from all neighbouring roofs and windows, flashes one irregular deluge of musketry, without effect. The Invalides lie flat, firing comparatively at their ease from behind stone ; hardly through portholes, shew the tip of a nose. We fall, shot ; and make no impression !

Let conflagration rage ; of whatsoever is combustible ! Guard-rooms are burnt, Invalides mess-rooms. A young beautiful lady, seized escaping in these Outer Courts, and thought falsely to be De Launay's daughter, shall be burnt in De Launay's sight ; she lies swooned on a pailleasse : but again a Patriot, it is brave Aubin Bonnemère the old soldier, dashes in, and rescues her. Straw is burnt ; three cartloads of it, hauled thither, go up in white smoke : almost to the choking of Patriotism itself. Smoke as of Tophet ; confusion as of Babel ; noise as of the Crack of Doom !

Blood flows ; the aliment of new madness. The wounded are carried into houses of the Rue Cerisaie ; the dying leave their last mandate not to yield till the accursed Stronghold fall. And yet, alas, how fall ? The walls are so thick ! The Firemen are here, squirting with their fire-pumps on the Invalides cannon, to wet the touchholes ; they unfortunately cannot squirt so high ; but produce only clouds of spray. Every man his own engineer ! And still the fire-deluge abates not : even women are firing, and Turks ; at least one woman (with her sweetheart), and one Turk, according to the Deux Amis.<sup>j</sup> Gardes Français have come : real cannon, real cannoneers.

How the great Bastille Clock ticks (inaudible) in its Inner Court there, at its ease, hour after hour ; as if nothing special, for it or the world, were passing ! It tolled One when the firing began ; and is now pointing towards Five, and still the firing slakes not. Far down, in their vaults, the seven Prisoners hear muffled din as of earthquakes ; their Turnkeys answer vaguely.

Woe to thee, De Launay, with thy poor hundred Invalides ! Broglie is distant, and his ears heavy : Besenval hears, but can send no help.

What shall De Launay do ? One thing only De Launay could have done : what he said he would do. De Launay could not do it. Distracted, he hopes in the middle of despair ; surrenders not his Fortress : declares

that he will blow it up, seizes torches to blow it up,<sup>1</sup> and does not blow it. Unhappy old De Launay, it is the death-agony of thy Bastille and thee! Jail, Jailoring, and Jailer, all three, such as they may have been, must finish.

For four hours now has the World-Bedlam roared: call it the World-Chimæra, blowing fire! The poor Invalides have sunk under their battlements, or rise only with reversed muskets: they have made a white flag of napkins. Terms of surrender: Pardon, immunity to all! Are they accepted?—"Foi d'officier" (on the word of an officer), answers half-pay Hulin,—or half-pay Elie, for men do not agree on it, "they are!" Sinks the drawbridge, rushes in the living deluge: the Bastille is fallen! *Victoire! La Bastille est prise!*

Why dwell on what follows? Hulin's *foi d'officier* should have been kept, but could not. The Swiss stand drawn up, disguised in white canvass smocks; the Invalides without disguise; their arms all piled against the wall. The first rush of victors, in ecstasy that the death-peril is passed, "leaps joyfully on their necks"; but new victors rush, and ever new, also in ecstasy, not wholly of joy. As we said, it was a living deluge, plunging headlong: had not the Gardes Françaises, in their cool military way, "wheeled round with arms levelled," it would have plunged suicidally, by the hundred or the thousand, into the Bastille-ditch.

And so it goes plunging through court and corridor; billowing uncontrollable, firing from windows—on itself; in hot frenzy of triumph, of grief and vengeance for its slain. The poor Invalides will fare ill; one Swiss, running off in his white smock, is driven back with a death-thrust. Let all Prisoners be marched to the Townhall, to be judged!—Alas, already one poor Invalidé has his right hand slashed off him; his maimed body dragged to the Place de Grève, and hanged there. This same right hand, it is said, turned back De Launay from the Powder-Magazine, and saved Paris.

De Launay, "discovered in gray frock with poppy-coloured riband," is for killing himself with the sword of his cane. He shall to the Hôtel-de-Ville; Hulin, Maillard and others escorting him; Elie marching foremost "with the capitulation-paper on his sword's point." Through roarings and cursings; through hustlings, clutchings, and at last through strokes! Your escort is hustled aside, felled down; Hulin sinks exhausted on a heap of stones. Miserable De Launay! He shall never enter the Hôtel-de-Ville: only his "bloody hair-queue, held up in a bloody hand"; that shall enter, for a sign. The bleeding trunk lies on the steps there; the head is off through the streets; ghastly, aloft on a pike.

Rigorous De Launay has died; crying out, "O friends, kill me fast!" Merciful De Losme must die; though Gratitude embraces him, in this fearful hour, and will die for him; it avails not. Brothers, your wrath is cruel! Your Place de Grève is become a Throat of the Tiger; full of mere fierce bellowings and thirst of blood. One other officer is massacred, one other Invalidé is hanged on the Lamp-iron; with difficulty, with generous perseverance, the Gardes Françaises will save the rest. Provost Flesselles, stricken long since with the paleness of death, must descend from his seat, "to be judged at the Palais Royal"—alas, to be shot dead, by an unknown hand, at the turning of the first street!

O evening sun of July, how, at this hour, thy beams fall slant on reapers amid peaceful woody fields; on old women spinning in cottages; on ships

[<sup>1</sup> According to Croker the story that De Launay threatened to blow up the Bastille was only "a silly rumour of the day."]



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far out in the silent main; on Balls at the Orangerie of Versailles, where high-rouged Dames of the Palace are even now dancing with double-jacketed Hussar-Officers;—and also on this roaring Hell-porch of a Hôtel-de-Ville! Babel-Tower, with the confusion of tongues, were not Bedlam added with the conflagration of thoughts, was no type of it. One forest of distracted steel bristles, endless, in front of an Electoral Committee; points itself, in horrid radii, against this and the other accused breast. It was the Titans warring with Olympus; and they, scarcely crediting it, have conquered: prodigy of prodigies; delirious, as it could not but be.

Along the streets of Paris circulate Seven Bastille Prisoners, borne shoulder-high; seven Heads on pikes; the Keys of the Bastille; and much else. See also the Gardes Françaises, in their steadfast military way, marching home to their barracks, with the Invalides and Swiss kindly enclosed in hollow square.

Likewise ashlar stones of the Bastille continue thundering through the dusk; its paper archives shall fly white. Old secrets come to view; and long-buried Despair finds voice. Read this portion of an old Letter:<sup>1</sup> “If for my consolation Monseigneur would grant me, for the sake of God and the Most Blessed Trinity, that I could have news of my dear wife; were it only her name on a card, to shew that she is alive! It were the greatest consolation I could receive; and I should forever bless the greatness of Monseigneur.” Poor Prisoner, who namest thyself Quéret-Démery, and hast no other history—she is dead, that dear wife of thine, and thou art dead! ’Tis fifty years since thy breaking heart put this question; to be heard now first, and long heard, in the hearts of men.

But so does the July twilight thicken; so must Paris, as sick children, and all distracted creatures do, brawl itself finally into a kind of sleep.

Besenval has decamped, under cloud of dusk, “amid a great affluence of people, who did not harm him; he marches, with faint-growing tread, down the left bank of the Seine, all night—towards infinite space. Resummoned shall Besenval himself be; for trial, for difficult acquittal. His King’s-troops, his Royal Allemand, are gone hence forever.

The Versailles Ball and lemonade is done; the Orangerie is silent except for nightbirds. Over in the Salle des Menus, Vice-president La Fayette, with unsnuffed lights, “with some Hundred or so of Members, stretched on tables round him,” sits erect; outwatching the Bear. This day, a second solemn Deputation went to his Majesty; a second and then a third: with no effect. What will the end of these things be?

In the Court, all is mystery, not without whisperings of terror: though ye dream of lemonade and epaulettes, ye foolish women! His Majesty, kept in happy ignorance, perhaps dreams of double-barrels and the Woods of Meudon. Late at night, the Duke de Liancourt, having official right of entrance, gains access to the Royal Apartments; unfolds, with earnest clearness, in his constitutional way, the Job’s-news. “*Mais*,” said poor Louis, “*c’est une révolte!*” (Why, that is a revolt!)—“Sire,” answered Liancourt, “it is not a revolt—it is a revolution.”

The Fall of the Bastille may be said to have shaken all France to the deepest foundations of its existence. The rumour of these wonders flies every where: with the natural speed of Rumour; with an effect thought to be preternatural, produced by plots. Did D’Orléans or Laclos, nay did Mirabeau (not overburdened with money at this time) send riding Couriers

<sup>1</sup> Dated, à la Bastille, 7 octobre, 1752; signed Quéret-Démery.—LINGUET.<sup>b</sup>

out from Paris; to gallop "on all radii," or highways, towards all points of France? It is a miracle, which no penetrating man will call in question.

Thus, in any case, with what rubs soever, shall the Bastille be abolished from our Earth; and with it, Feudalism, Despotism; and, one hopes, Scoundrelism generally, and all hard usage of man by his brother man. Alas, the Scoundrelism and hard usage are not so easy of abolition! But as for the Bastille, it sinks day after day, and month after month; its ashlars and boulders tumbling down continually, by express orders of our Municipals. Crowds of the curious roam through its caverns; gaze on the skeletons found walled-up, on the *oubliettes*, iron cages, monstrous stone-blocks with padlock chains. One day we discern Mirabeau there; along with the Genevese Dumont.<sup>i</sup> Workers and onlookers make reverent way for him; fling verses, flowers on his path, Bastille-papers and curiosities into his carriage, with *vivats*.

Able Editors compile Books from the *Bastille Archives*; from what of them remain unburnt. The Key of that Robber-Den shall cross the Atlantic; shall lie on Washington's hall-table. The great Clock ticks now in a private patriotic Clockmaker's apartment; no longer measuring hours of mere heaviness. Vanished is the Bastille, what we call vanished: the body, or sandstones, of it hanging, in benign metamorphosis, for centuries to come, over the Seine waters, as Pont Louis Seize; the soul of it living, perhaps still longer, in the memories of men.

So far, ye august Senators, with your Tennis-Court Oaths, your inertia and impetus, your sagacity and pertinacity, have ye brought us. "And yet think, Messieurs," as the Petitioners justly urged, "you who were our saviours did yourselves need saviours" — the brave Bastillers, namely; workmen of Paris; many of them in straitened pecuniary circumstances! Subscriptions are opened; Lists are formed, more accurate than Elie's; harangues are delivered. A Body of "Bastille Heroes," tolerably complete, did get together; — comparable to the Argonauts; hoping to endure like them. But in little more than a year, the whirlpool of things threw them asunder again, and they sank. So many highest superlatives achieved by man are followed by new higher; and dwindle into comparatives and positives! The Siege of the Bastille, weighed with which, in the Historical balance, most other sieges, including that of Troy Town, are gossamer, cost, as we find, in killed and mortally wounded, on the part of the Besiegers, some Eighty-three persons: on the part of the Besieged, after all that straw-burning, fire-pumping, and deluge of musketry, One poor solitary Invalide, shot stone-dead (*roide-mort*) on the battlements! The Bastille Fortress, like the City of Jericho, was overturned by miraculous sound.<sup>k</sup>

#### TAINE'S PICTURE OF THE OLD RÉGIME

Whatever act or day may be taken as the beginning of the French Revolution, with the fall of the Bastille flames of revolt went leaping skyward. Its memories were grim with tyranny, though the mild Louis XVI had almost emptied its cells, and did not abuse the *lettres de cachet* after the manner of his predecessor. But the oppression had reached an intolerable state before him, and his palliatives were as weak as his conduct was untrustworthy from vacillation and ingrained autocracy. We are about to enter a hideous carnival of public atrocity. But it is only fair to remember what had gone before, and of what quality was the aristocracy that bowed the peasantry and the middle-class to the dust. Let us read at some length the summing-up of

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the Old Régime as Taine<sup>l</sup> made it in his famous book. Let us remember in later pages what follows here, that judgment may be the better balanced.<sup>a</sup>

In order to understand thoroughly the history of the French kings, it is necessary to start with the assumption that the land of France is their property by hereditary right, a sort of farm transmitted from father to son, small at first but gradually growing larger, owing to the many profitable transactions the astute proprietor is able to make at the expense of his neighbours, until finally it attains a prodigious size. After eight hundred years of such proprietorship the royal possessions comprise twenty-seven thousand square leagues. On many points the owner's interest and pride have been in accord with the public good, and on the whole he cannot be called a bad manager, rather a better one than some, since he has constantly contrived to enrich himself. Whether feudal or modern, however, the domain is still his to use or abuse as he pleases, and he who uses without stint invariably finishes by abusing.

Under such conditions to subordinate private interests entirely to those of state would require the saintliness of Louis IX, or the stoicism of Marcus Aurelius, whereas the king is merely a nobleman like all the others about his court; a trifle less well-bred, possibly, and exposed to greater temptations and worse counsels, but having like them his personal pride and tastes, his family, wife, mistresses, and boon companions who must all be made content before public affairs are given a thought.

Indeed, for a period of a hundred years, or from 1672 to 1774, every war that is undertaken covers some personal or family intrigue, some impulse of piqued vanity, or the gratification of a woman's whim.<sup>1</sup> Louis XV's conduct of his wars is even more reprehensible than the spirit in which he undertakes them, and Louis XVI, in every act of his foreign policy, is under the strictest conjugal control. In his private life the king resembles any other nobleman of France with the exception that being the greatest he is surrounded by a greater pomp. We shall presently describe his mode of living and it will be seen by means of what exactions so much splendour is maintained; meanwhile let us note a few details.

### *The Spendthrift Court*

According to authentic accounts Louis XV expends for Madame de Pompadour alone the sum of thirty-six million livres, equal to seventy-two millions [£2,800,000 or \$14,000,000] at the present time. D'Argenson<sup>n</sup> states that in 1751 there are four thousand horses in the king's stables, and that his household and personal expenses amount for the same year to sixty-eight millions, or about one quarter of the public revenue. What wonder in all this when one considers that the sovereign of these times is looked upon as a mighty lord of the manor, whose perfect right it is to enjoy to the full the prerogatives of his position? He is at liberty to build, receive, give feasts, and hunt, precisely as he wills, and being absolute master of his own means can bestow money upon whom he pleases, and a special grace seems to descend upon those whom he singles out for such high favour.

Necker, taking charge of the state finances, finds that twenty-eight millions in pensions are annually leaving the royal treasury, and after his downfall money is poured in streams upon the favourites of the court. Even

<sup>1</sup> Madame de Pompadour, writing to Marshal d'Estrées concerning the operations of his campaign, traced out a species of map for him and marked with patches the places she advised him to attack or defend. — MADAME DE GENLIS.<sup>m</sup>



during his time the king is cajoled into raising to fortune the friends of his wife; to the countess de Polignac he gives four hundred thousand francs for the payment of her debts, eight hundred thousand as a marriage portion for her daughter, the promise of an estate yielding thirty-five thousand livres annually for herself, and to her lover, the count de Vaudreuil, a pension of thirty thousand livres. To the princess de Lamballe, both as salary for herself in the office of superintendent that has been re-established for her benefit, and as a pension for her brother, he gives one hundred thousand écus yearly!

But it is under Calonne that prodigality reaches a truly insensate height. The king has been reproached with parsimony; why should he draw his purse-strings tight? Once launched on the road of free giving he bestows, buys, builds, exchanges, and comes to the aid of nobles in distress, with a truly royal lavishness; he literally scatters money on all sides. A single instance will suffice to illustrate: when the noble family of Guémené fail, he purchases of them, for 12,500,000 livres, three estates for which they had paid only four millions, and in exchange for two estates in Brittany, which bring in barely 33,758 livres, he cedes to them the principality of Dombes which yields an income of 70,000 livres. The Red Book will reveal that 700,000 livres are paid out in pensions to the different members of the house of Polignac, and that nearly two millions in gifts and benefices are received yearly by the house of Noailles. Forgetting that each ill-considered act of generosity bears within it the seeds of destruction, that, as Mirabeau<sup>o</sup> says, "every courtier who obtains a pension of six thousand livres receives the price of six villages," the monarch, whose smallest largess, under the present system of taxation, means a period of fasting for the peasant, is taking bread from the poor to give carriages to the rich. Expressed in brief, the centre of government is the centre of the country's ill; all injustice, all suffering proceed from there as from a swollen and festering sore, and there it is that the pent-up poison will one day overflow. When it does we shall see but the just and inevitable effect of exploiting great privileges selfishly instead of for the benefit of others. The words *sire* and *seigneur* mean "protector who nurtures, *l'ancien*, or the chief who leads."<sup>1</sup> For many years, in fact, before the great final catastrophe, France has been in a state of dissolution, simply because the men upon whom her highest privileges are bestowed have forgotten their character as instruments for the public good.

One day when hunting Louis XV, according to Besenval,<sup>g</sup> asked the duke de Choiseul who accompanied him how much he thought the carriage in which they were seated cost. Choiseul replied that he would guarantee to buy one like it for five or six thousand livres, but that his majesty, paying after the manner of kings, with a wide margin in the matter of time, had probably been obliged to give as high as eight thousand. "You have come nowhere near it," answered the king, "the carriage just as you see it cost me a round thirty thousand livres. The stealing that goes on in my household is simply outrageous, but I know of no way to prevent it."

Indeed all connected with the court whether great or lowly had the faculty of gaining high emoluments; in the king's stables were fifty-four horses for the use of the head equerry alone; Madame de Brionne, who discharged some office about the stables during the minority of her son, had the use of thirty-eight, while 215 grooms were told off, and as many horses were set aside for the service of various other persons who had no connection

<sup>1</sup> Lord, in old Saxon, signifies "he who nurtures"; *seigneur*, in Latin of the Middle Ages, signifies *l'ancien*, or the "leader of the flock."

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with the department. What a swarm of parasites on that one branch of the royal tree! Elsewhere I see that Madame Elizabeth, always so abstemious, consumes in a year thirty thousand livres worth of fish; meat and game to the amount of 70,000 livres, and candles to the amount of sixty thousand. *Mesdames* burn a quantity of white and yellow wax candles that cost 215,068 livres, and the bills for lighting of the queen come to 157,109 livres.

At Versailles the street, formerly bordered with booths, is still shown where the valets of the king sold enough scraps from the royal table to feed the entire town. There seems to be not a single article from which the voracious domestic insects do not contrive to extract a rich substance. The king is alleged to drink each year 2,190 livres' worth of orgeat and lemonade; the "chief day and night broth" of Madame Royale, aged two years, costs per year 5,201 livres. Toward the close of the preceding reign, according to Arneth and Geoffroy,<sup>1</sup> the ladies in waiting report the following necessities for the dauphine: "Four pairs of shoes a week, three ells of ribbon a day to tie her morning gown, two ells of taffeta a day to cover the basket in which are placed her fan and gloves." Several years earlier the king had expended 200,000 livres annually for coffee, lemonade, chocolate, orgeat, and iced waters, while several persons were inscribed as receiving daily ten to twelve cups, and it was calculated, according to Luyne,<sup>2</sup> that the coffee and rolls served each morning to the ladies in waiting came to 2,000 livres a year.

It is easy to conceive that in households thus governed the tradespeople who furnish the supplies are made to wait long for their money, so long, in fact, that they frequently refuse to furnish and retire into temporary hiding. Indeed to cover the loss occasioned by these certain delays they are obliged to charge five per cent. interest on the goods they deliver, so that in spite of the economy practised by Turgot the king still owes in 1778 more than 800,000 livres to his wine merchant, and nearly three millions and a half to his purveyor.<sup>1</sup> The same disorder reigns in all the households that surround the throne. "Madame de Guémené owes sixty thousand livres to her shoemaker, sixteen thousand to her paper-hanger, and to the rest of her furnishers she owes in proportion."

Money is a stream which, running carelessly and escaping on all sides, here in secret or tolerated domestic abuses, there in the prodigalities of the masters in houses, furniture, wearing-apparel, hospitality, and pleasures, is perilously near to becoming exhausted. The count of Artois, preparatory to a fête he gives in honour of the queen, causes Bagatelle to be demolished, rebuilt, newly furnished and arranged by a force of nine hundred men working day and night; and as there is not sufficient time to procure the stone, lime, and plaster from afar, he sends patrols of the Swiss guard out upon the highways, to seize all wagons loaded with such materials. The marshal De Soubise expends 200,000 livres in entertaining the king at dinner and over a single night in his country house.<sup>2</sup> The queen, concerning a gift she made the dauphin of a carriage, the gilded panels of which were set with rubies and sapphires, remarked innocently: "The king has increased my allowance by two hundred thousand livres; he surely does not mean that I shall keep them?"<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> National Archives, O, 738: "Interest paid to baker, 12,969 livres; to wine merchant, 39,631 livres; and to the purveyor, 173,899 livres."

<sup>2</sup> Barbier. Belonging to the Marshal De Soubise was a hunting lodge where the king came from time to time to partake of an omelette made of pheasants' eggs, costing 157 livres, 10 sous.

<sup>3</sup> According to Madame de Genlis,<sup>m</sup> *Souvenirs de Félicité* and *Théâtre d'Éducation*, a respectable young woman contracts debts in ten months amounting to 70,000 livres: "For a

*The Fever of Gaiety and License*

One cannot read a biography or any provincial document of that time without hearing the tinkle of carnival bells. At Mouchaix, at the house of the count de Bédée, uncle of Châteaubriand, "there was music and dancing and hunting and feasting from morning till night; it took capital as well as income to keep it all going." At Aix and Marseilles, in the highest circles of society, we read of nothing but concerts, balls, masquerades, and amateur theatricals, in which the countess de Mirabeau enacted the chief rôles. At Châteauroux, M. Dupin de Francueil kept about him a "troop of musicians, of lackeys, of cooks, of parasites, and horses and dogs, to whom he gave without counting, liking nothing as much as being happy himself and seeing everyone around him happy." At this sport he ruined himself, in the most light-hearted manner possible. Nothing avails to stifle this gaiety—neither age, nor exile, nor misfortune; it still survives even in 1793 in the prisons of the republic.

At Trianon, first before only forty persons, then before an audience of great size, the queen plays Colette in *Le Devin de Village*, Gotte in *La Gageure imprévue*, Rosine in *Le Barbier de Seville*, and Pierrette in *Le Chasseur et la Laitière*, the rest of the parts being taken by the highest nobles of the court. There is a theatre in the house of Monsieur, two in that of the count of Artois; the duke of Orleans possesses two, the count de Clermont two and the prince of Condé one.

Last and most significant trait of all is the style of play chosen to conclude the favourite entertainment of these fashionable merrymakers for whom life is a perpetual carnival, not a whit less shameless nor unrestrained than that of Venice. Such afterpieces are usually farces taken from the stories of La Fontaine, or the comic Italian authors, and are broad to the point of indecency, so that they are fit to be presented only to an audience of great princes or courtesans; palates cloyed with the sweetness of orgeat soon come to demand strong rum. The duke of Orleans sings upon the stage couplets of the vulgarest meaning, and one of his rôles is Bartholin in *Nicaire*; another is Blaise in *Jocande*. *Le Mariage sans curé*, *Léandre grosse*, *l'Amant poussif*, *Léandre Etalon* are the titles of some of the pieces written by "Collé, for the amusement of his highness and the court." For one that is only moderately spiced there are ten rank with the strongest seasoning. Some given at Brunoy by Monsieur so far exceed the bounds that the king regrets having come to witness them. "Such license was inconceivable; two ladies who were present were obliged to leave, and, crowning enormity, the queen was actually invited!" Gaiety in these days is a sort of intoxication that impels the drinker to empty the cask of the last drop of wine, and when the wine is gone to drink the dregs.

Not only at private supper parties, or where women of loose life are assembled, but in the highest court circles follies are perpetrated that would disgrace the lowest public-house. In a word society is made up of *débauchées* who shrink from nothing either in speech or deed. "For five or six months past," writes Madame de Genlis<sup>m</sup> in 1782, "suppers have been followed by a sort of 'blind man's buff' which ends in a general riot." To these feasts guests are invited two weeks in advance. On one occasion, "tables and chairs were overturned and twenty carafes of water were emptied upon the

small table 10 louis, for a chiffonnière 15 louis, for a bureau 800 livres, for a small writing-desk 200 francs, for a large writing-desk 300 francs; for rings, watch, chain, bracelets, etc., of hair, 9,000 francs."



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floor. At half-past one I took my departure worn out with fatigue and smarting from the blows of handkerchiefs; leaving Madame de Clarence with her voice barely audible, her dress torn in shreds, a deep scratch on her arm, a contusion on her head, but congratulating herself on having given a supper of such surpassing gaiety, which would surely form the chief topic of conversation on the morrow."

These and similar are the excesses to which people are led by the appetite for pleasure constantly indulged.<sup>1</sup> Under the accumulated weight of such facts, as under the presence of the sculptor's thumb, the mask of the century gradually becomes transformed; first the grave, set physiognomy of the courtier softens into the genial countenance of the man of the world, then the lips, ever expanding into a wider and wider smile, at last break into the full brazen grimace of the rowdy of the streets.<sup>2</sup>

Turn from this picture of insane gaiety to the madhouse horror of the starving peasantry who dug out of the ground the harvest the courtiers scattered broadcast, and who starved in their very fields. This picture is also Taine's and as much a part of the Old Régime as the golden wantonness of the court.<sup>a</sup>

### *What the Old Régime Meant to the Peasant*

Just a century before 1789 La Bruyère<sup>u</sup> wrote: "Wild animals of a certain species, male and female, are to be seen all over the country; they are dirty, livid, and sun-burned, and seem to be held in some manner to the earth which they dig with invincible obstinacy. They have an articulate voice, and when they stand upright they reveal a human countenance; they are, in fact, human beings. At night they retire into dens and subsist entirely on black bread, water, and roots. They relieve other men of the necessity of tilling, sowing, and reaping, hence deserve never to want for that bread which they have themselves produced." They do want for it, however, during the twenty-five years that follow, and they die in droves.

We calculate that in 1715 nearly a third of the whole number, six millions, perished of cold and hunger. Indeed, for the quarter of a century preceeding the Revolution, La Bruyère's picture, far from being overdrawn, falls considerably below the reality, while as a representation of the half-century before the death of Louis XV it is correct, needing to be heightened if anything, here and there, rather than subdued.

"In 1725," says Saint-Simon,<sup>v</sup> "while the inhabitants of Strasburg and Chantilly were in the midst of plenty, the people of Normandy lived on the grass of the fields. The first king of Europe cannot be a great king as long as his subjects are only a lot of ragamuffins of all descriptions, and his kingdom a hospital where what little the dying possess is taken from them in perfect security." During the most prosperous years of Fleury's time, and in the most fruitful portion of France the peasant is in the habit of hiding his bread and his wine, thinking himself lost if anyone suspects that he is not dying of hunger. In 1739 D'Argenson<sup>w</sup> writes in his journal: "The famine has been the cause of uprisings in the provinces, at Ruffec, Caen, and Chinon. Women carrying bread have been assassinated on the highways. M. le duc d'Orléans took with him the other day to the council a piece of

[<sup>1</sup> G. Sand<sup>x</sup> says, "At my grandmother's, I have found portfolios full of couplets, madrigals, and ferocious satires; I have also burned verses so obscene that I could not read them to the end, written by abbés whom I knew in my childhood, or by noblemen boasting the highest birth."]

bread, which he laid on the table before the king. 'That, sire,' he said, 'is the kind of food your subjects are eating. In my district of Touraine the people, for more than a year past, have been living on grass.'"

The destitution, which is rapidly spreading on all sides, becomes more than ever the topic of conversation at Versailles. The bishop of Chartres, being questioned by the king as to the condition of his people, replied that the famine was such that "men were eating grass like sheep and dying off like flies." In 1740 Massillon, bishop of Clermont-Ferrand, writes to Fleury: "Our rural populations are in the direst poverty; they lack beds, furniture of all kinds, and, during the greater part of the year barley and oats, which are their whole sustenance, and which they are obliged to take from their own mouths and those of their children to pay the taxes. This sad spectacle is before my eyes on every one of my yearly visits. So terrible is the situation that even the negroes in our islands are better off than our own people, being able to clothe and feed their families and themselves on the proceeds of their labour, whereas our hard-working peasants cannot, by dint of the most severe and unremitting toil, earn enough to pay taxes and provide their families with bread." D'Argenson relates that at Lille, in 1740, the people revolted when the grain was carried away for exportation. "More in fact live by charity than without it, and the collecting of taxes is carried on with unexampled rigour. All is taken from the peasants, their clothes, their last bucket of wheat—even the latches on their doors. In my parish, which contains but a few souls, there are more than thirty young men and women who long ago reached the marriageable age; they do not pair off together, nor is there any talk of marriage between them. Certain nobles of Touraine have told me that, wishing to give the inhabitants employment in the country, he found only a few workers in the sparsely populated districts, and these were too weak to perform manual labour. All those who are able to do so leave."

### *Wholesale Starvation and Revolt*

"Even in Paris," continues D'Argenson, "I learn that on the day when M. le dauphin and Madame la dauphine went to Notre Dame two thousand women assembled near the bridge of la Tournelle and cried out to them as they passed: 'Give us bread or we shall starve!' One of the vicars of the parish of Ste. Marguerite assures me that more than eight hundred persons perished of hunger and cold in the faubourg St. Antoine between the 20th of January and the 20th of February; that the poor people died in their garrets without anyone to give them succour and before the priests could arrive."

These movements are the convulsive quivers of an overtaxed organism; after a fast as long as nature will allow, instinct at last asserts itself. In 1747, according to D'Argenson, there are three bread riots in Toulouse, and in Guienne they take place on every market-day. In 1750 six to seven thousand men assemble near a river in Béarn to offer resistance to the king's agents; two companies of the Artois regiment fire upon the insurgents and kill twelve of them. In 1752 there is an uprising in Rouen which lasts three days; and in Dauphiné and Auvergne the villagers storm the granaries and take from them the grain at their own price. At Arles, in the same year, two thousand armed peasants troop to the Hôtel-de-Ville to demand bread and are dispersed by the soldiers. In the province of Normandy alone uprisings take place in 1725, 1737, 1739, 1752; in 1764, 1765, 1767 and 1768, and the cause is always the same—the lack of bread. Until the very end,

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at Rheims in 1770, Dijon, Versailles, St. Germain, Pontoise, and Paris in 1775, Poitiers in 1782, Aix in 1785, and Paris in 1788 and 1789, over the whole of France, in fact, such explosions are seen to occur.

Without doubt under Louis XVI the government has greatly improved, the administration has become more honest, the officials more humane, there is less inequality in the levying of taxes, and drudgery has lightened as its nature has become transformed; yet the suffering, though less intense, is still too great for human nature to endure. To anyone who reads the administrative correspondence for thirty years before the Revolution there is abundant proof that conditions are deplorable even when they do not give rise to outbreaks of revolt.

It is apparent that for the man of the people, the peasant, the artisan, the labourer, life is at best a precarious matter; he earns just the little necessary to keep off starvation—sometimes not even that little. In one place during a period covering four elections the inhabitants lived entirely on buckwheat, and for five years, apples having failed, their only drink was water. In another, the centre of a wine-growing district this time, the “growers are, for the most part, reduced to begging their bread in the dull season.” Elsewhere workmen are obliged to sell their furniture and belongings, and many of them perish from cold. Disease caused by insufficient and improper food has spread abroad, and at two elections there are counted no less than thirty-five thousand people who live by alms. In one remote canton the peasants cut down the grain while it is yet green, their hunger not allowing them to wait until it ripens. It is plain that the people are living only from day to day; bread fails them utterly if the crops chance to turn out poor. Let there come but a hail-storm, a sharp frost, or an inundation, and a whole province is at a loss to know how it is going to live till the following year; in many places the rigours of an ordinary winter are enough to plunge the population in distress. It is as though a multitude of arms were raised in supplication to the king, the universal alms-giver.

### *The Peasant Robbed while he Starved*

The decade between 1750 and 1760 is the period when the idlers and those favoured by fortune begin to look with compassion and alarm upon the workers who never dine. Why should one class of society be so desperately poor, and why in a land blessed with so fertile a soil as that of France should there be any lack of bread among the very people who grow the grain? According to the closest observers, “A full quarter of the land has gone absolutely to waste; in some portions the moors and fields of heather lie so close to each other as to make whole districts, thousands of acres in extent, resemble barren deserts.”

Men stricken by poverty become hard and bitter, but when they are property owners and yet poor to desperation their mood is black indeed; indigence is an evil to which it is possible to be resigned, but no one can accept spoliation calmly. Such a property owner was the French peasant in 1789, for he had contrived somehow, all through the eighteenth century, to increase his possessions of land. That he had accomplished this in the midst of his distress is little less than a miracle, and the explanation is to be found only in the combination of qualities that go to make his character, the sobriety, tenacity, dissimulation, severity towards himself, and the passionate love of the soil that has descended to him from his fathers. Sou by sou, through years of pinching and privation, he laid by the sum in the most



secret corner of his cellar. Barefooted and with nothing but rags to cover him, he kept his heart warm with the thought of the little treasure that was to secure for him the realisation of all his hopes, and warily lay in wait for the opportunity for investment that was sooner or later certain to arise.

As long as he is merely a worker, with no other property than his pair of hands, he is in a degree exempt from taxation; but once he comes into possession of a bit of land, no matter how poor he is or may represent himself to be, he is fallen upon by the fiscal authorities to the full measure of his new liability. The collectors, peasants like himself and jealous in their character of neighbours, know exactly how much his land will bring him in, and are thus able to despoil him utterly. In vain he labours with redoubled energy; at the end of the year he finds that his hands are just as empty as before, that his field has yielded him absolutely nothing. The more he acquires and produces, the greater is the burden of imposts he has to bear. In 1715 the land-taxes and capitation borne by the peasantry alone amounted to 66,000,000 livres, in 1759 to 93,000,000, and in 1789 to 110,000,000. In 1757 the assessment is for 283,156,000 livres, in 1789 for 476,294,000.

Let us consider closely the extortions from which he suffers; they are enormous, quite beyond anything we can imagine. Against the collector and receiver he has but one resource, poverty, either real or simulated, forced or voluntary. In the provincial assembly of Berri it is said: "Every taxable peasant fears to show the extent of his possessions; he will not make full use of his furniture, his clothing, his food supplies — of anything that is likely to be seen by others." When "M. de Choiseul-Gouffier made an offer to the peasants to cover their thatched roofs with slate at his own expense," says Chamfort,<sup>w</sup> "they thanked him for his kindness but refused, saying that the agents would only tax them the higher for such an improvement. The peasant works, but only enough to satisfy his most immediate needs; the fear of being obliged to pay out an additional écu causes him to refrain from work that would bring him in a quadruple gain." "Hence we see nothing," said Arthur Young,<sup>x</sup> "but poorly fed animals, wretched tools, and neglected dunghills even among those who can afford to have better. Unrestrained spoliation carried on annually robs them of the desire to earn even a modest competency." The greater part of them, becoming weak-spirited, mistrustful, benumbed, resembling more than anything the serfs of former times, sink into a condition little better than that of the fellahs of Egypt or the toilers of Hindustan. Under a fiscal system so arbitrary in its methods, so enormous in its demands, acquisition is made a snare, possession a peril, and the hope of saving a delusion.

Is there any need to draw their mental portrait after the picture that has been made of their physical condition? Later their own deeds will best explain them: the movement of fury which impels them to trample to death under their wooden shoes the mayor and the adjunct they themselves have chosen, because the two unfortunate officials have, at the bidding of the national assembly, posted up the table of assessments; and the tearing to pieces in the street at Troyes of the venerable magistrate who was up to the last occupied in caring for them, and who had just made a will in their favour. From the mind, still so unformed, of the peasant of to-day, take the knowledge that has filtered in from so many sides at once — from the primary schools instituted in each village, from the conscripts returning home after service in the army, from the prodigious increase in books, newspapers, public roads, railways, and means of intercommunication of all kinds

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—and you will know exactly the mental status of the peasant of those times. Shut in like his father before him in the little hamlet in which he was born and from which no road leads out into the world beyond, he has but one aim — the gaining of his daily bread and the payment of the taxes. What little mind he has is, as it were, extinguished under the weight of suffering he has endured. In very few particulars is his condition any better than that of his ox or his ass, and his ideas correspond to his condition.

How indeed should it be otherwise? Before finding lodgment in their brains every idea must assume the form of a legend, as absurd as it is easy to understand. Once bedded in this fecund, uncultivated soil, the foreign growth becomes transformed; it sends out wild shoots in all directions that bear dark foliage and poisonous fruit. On the occasion of the arrest, under Louis XV, of a band of vagabonds, some children are carried off purposely or by mistake, and the rumour at once goes round that the monarch is in the habit of taking baths of blood to restore his lost physical powers. The idea seems so probable that women, impelled by outraged maternal instinct, join in the mobs that form; and when an *exempt* is seized and maltreated one woman answers his cries for a confessor by a blow on the head with a stone, saying (and she sincerely believes she is performing but an act of justice) that he must not be allowed time to go to heaven. Under Louis XVI the people refuse to believe that the famine has not been deliberately brought about. In 1789 an officer overhears his soldiers say among themselves that “the princes and courtiers have thrown all the flour into the Seine so that the people of Paris shall starve.” Asking them how it is possible for them to believe such nonsense, he receives the reply, “It is quite true, lieutenant, the bags of flour were all tied with blue ribbon.” This argument was to them decisive; no reasoning could convince them of their error.

Thus in the lowest stratum of society there gradually take shape foul and horrible legends relative to the famine, the Bastille, the pleasures and extravagances of the court, in which Louis XVI, Marie Antoinette, the count of Artois, Madame de Lamballe, the contractors, and all the great lords and ladies are made to play the part of ghouls and vampires. These ideas are to be seen in print in certain pamphlets of the time, and they have been abundantly pictured forth in engravings and coloured prints, which are the most effective means of propaganda, since they appeal directly to the eye.

From suspicion to hostility there is but a step. Guests arriving at a concert given in March or April, 1788, are in a state of great perturbation: “This morning the populace was assembled at the Barrière de l’Étoile, and insulted in the most frightful manner the people who were riding by in carriages to the promenade of Longchamp. Some of the wretches climbed up on the carriage steps and shouted in the faces of those inside, ‘Next year we shall be riding in your carriages, and you will be trudging on foot behind.’” At the end of 1788 the stream has become a torrent, the torrent a cataract. Both the clergy and the nobility are heartily detested, and their supremacy has come to be as oppressive as a yoke. If hail or a severe frost should visit the country as in 1788; if the crops should fail, the price of bread go up to four sous a loaf, and the charity workshops be able to pay no more than twelve sous a day, are the people going to resign themselves to death by starvation? Around Rouen the forests are plundered in full day; the wood of Bagnères has been entirely cut down, and the logs sold publicly by the marauders. Famine-stricken peasants and plunderers travel in bands together, and want makes itself the accomplice of crime. The evil-

doers can be tracked from province to province by the depredations they commit along the way.

#### WHO SHALL GUARD THE GUARDS?

When the sedition at length grows universal, what force can prevail? Among the hundred and fifty thousand men who are to maintain order, precisely the same conditions prevail as among the twenty-six millions who are to be restrained; and the abuses, the disaffection, the numberless causes that tend to split the nation into fragments are also constantly in operation to disrupt the army. [There were sixty thousand desertions in eight years.] Out of the ninety millions that the maintenance of the army annually costs the state, forty-six millions go to the officers, and only forty-four to the men; while it is well known that by a recent ordinance only those who can prove their right to a title of nobility can be admitted to the rank of officer. In no other branch of the social organisation does the inequality against which public opinion has revolted show forth in such vivid contrasts. On the one hand are the few for whom all the honours, all the emoluments, all the leisure, all the private theatricals, all the good cheer and pleasures of this world are reserved; on the other is the great majority whose lot is enforced service, hardship, and fatigue, whose gain is six sous a day without hope of more, whose narrow bed is shared with another, whose food is that given to a dog with, latterly, the blows thrown in. Here, on this side, are ranged the highest members of the nobility, on that the lowest dregs of the populace.

For the militia only the poorest classes are available, and not a man will enter it willingly. So odious is the service to them that many take refuge in the depths of the woods, whither it is necessary to send in pursuit of them an armed force. In a certain canton which, three years later, is to furnish from fifty to a hundred volunteers a day, young men cut off their thumbs to escape conscription.

The irritation spreads and deepens; the soldiers of Rochambeau have fought side by side with the free militiamen of America and the memory is not likely to desert them. In 1788, when Dauphiné rises in revolt, Marshal de Vaux sends to the ministry the warning cry: "Impossible to count on the troops!" Four months after the opening of the states-general sixteen thousand deserters are found to be leading insurrections instead of exerting their utmost power to put them down.

France is now a whirlwind of human dust that whirls and writhes. In one great cloud it rolls at the blind impulse of the tempest.<sup>1</sup>



## PERIOD II. THE REVOLUTIONARY EPOCH [1789-1815 A.D.]

(Comprising Chapters VII-XXII)

### A PREFATORY CHARACTERISATION OF THE PERIOD

WRITTEN SPECIALLY FOR THE PRESENT WORK

BY ALFRED RAMBAUD

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#### I. POLITICAL PROBLEMS<sup>1</sup>

THE Revolution burst forth, and from the outset its mission, politically speaking, was plainly revealed. It had but to make true the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen published on November 3rd, 1789, a prototype for which can be found in certain American declarations of 1776, notably that of Virginia.

To the theory of absolute monarchy formulated by Louis XIV and Bossuet was now to be opposed the new theory, "The principle of all sovereignty resides in the nation"; or in other words, national sovereignty was to succeed sovereignty by "divine right."

Louis XIV, like the Roman emperors, had believed himself above all laws because being in his own person the "living law" he alone had the right to make them. "Laws," affirms the Declaration, "are the expression of the general will; all citizens, either personally or by their representatives, are entitled to assist in their creation." Henceforth the king was to reign not "by the grace of God" alone but also "by the will of the people." Formerly absolute master over all public property, disposing freely of the state as well as of the private royal funds, he has now to conform to a "civil list" strictly made out for him by others. He can be no longer looked upon as more than the "head of the executive power," the chief magistrate of the state, as he is its first salaried servant. From subjects Frenchmen have been pro-

[<sup>1</sup> Works for consultation: H. Taine, *Origines de la France contemporaine*, vol. ii. Thiers, Mignet, Michelet, Louis Blanc, Edgar Guinet, Aulard, etc., *Histoire de la Revolution française*. Albert Sorel, *L'Europe et la Revolution française*. Aug. Challamel, *Histoire de la liberté en France depuis 1789*. Innumerable Memoires and Souvenirs of which we will cite only those of Gouverneur Morris, 2 volumes, 1832. Mortimer Ternaux, *Histoire de la Terreur*. H. Wallon, *Histoire du Tribunal Revolutionnaire*. Ernest Hamel, *Histoire de Robespierre*. On Napoleon: Thiers, *Histoire du Consulat et de l'empereur*. Lanfzey, *Histoire de Napoleon*. H. Taine, *op. cit.*, vol. vi. Aucoc, *Le conseil d'Etat*. Madelin, *Le premier consul législateur*. Perouse, *Napoleon I et les lois civiles*. D'Haussonville, *L'Eglise romaine et l'Empire*. Henri Avenal, *Histoire de la presse française depuis 1789*. Alma Sæderhjelm, *Le régime de la presse pendant la Revolution française*.

moted to the rank of citizens, pending the time when there shall be no more kings.

All forms of liberty that had been so constantly and ruthlessly suppressed under the old régime; personal liberty violated by means of the *lettres de cachet*, liberty of conscience by the persecution of Protestants and Jansenists, liberty of the press by the bonfires which had been made of condemned books and by the prison cells whither the imprudent authors had been sent to languish—every liberty was affirmed anew by the Declaration, and the same articles figured at the head of the constitution of 1791.

Inequality formed the basis of our ancient social system. There was inequality between men, some being known as “nobles,” others as “roturiers” (plebeians), inequality among public officials, in the army and the high places of the church, inequality before the bar of justice—for not only were the privileged and lower classes not treated alike at the king’s tribunals, but the nobility and the clergy had jurisdiction of their own; inequality in the taxation since the nobility and the clergy were practically exempt themselves while imposing lesser taxes on their fellow-citizens; inequality between the different provinces of which some had “states” and some had not; inequalities between cities, some having magistrates appointed by election and others being without the right to elect.

The Declaration abolished titles and all other hereditary distinctions; it proclaimed that all citizens were alike admissible to public office, on no other claims than those presented by their talents and ability. It also pronounced all citizens liable to assessment exactly in proportion to their means, and established their equality before the civil and penal law. Inequality between provinces disappeared with the provinces themselves which were turned into departments. All legal distinctions between cities, towns, and villages ceased, there being no longer anything but *communes*, or commonwealths, which all submitted to the same organic laws.

The work was made complete by the application of new principles in legislation, in the machinery of justice, in military organisation, and in the system of public schools and charities.

### *Mistakes of the Constituent Assembly*

If the constituent assembly in undertaking an ecclesiastical reorganisation had been wise enough to refrain from entering the field of pure religion—as it did when it tried to restrain the bishops from demanding canonical investiture of the pope—if it had not, following the lead of Jansenists and other obstinate theologians, provoked an agitation which degenerated into civil war and aggravated the foreign war already in progress, its work, from a political and administrative point of view, might have been fairly easy of accomplishment.

But was this work a good one in itself? No, for the constituent assembly succeeded neither in creating a new power in place of the one it had cast down, nor in laying a firm foundation for liberty in France.

It had stripped the king of every prerogative recognised as essential then or since by all parliamentary constitutions, commencing with that of Great Britain. It had forbidden him active participation in the framing of the laws, and had withdrawn from him the power of absolute veto to leave him only that of a qualified (*suspensif*) veto, an act that prepared the way for perpetual conflict between the legislative assembly and the crown. The king had no longer the right to declare war, to conclude peace, or to sign

treaties; he proposed, but the assembly decreed. Neither was the nomination of bishops, judges, and army-officers left in his hands; all appointing to office, even to that of curé, became the work of the electoral body.

Heedless alike of the experience gained by Great Britain and of the wisdom recently shown by young America, the revolutionary powers placed opposite to royalty, despoiled and mutilated, a single assembly called the legislative, from the ranks of which the king was not permitted to choose his ministers, since ministers were exclusively creatures of the king and as such would be open to suspicion. Between royalty refusing to become reconciled to its fallen condition, and a single assembly over which there was no restraining authority, conflict was, in the very nature of the situation, certain to arise. The constitution of 1791 had a term of existence of only eleven months. The constituent assembly did not even succeed in organising a "cabinet government" which is the very essence of a parliamentary régime.

In administrative matters its mistakes, born of the best intentions, were no less disastrous. As politically it had rendered further reign, yes further existence for the king impossible, so administratively it set conscientiously to work to create a condition of complete anarchy.

It began by suppressing the posts of intendant and sub-delegate, thus destroying the whole royal order of financial officials, and placed the administration in the hands of bodies appointed by election to act for the department, the district, the commune. To such committees were intrusted the most vital state functions, the assessment of taxes and the levying of troops. By suppressing all the indirect imposts, the playing-card and other royal monopolies, the taxes on liquors and salt (*gabelle*), the farming of tobacco which alone brought thirty millions to the state, the constituent assembly left the state without proper means of subsistence and apparently gave no thought to making good the loss. Hence it became necessary to take the dangerous measure of fabricating assignats which were afterwards issued in ever-increasing numbers.

In return for the prerogatives of which the king had been stripped he was recognised as non-responsible, all responsibility being transferred to the ministers. The worth of this guarantee was amply demonstrated by the scaffold of the 21st of January, 1793.

The breaking down of the royal power was supposed to have laid the foundations of liberty in France, as though power and liberty were not both necessary in equal degree to a great nation! Notwithstanding its errors the work of the constituent assembly might have lasted some time in a country at peace with itself and its neighbours; but immediately anarchy and *Jacqueries* arose, and it was perceived that no one was rendering obedience to anyone else, that the marvellous machine constructed by so many thinkers who believed themselves sure of their ground was incapable of performing its functions. The situation became worse when, under the legislative, a foreign war broke out, when in February, 1793, after the execution of the king, the great European coalition was formed, and when the Vendée and thirty or forty departments rose in insurrection. The convention must secure obedience at any cost, and to gain this end it resolutely assumed powers more absolute than any wielded by Louis XIV, the Grand Turk, or the Great Mogul. It respected the work of the constituent assembly, the departments and district administrations, and the municipalities; but beside existing institutions it raised up an administrative system of its own which it called "revolutionary" and "provisory."



*Work of the Convention*

The convention constituted itself a vigorous executive power since it organised various committees, of which the most important was the Committee of the Public Safety, holding the full executive power of the assembly. The intendants of the old régime were replaced by special delegates sent out into the rebellious provinces, into the cities disturbed by reactionary movements, to the frontiers and among the armies. In each commune, by the side of each district assembly, the convention established national agents which it alone had the right to appoint and recall. It suppressed the departmental general councils and subordinated the former's directories. It assumed all the prerogatives of which the constituent assembly had deprived the king, and left but one-third of the public nominations to be decided by ballot. It gave out the commissions of general in the army, called by Hoche "warrants to mount the scaffold," which indeed they proved in the case of the generals Custine, Houchard, Beauharnais, Brunet, Biren, Luckner, etc.

The tribunals not performing their functions to its satisfaction, the convention established by the side of the elected judges the "revolutionary tribunals," of which the most terrible was that of Paris which pronounced 2,550 sentences of death; the revolutionary army composed of *sans-culottes* and intended to replace the royal *maréchaussée*; and the Jacobin committees which formed the police force, and conducted "Saint Guillotine" on a cart all over the country. All this machinery constituted a system of justice as repressive as that of the Turks, especially after the law of Prairial, 1794, when to be brought before any of the tribunals was equivalent to a sentence of death.

In place of the national guards of the constituent assembly and the "volunteers" of 1792 the convention instituted "forced requisition" and the levy *en masse*. Later the Directory acting on the report of General Jourdan established conscription, a system that satisfied Napoleon.

The methods of public economy practised by the convention were thoroughly revolutionary in character. To prevent the raising of prices on the necessities of life it imposed upon merchants the *law of the maximum*. It prohibited under pain of death the exportation of grains and under pain of twenty years' imprisonment the importation, sale, or purchase of English merchandise. There being no revenue from taxes, the government in order to feed, equip, and arm its troops resorted to "requisitions," by which it seized on grains, fabrics, leathers, metals, and saltpetre wherever they could be found; it also disposed arbitrarily of all the working hands of France by shutting up old men, women, and children in the "national workshops." The Directory went still further for it established an "enforced loan" upon all rich people.

*Liberty of the Press*

That liberty which the constituent assembly firmly believed it had founded in France was but little enjoyed even during the relative calm of its own period. Under the convention the right of reunion became merely the right to form "popular" societies, all unions of men of moderate views being held to be conspiracies having the scaffold for their central point. After the 9th Thermidor the "moderate" side, taking its revenge, belaboured in its turn the terrified Jacobins with the rod called executive power, and brought about the closing of their clubs. Under the Directory, the law of Thermidor, year V, prohibited political associations of any kind, and Napoleon was not to be

counted on to re-establish them. Articles 291 and following of his penal code interdict all associations of more than twenty persons formed "without the consent of the government." Liberty of the press had been legally recognised under the constituent assembly, but it was not long before the revolutionists seized all the "moderate" newspapers and made bonfires of them in the street. After the fall of the monarchy, the revolutionary commune of Paris decreed on the 12th of August, 1792, that the "poisoners of public opinion should be cast into prison and their presses, type, and instruments be distributed among the patriot printers." Sureau, editor of the *Acts of the Apostles* was massacred by the populace on August 10th; du Rozoy, editor of the *Gazette de Paris* was judged, condemned to death, and executed. On the 29th of March, 1793, the convention declared subject to the pain of death any writer who should advocate the abolition of proprietary rights or the re-establishment of the monarchy. With the 31st of May and the 2nd of June, 1793, liberty had ceased to exist for the Girondins. Soon after the *Vieux Cordelier* of Camille Desmoulins was burned, and Desmoulins himself, as well as the great poet André Chénier, editor of the *Journal de Paris*, was decapitated. After the 9th Thermidor, it was the turn of the Jacobin papers to suffer oppression. Under the Directory, following upon the *coup d'état* of the 18th Fructidor fifty-four newspapers were suppressed and sixty-seven journalists deported.

Bonaparte, as first consul, permitted only thirteen journals to exist; when he became emperor he declared that the profession of journalism was a public function and re-established the censorship of the old régime. For the surviving newspapers he arrogated to himself the right of naming and revoking journalists and caused the oath of allegiance to be sworn to him by the printers. In 1811 he suppressed all the newspapers except four, originally intending to leave in existence only one, the *Moniteur*. A favourite remark of his was, "I am a child of the people and do not wish to be insulted like a king."

During the period extending from 1789 to 1815 France cannot be said to have had either liberty or constitution, since the constitution formulated in 1791, which instituted the legislative assembly, remained valid less than a year. The convention being a constituent assembly, voted two widely different constitutions, that of 1793, wildly demagogic, which was never made to serve, and that of the year III (1795). The latter accorded the right of suffrage in a superior degree — which was alone effective — only to citizens who possessed property yielding a revenue equal to that produced by a hundred and fifty or two hundred days' labour; and while pretending to respect the right of the people to vote, it in reality imposed great curtailment upon the mass of poor electors. It placed the executive power in the hands of five directors, and divided the legislative power, having learned wisdom by the unfortunate experience of the constitution of 1791, between two separate councils; that of the *anciens* and that of the Five Hundred. The period of the Directory up to its close with the *coup d'état* of Napoleon, on the 18th Brumaire, 1799, was marked by a series of *coups d'état*, occurring on the 18th Fructidor, 22nd Floreal, and 30th Prairial.

The convention, to sum up, gave France despotism exercised by an assembly. The government of Napoleon, whether consulate or empire, notwithstanding the constitutions of the years 8, 10, 12, etc., its republican features and popular aspects, its *plebiscites* and consul-senators, can be fitly characterised only by two words: military despotism. In it was exemplified the absolute power of the ancient Cæsars.

*The Despotism of Napoleon*

Napoleon recovered all the prerogatives that had been taken from the king; the right to make war and peace, to appoint bishops, magistrates, officers and functionaries of all kinds. He re-established the ancient system of administrative jurisdiction, and instituted in each department a *conseil de préfecture* with the *conseil d'état* at the head of all. By article 75 of the constitution of the year 8 he made public functionaries exempt from the judgment of ordinary tribunals. He appointed prefects and sub-prefects, in whom were revived the intendants and sub-delegates of former times; he chose mayors and adjuncts, and selected almost all the members of the general councils in districts and cities. He placed the prefects in charge of levying the troops, and the raising of contributions was entrusted to a whole hierarchy of financial functionaries.

After having created the state council, the senate, the legislative body (*corps législatif*), and the tribunate, he made of the first the pivot of the Napoleonic rule, suppressed the fourth in 1807 as being too independent, and reduced the second and third to the condition of being merely chambers of registry for his will. On his own unsupported authority he regulated by decrees the budget of 1813, and ordered fresh levies of troops. Of what consequence beside him, who had been rendered three times sacred by the plebiscit, the expression of the national will, were any number of deputies appointed after the most extraordinary proceedings by a handful of electors united in a district or department college, who no longer had the least connection with any other electoral body? What did a deputy represent? A small division of territory, nothing more. The emperor, on the contrary, could lay claim to having received from the totality of the sovereign people the sovereign power. Like the Cæsars of Rome he was the "nation" incarnate.

We have seen how fared freedom of the press and freedom of association under Napoleon; other liberties and guarantees were no more faithfully observed. In 1805 he suspended the functions of the jury in cases of high treason, which was virtually a return to trial by "commission" as practised under Richelieu and Louis XIV. In 1813 he annulled a decision rendered by the jury at Antwerp, and summoned both jury and accused to appear before another court. His decree issued in 1810 concerning state prisons, where it was possible to be confined without legal judgment, recalls the period when *lettres de cachet* were in full vigour. The constituent assembly had abolished confiscation, a penalty often disproportionate to the fault and falling most heavily on the children of the condemned; Napoleon maintained it after it had been re-established by the convention. A certain house, belonging to the father of the poet Lemercier, being needed for the widening of the rue de Rivoli, Napoleon had it demolished and then refused to pay indemnity. The story reflects less credit on him than did that of the miller of Sans Souci on Frederick II.

In the Concordat Napoleon became the restorer of the Catholic faith, and in the *organic articles* the legislator of all forms of worship; whereby it cannot be denied that he rendered a great service to a country afflicted as this had been by religious persecutions. It is plainly to be seen, however, that he also wished to make of the church an *instrumentum regni*. He imposed upon it a certain catechism wherein the duties of Christians towards "Napoleon I, our emperor," were vigorously set forth. He was fond of speaking of "my bishops," "my gendarmes," and he introduced into the



church calendar a new saint-day, that of Saint Napoleon,—the 15th of August. After this, in 1808, we find him offering grave offence to Catholics by abducting Pope Pius VII and detaining him a prisoner at Fontainebleau; by uniting to his empire, which was already so vast, the Roman states; and by bestowing, three years later, the title of King of Rome upon his new-born son.

His system of customs exceeded in rigour that of the convention, and was later to terminate in the gigantic folly of the European blockade. He had also re-established all the earlier indirect imposts under the name of "united duties," had restored to the state its monopoly in tobacco and other products, but had retained the fiscal inventions of the Directory such as the tax on doors and windows.

Napoleon, the former *sans-culottes* officer and Jacobin general, the friend of the brothers Robespierre, seemed to have forgotten all the principles of democracy he had once imbibed. He drew to his court the aristocracy of the old régime, and brought into being an imperial nobility of his own whose titles were derived from victories, or the names of conquered towns. He created not only barons, counts, dukes, and princes, but kings as well: setting his brother Joseph on the thrones of Naples and of Spain, his brother Louis on that of Holland, raising a kingdom in Westphalia for his brother Jerome, making his sisters reigning duchesses, his brother-in-law, Murat, king of Naples, and his son-in-law, Eugène Beauharnais, viceroy of Italy. He formed a court for himself of the highest dignitaries, marshals, and ministers attired in silks and gold, and his own sword-hilt was adorned with the famous diamond called the Regent's.

Napoleon had so despotically forced his way into a position where he could dominate not France alone but the other European powers that he was free to undertake at his will expeditions into Spain and Russia, and there leave the greater part of his armies. He reigned by grace of the victories he achieved, but all glory fell from him when success began to desert him, and his doom was sealed by the silent voices in the Senate and Chamber of 1814 and 1815.

### SOCIAL PROBLEMS<sup>1</sup>

The only task in which the revolutionary assemblies can be said to have fully succeeded was the solution after many vain attempts of the social question, which, as we have said, was almost wholly an agrarian question.

During the year 1789 there succeeded each other in Paris the initial events of the great drama that was about to be enacted, the oath of the Jeu de Paume (tennis-court), the royal sitting of the 23rd of June, and the taking of the Bastille. But under the revolution that had Paris for its scene was a second one kindling, spreading, leaping into flame—the revolution of the peasantry. King and assembly might enter into conflict and become reconciled, new legislators might soar into the region of pure abstractions and talk grandly of liberty, equality, fraternity, justice; the true significance of the situation lay in this, that "Jacques Bonhomme" had at last risen to his full stature on his wooden-shod feet. In July it was learned at Paris that everywhere chateaux were being burned, and with them the seigniorial archives wherein were kept the titles by the aid of which the intendants of the nobles made the peasants give up their money. Almost all local histories

<sup>1</sup> Works to be consulted already cited above, p. 191.

of the Revolution<sup>1</sup> have described the singular panic caused by the alarm of brigands, raised once and never repeated, that placed arms in the hands of peasants from one end to the other of the country.

In some localities the peasants set fire to the man of business and his papers together to make him confess where certain deeds were hidden. Everything that was nearly or remotely connected with the nobility, every act however insignificant in itself that seemed to conflict with the doctrine of equality, gave rise to excesses that were given the name of reprisals by the insurgents. The latter caused to be delivered up to them the weather-vanes that only the owners of castles had a right to possess, and these trophies they fastened to the tops of "liberty poles" which they had everywhere erected. They seized and carried away the contents of granaries and cellars, claiming that they were thus simply regaining possession of their own wheat and wine. They cut down what trees they wanted in the noble's wood, and removed his carved bench (*banc d'œuvre*) from the parish church. As for the noble's exclusive right to fish, hunt, and keep pigeons and rabbits, armed bands of peasants went about emptying all the streams and warrens, while others entered the very courts of the castles and shot all the pigeons that were to be seen. Louis XVI, the impassioned hunter, was obliged to listen for several days to the noise of shooting in his park, where stags, hinds, wild boars, and hares were brought down by thousands. In some places the rioters, to exercise and confirm the new principles of equality, forced the former noble to extend to them his hand in greeting, or the lady of the castle to bestow upon them a kiss. The surprise of all these terrible scenes might have been spared the nobility, the clergy, and the new legislators if they had taken the trouble to glance over the rural registers of 1789.

The parish records, the contents of which rarely entered into the general reports drawn up in cities, have been preserved in the national archives. "Side by side with handsomely transcribed copies of leases bound in fine registers, they stand, and the dingy bands which hold them together, the coarse paper, scribbled over with innumerable rustic signatures on which they are made out, give an exact idea of the conditions and people they represent. On the margins of the stately registers is written what was supposed to be a complete political constitution, but one that has never been brought into effect; whereas those sordid pages inscribed by peasants changed the face of the world in a few days."<sup>2</sup>

The "privileged classes," that is the clergy and the nobility, which formed half of the national assembly, took the news of pillaging and burning very much to heart. The same may be said of a great number among the representatives of the Third Estate (*Tiers État*) some of whom had acquired the lands of nobles and exercised seignorial rights, while others, *procureurs*, lawyers, country judges and business agents were what were called at the time "seignorial *valets*."

### *Sacrifices of the Nobility and Clergy*

On the third of August the count of Clermont-Tonnerre read before the assembly a report describing the recent events. The peasants affected to believe that they had acted under the orders of the king and displayed "deep sympathy for the kind masters whom imperative commands had obliged them to harm."

<sup>1</sup> A very curious book of this nature has recently appeared; Georges Bussière, *Études historiques sur les révolutions en Périgord*.

<sup>2</sup> Doniol, *La Révolution française, et la féodalité*, chapter IX.

Obeying the impulse given by a party of nobles wiser and more liberal than the rest, the national assembly in a unanimous movement of generosity voted during the night of the 4th of August the abolition of the feudal régime. But the most difficult remained to be accomplished; France had seen so much agitation on the subject of feudalism, so much had been written, said, and argued about fiefs, feudal rights, *seigneuriaux*, and *domaniaux* and the "feudal" lawyers had shown themselves such wells of knowledge that the whole matter was plunged in deep obscurity. Moreover it was not merely a conflict of doctrines that was certain to ensue; personal interests were also involved, and the bitterness shown in equal degrees by proprietors and financiers would prevent truth and equity from ever coming to the light.

At least one good result was obtained, a decree issued on the 12th of August which abolished without indemnity ecclesiastical tithes. Thus a gift of 123 million was made to the taxpayers without distinction between rich and poor, while the state undertook to maintain the clergy and all the institutions of worship on funds that it did not possess. The peasants were gainers to the extent of 100 millions more by the abolition of ecclesiastical seigniorial rights. The clergy had become the target upon which the shots of all parties were directed. By the decree of November 2nd its immense estates were given over to be disposed of by the nation, and were again immediately placed on sale, the French peasant being thus afforded another occasion of widening the boundaries of his land.<sup>1</sup>

### *Seigniorial Rights*

Infinitely more complicated than the questions of church tithes or church property was that of seigniorial rights.

The constituent assembly had deemed it wise to establish a distinction between the rights which were handed down as a relic of ancient rural servitude and those which might be freely granted, as in any other contract, between *ci-devant* noble and *ci-devant* tenant. Thus there came to be two separate categories of rights or claims; those formulated by the feudality of domination and those appertaining to the feudality of contracts. It was the first alone that were abolished.

Thus servitude became a thing of the past, together with the exclusive right of hunting, fishing, and maintaining pigeons; with the tax on legacies and unclaimed heritages, on strangers dying within the seigneurie, on bastards and on wreckage on the shores; with the special tax and hours of labour due the noble, the banalités, or payment for the use of mill, oven, and wine-press, and the toll on roads, bridges, and market-places. All these

<sup>1</sup> We must not, however, exaggerate the share taken in these sales of ecclesiastical property to the peasants who ordinarily had little money either in coin or assignats, and who preserved certain scruples of conscience which made the purchase of such estates seem to them a sort of sacrilege. Monks and curés, moreover, never ceased reminding them that property so obtained must one day be returned. The parties who chiefly profited were the syndicates of buyers called "black bands" which broke up the great domains and resold them in little bits, and the bourgeois of cities and lesser towns who presented themselves with coins or assignats in hand and a total absence of religious scruples.

A recent study of M. G. Lecarpentier, *La propriété foncière de la clergé, et la vente des biens ecclésiastiques dans la Seine supérieure* (Paris et Rouen, 1901) throws great light on the subject; in the district of Caudebec more than half of the land either became part of the urban municipalities or passed into the hands of citizens, such as lawyers, merchants, etc. To those who deplore the small number of purchasers that offered for the church domains Mirabeau replied, "What does it matter to us? If no one buys them we shall give them away!" After 1793 the convention was forced to divide up the property to be sold in small lots for the benefit of the peasant.



formed the oddest, most picturesque, and archaic features of the system in question, but they were by no means the most important from a financial point of view.

On the contrary the *cens* or seignorial rents were left intact, as also the *lods et ventes* granting their possessor the privilege of redemption. It is possible that these claims proceeded from the "contract-feudalism," but the peasant was of the opinion that it would not result in gain to him to pay in ground-tax what he had formerly been obliged to yield over as *feudal dues*. The maintenance of *lods et ventes* when a mutation tax had already been established by the king was wholly unjustifiable. Indeed the rural inhabitant refused utterly to satisfy this claim unless the ci-devant noble could produce written proof that it had been granted to him freely, and even then a radical means of making such proofs disappear had been found in the burning of châteaux.

As soon as the peasant conceived the idea that the deputies appointed by him were not defending his rights with sufficient vigour, a new jacquerie arose in several provinces, with wholesale burning of châteaux and murder of nobles when necessary. Taine has calculated that from July 1789 until the dissolution of the constituent assembly no less than five jacqueries, involving the eruption of several whole provinces took place; and even in the time of the legislative assembly the fermentation had not entirely subsided.

### *English and French Agrarian Laws*

If the agrarian laws framed by the constituent assembly had remained in force the French peasant would have found himself in a position similar to that of the English agriculturist of to-day. Agrarian reform was not really accomplished in Great Britain until 1835, the fifth year of the reign of William IV. The people gained little by having waited so long. Brought about pacifically, without the aid of jacqueries and popular uprisings the reform was effected with the consent of all parties interested, and in accordance with laws that had been given long deliberation in both chambers. In no way abolished, the tithe to the church was simply transformed into an impost fixed under the authority of special commissioners (Tithe Commissioners) and all persons liable were left absolutely free to do as they chose about redemption. Nevertheless a burden of many millions continued to weigh upon the English taxpayers.

The manor was no more inclined than the church to allow itself to be despoiled. Depending on the seignury more in a measure than the peasant of France, the English peasant had no other title-deeds to his tenure or copyhold than an inscription on the "roll" of the manor. As in France he paid yearly rental, or *cens*, fines, different mutation dues, of which one was called "decease money," a ground-rent which represented the obligations formerly imposed by the Norman conquerors on the Celtic or Anglo-Saxon serfs, and lastly he was obliged to render certain stated hours of service. In many localities the forest was the property of the lord, and cutting down the trees was punishable with a fine. Any departure from the customs of the manor, all innovations, such as the planting or removal of a hedge without the authorisation of the landlord, who was the "superior" proprietor, might entail confiscation pure and simple, or, at the very least a heavy fine. In certain manors the lord had a right to claim, on the death of the copyholder, the best beast in the latter's stables, or his finest piece of furniture. This was called right of *heriot*.

Such a system was still more intolerable in England than in France for in proportion as methods in agriculture improved the restrictions placed on the freedom of the copyholder became more and more irritating and oppressive. There had recently sprung up, moreover, on arable or prairie lands that had formerly been copyholds, whole cities or quarters of cities, as for example Brighton, and the newest part of London. The lord thus became chief owner of a great number of fine mansions and houses of trade; and it was upon the flourishing industries of the country, upon the manufacturers, traders, ship-builders, that the rule of the "manor" was now to press with the full weight of its vexations and injustice. The lord who was formerly owner of a piece of land worth 30 livres shortly saw buildings erected upon it to the value of 200,000 livres, and the soil which had once yielded sustenance for a bare half dozen sheep was made to bring him in a profit of thousands. It was to enrich him who was already so wealthy, and whose days were passed in idleness that the expert agriculturist in the country and the ingenious architect, the prosperous merchant and the bold speculator in the city, performed marvels of intelligence and skill. Manor rule applied to the new England that was rising up became a crying iniquity; where he had before taken an ass or a cow on the decease of one of his poor tenants to satisfy his claim of heriot, the lord could now seize, from the estate of an opulent sub-proprietor, a priceless painting, an historic diamond, or a race-horse bearing a name celebrated all over the world.

Detestable as may have been the former English system — worse in many respects than that of France — it was destined to survive the latter by fifty or sixty years, and when the change finally came it was more in the nature of an attenuation than of a suppression. The law of 1841 empowered the tithe commissioners (now tithe and copyhold commissioners) to preside over the negotiations between landlord and tenant. According to the same law three different methods of arrangement were possible: commutation or substitution of reduced and non-variable fines for the old variable and arbitrary rentals; enfranchisement, or rather suppression of the copyhold and its replacement by any terms that might be acceptable to the chief proprietor; and lastly certain simple amendments to the manorial system as it then stood. The first expedient seemed the easiest and the one most likely to give satisfaction to all the parties concerned.

The right of ransom was left subject to the will of the landlords. Their exactions were most severe. In 1848 the commissioners made the declaration that unless a law was passed which increased their powers there would shortly be no need of their services, as parties had almost ceased to present themselves before them.

The new laws passed in answer to this appeal were those of 1852 and 1858; the first obliged the landlord to enfranchise all copyholds against an indemnity in rent or capital; still his consent remained necessary to any curtailment of his right of fishing and hunting which he everywhere retained. The second law had merely to suppress certain useless hindrances, and to codify all the rules in the matter. These proceedings marked the close of the manorial régime.

In whatever direction the new legislation of Great Britain made itself felt it tended toward the same result, namely, ransom or readjustment, not abolition. Not without making compensation in other ways did the yeoman cease paying tithes to the church and seigniorial and proprietary taxes to the landlord; the only evils of the old system to be completely abolished were those that were the most intolerable.

Almost analogous to this, leaving out the question of tithes, would have been the situation of the French peasant if the agrarian laws of the constituent assembly had remained in operation. The universal feeling was such in France, however, toward the close of 1791 that a pause could not have been made at this point. The conflict between the classes had broken out when indignation against the king was at its height, and religious discords, the bluster of nobles who had taken refuge in other lands, and the imminence of a European coalition, put the finishing touch to the popular exasperation. In France the agrarian revolution was consummated in the midst of civil and on the eve of foreign war; while in England the reform had come about under peaceful conditions, as the result of a series of acts looked upon as purely business measures, having no connection with politics.

### *End of Feudalism*

In France, while the Jacqueries were carrying on a "propaganda by deed" the revolutionary agrarian doctrines were assuming final shape; over against the "rights of nobles" were reared in threatening array the "rights of villeins." The conviction was soon reached that never could feudalism be made *contractante*, it must always remain not only *dominante* but cruelly oppressive as well. Moreover it was very necessary to decide just what revenues the nobles were to be allowed to retain. An old law of the monarchy which decreed confiscation of the estates of persons guilty of high treason, was revived and put in practice against emigrants, scarcely any distinction being made between emigrants who had actually carried arms against France, and those who had merely taken refuge in a foreign land. Nevertheless the manner in which those nobles who had remained at home were treated by the Jacobin committees of their village or of the neighbouring town was such as to turn almost every "ci-devant" into an emigrant. Thus a prodigious number of seignorial estates were turned in with the lands of the clergy to swell the national domains. These estates the peasant could now make his own if he so desired, paying for them in assignats that had already greatly depreciated, and were soon to fall to a hundredth part of their face value.

The assembly which was to take away the property of the nobles as its predecessor had taken away that of the clergy was elected, not by universal suffrage which never came into operation during the whole course of the Revolution, but by an electoral body of which each member paid a sum equivalent to the proceeds of three days' labour. Four million two hundred and ninety-eight thousand three hundred and sixty "active" citizens composed this body which was sufficiently large to be an exact representative of the popular spirit; had it contained more members its action might not have been so energetic. It elected an assembly exactly after its own image, the legislative. It was this assembly that was to take the most rigorous measures against the nobility and clergy, to precipitate the fall of royalty, to commence the foreign war that was to react so disastrously on France, to regulate, lastly, the agrarian question and make an end of the "seigneurie" for all time.

By its edict of the 18th of June, 1792, the legislative assembly declared abolished without possibility of redemption all rights of whatever denomination — the denominations varied according to the province — based on the mutations that might arise in the possession of property or of funds. This was equivalent to the suppression of all seignorial rights of mutation.



The assembly recognised the validity of certain *casual* claims which might exist by reason of a sale or concession freely agreed to by the former owner; but only on condition that the latter or his representatives could furnish proof of there having been a contract. Now proof of this kind could rarely be produced, hence the victory was nearly always on the side of the peasant.

The legislative assembly also abolished a certain number of *banalités* that the constituent assembly had allowed to remain in force because they were looked upon as payment for certain services the noble had rendered to the village.

The convention took still more radical measures. It abolished the *casual rights* that its predecessor had respected. There was no longer any question of trying to determine just what were the rights of the noble and what were the rights of the peasant; the convention denied all rights whatever to the noble, even the right to exist. Only by the total destruction of the aristocracy, by the absolute triumph of democratic principles in all the rural districts, could the Revolution be made complete and lasting. Of feudalism the name, even the very memory was to be destroyed. The assembly ordained that all papers belonging to the châteaux should be deposited in the municipal record offices, and there "burned in the presence of the municipal council and all the citizens." Isolated acts of violence, of brutal retaliation on the part of the peasants, that had hitherto been denounced and perhaps punished when circumstances permitted, were now declared to be strictly legal. Feudalism was to be hunted down wherever it existed, beyond the boundaries of France, across the seas. "The national convention decrees that no person of French birth can claim feudal rights or service in any quarter whatsoever of the globe, under pain of civil degradation" (7th of September, 1793). This meant utter ruin to French colonial property-owners in the Antilles, the Isles of France and of Bourbon.

The work is at last accomplished; there no longer remains in France a trace of feudal dominion. The legislative assembly and the convention have been partial even to the point of flagrant injustice in favour of the peasant and against the noble. The result was the creation of a rural democracy, absolved by the Revolution from the necessity of paying tithes and seigniorial dues that would aggregate several hundreds of millions, and made possessor of immense "national domains," which has become the most influential factor in national affairs that exists in the world to-day.

The lawyer Mailhe, a learned *feudalist* and deputy to the legislative assembly from Haute-Garonne, was neither a Jacobin nor a collectivist, yet this is what he said about seigniorial rights: "If their suppression in reality covered an attack on all proprietary rights, the assembly which issued the decree would be blessed by ninety-nine hundredths of the nation." The question of seigniorial rights was treated both by the legislative assembly and the convention, not as a litigation between compatriots and fellow-citizens, but as a *casus belli* that had to be decided between two hostile castes—almost two hostile nations.

Virtually the whole of the social question lay at that epoch in the agrarian question, there being, properly speaking, no question of labour. The law of March, 1791, suppressed all corporations and trades unions with their syndics, committees, and rules, and it was believed that thereby liberty had been permanently founded in every department of labour; pharmacy and the trade of silversmith alone excepted. So little did the assembly foresee any great development of industries in France that by the law of July, 1791, it

decided that no blast furnaces could be manufactured without the authorisation of a special law. It was not long thereafter before the emigration of the rich, the excesses committed by the lower classes, the "requisitions," the law of maximum, and civil war had destroyed what little industry and commerce still subsisted in France. The cruelties of the Lyons revolt in 1793 decimated the population of that city and closed all its silk factories.

The constituent assembly in suppressing corporations had no intention of allowing them to reorganise at some future time. By the law of June 14th, 1791, it prohibited all associations and coalitions of working people formed with the object of raising funds for mutual support, or obtaining an increase in wages; and punished delinquents with fine and imprisonment. In his report the deputy, Chaspelier, justified these prohibitions by arguments drawn from a most astonishing tissue of sophistries, "Without doubt," he said, "all citizens should be allowed to assemble; but citizens belonging to certain professions should be prohibited from assembling in their own interest, since the state is able and willing to furnish work for those who subsist by it, and support for the infirm." Thus the constituent assembly, embracing in its distrust of labour organisations the dangerous utopian theory of every man's "right to work," tumbled finally into the pitfall of "state socialism."

Napoleon, in his law of 1803, prohibited labour coalitions held with a view to arranging strikes. In article 414 and following of his Penal Code he makes a greater show of justice by accompanying his prohibition of labour coalitions with similar restrictions upon manufacturers; but this can be nothing but a feint, since manufacturers have no need to assemble noisily for the purpose of deciding their affairs. In article 1781 of his Civil Code Napoleon manifests great partiality for the employer, whose word is not to be questioned in matters pertaining to the amount of wages paid, the salary list of the previous year or the estimates for the current year. In 1805 the employé was obliged to provide himself with a *livret* (small book or certificate), that was to be left in the hands of the employer, who was thus given complete control over the employé.

Nevertheless the working classes should be grateful to Napoleon for having given them the first law establishing trade councils (*Conseils de Prud'homme*), and also for prompt and inexpensive jurisdiction (law of the 18th of March, 1806). This law was later modified in a sense even more favourable to the workingman.

### *Social Metamorphosis*

The social transformation that took place in France during the period of the Revolution can be followed in all its phases. Before 1789 there had existed "privileged classes," that refused to bear any share of the public burden on the pretext that the clergy aided the state by its prayers, and the nobility by its sword. Now privileges and privileged classes have both disappeared. The clergy has ceased to form a distinct order, the first of the state; the decree of the 12th of August, 1789, has deprived it of its revenues, the tithes; that of the 2nd of November has robbed it of its lands; the congregations, that second and richer half of the ecclesiastical body, have been dissolved. The secular clergy has been made a mere collection of salaried officials, having no corporate place in the nation.

Civil acts are taken out of the hands of the clergy and placed in those of municipal officers, and religious marriage is subordinated to civil marriage.

Protestants have been emancipated, also Jews ; everywhere freedom of conscience has been proclaimed, a privilege that the clergy will soon have to claim in its own behalf, as its civil constitution, in the effort to make it independent of the spiritual authority of Rome, has placed it in a position where it will have to choose between persecution and schism. The enactments that follow fall so heavily upon "refractory" priests or those who are not "sworn in" as to deliver them over to the massacres of September, 1792, to death by drowning in the Loire at the hands of the ferocious Carrier, to the tumbrils of the guillotine and the bloody-thirsty humours of the populace.

The night of the 4th of August also dealt the death blow to the nobility as second order of the state. It has been seen what became of seignorial revenues and, after the emigration, of the great landed estates. The aristocracy has been shorn of its honours in the village church, has been stripped of those rights which it valued highest. It is no longer necessary to belong to the nobility in order to attain to the exercise of the highest state functions, or to fill the positions of greatest dignity in the church, the magistracy, and the army ; on the contrary such an accident of birth is a decided disadvantage. There is no longer a court where the noble, ruined by the Revolution, can seek consolation in honorary privileges, or can solicit the "special favour" of the king ; there remains no place open to him in the entire country. Moreover, not only does the nobility not exist, but the law declaring that children shall inherit equally and limiting the right of making wills renders the exercise of the right of primogeniture, and the consequent reconstruction of the old domains, an impossibility for the future.

The terror caused by the Revolution is everywhere increased by local anarchy ; there is violence above and violence below. Who can doubt that the morrow has arrived of the humanitarian prophecies of a Voltaire, a Rousseau, an Abbé de Saint Pierre ; of the sentimentalities of a Beaumarchais and of the virile philanthropy of a Turgot ? The drama has followed upon the idyl. "The Revolution, prepared by the most civilised classes of the nation," says De Tocqueville, "passed for execution into the hands of the roughest and least cultured."





## CHAPTER VII

### THE REVOLUTION UNDER MIRABEAU

[1789-1791 A.D.]

THERE is no scene, no portion of history, that can be regarded under so many different views as the revolution upon which we now enter. To some, it is all crime; to others, all glory. In England, the prevailing sentiment has been, to regard the French nation, as if it were an individual actuated by one perverse will, and flinging itself, from pure love of mischief, into the agonies of suffering and the depths of crime.

But revolution is one of the maladies of kingdoms, or rather the crisis of malady. It may proceed from some latent vice in the constitution, from dissipation, from mismanagement. To avert such is often no more in the power of the nation or of the individual than it is to be all-sound and all-wise. From early times there was something wrong in the framework of French society. These defects have been noted; above all, that marked division of classes which refused amalgamation. Their mutual and oft-renewed struggles have been seen. The people, the great mass, not of the poor and ignorant, but often of the wealthy and enlightened, were conquered and borne down in the combat. Their defeat they could have forgiven; but the extravagant use which the upper classes had made of their victory revolted the fallen. The clergy grasped one-third of the lands of the kingdom, the noblesse another; yet the remaining third was burdened with all the expense of government. This was reversing the social pyramid, and placing it upon its apex.

To reform this state of things was necessary. Flesh and blood could not bear it. Intellect, more powerful still, rebelled against it. Owing to the great exertions for the latter in print and orally, all men were agreed as to the necessity of this change. Louis XVI, however uneducated, felt and owned the need; but he was at first young, weak because ignorant, and dared not to break through the trammels of a court. The monarch, nevertheless,

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made every effort to bring about the desired reform peaceably. He intrusted the task first to Turgot, whose schemes were repulsed by the magistracy. Necker made no political attempt. Calonne tried next. He was defeated and overthrown by the clergy and the noblesse. Brienne then was driven to repeat the attempt, and the magistracy tripped him up. What resource was left? To recur to the people. But this was revolution. True! but who rendered it indispensable? Not the people, who were all the time tranquil; not the monarch, who did his utmost; not the queen, despite the accusation that even respectable writers echo—we find her supporting Necker and approving the double representation of the commons. No; it was the resistance, the false, the blind resistance of the privileged orders—noblesse, clergy, magistracy—that precipitated the Revolution, and flung all power at last into the hands of the commons.

In the great English rebellion, the peerage was not destroyed—it fell. There was none of the hatred towards it which the French noblesse had excited in the people; still, it fell. From the same law, it might be argued that in the general wreck of the social system, which was now inevitable in France, the opportunities for repairing and saving it being voluntarily lost, the members of the privileged classes could survive but as individuals, and hold influence but by their talents and character, not their rank.

This is the law of every revolution in which the people are called to partake.<sup>1</sup> Some argue, might not the Revolution have been brought about amicably, with forbearance and mutual sacrifice? Certainly not: it was too late. The changes which even the monarch himself allowed as necessary to be effected were too radical, too great, to be wrought by aught save force. What centuries ought to have gradually done, was here given as the work of a day. Such a task was too great, too momentous, and the time allowed too short, to permit of its accomplishment by aught short of convulsion. With never so little of fatalism in one's creed, much of that stern principle must be seen linking together and impelling the events of this dire catastrophe. The distressed condition of the peasantry had swelled their disorderly ranks, in which were found those ardent tempers which war occupies and mows down, and who in long intervals of peace roam unquiet and eager for their natural element of strife. Famine, occasioned by the failure of the last crop, rendered more severe by an inclement winter, sharpened the ferocity of this class; whilst its hordes were increased by the efforts of the benevolent, chiefly exerted in the capital, whither the indigent flocked in consequence.<sup>b</sup>

#### SOREL ON THE SPIRIT OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

"The national assembly," wrote Mirabeau, "has contracted the habit of acting in the same way as the people whom it represents, by actions which are always abrupt, always passionate, always precipitate." The assembly itself formed a people, and a people in revolt. Elected by a sort of public acclamation, it was a reflection of the nation's own character, and presented a faithful likeness of France. The nation possessed a very clear idea of the civil reforms it demanded, and a very determined will to accomplish them; only on the subject of political reforms it had but vague aspirations and inconsistent plans. Civil liberty had taken the place of morality, and nothing contributed more than that to render unendurable a government that had banished from it all laws.

<sup>1</sup> The revolution of 1830 offers another exemplification of this important truth.

The feudal rights were abolished in a night, and it became evident, after that particular night, that France would rise up against whosoever should desire to restore them. Political liberty was an innovation. It was contrary to all precedents. The notion could be instilled into the minds of the people only by upsetting all their acquired ideas, and before it could be established the foundations of the state must be relaid. To put it into practice it was necessary to change the previous customs and modify them to conform to the instincts of the people.

Each one invented for himself an abstract ideal; no one had gained knowledge of it through experience. One heard only the sovereignty of the people proclaimed, and a determination to sweep away everything that appeared in the shape of an obstacle. But the old régime being the only one of which the French had any knowledge, when it had vanished there was nothing to fill its place. Instead of the liberty for which they were waiting, it was anarchy that they saw appear. Anarchy sprang out of those causes which rendered the Revolution inevitable.

It is not through revolution that a government is destroyed, it is because the government is destroyed that revolution is triumphant. From the first outset of the disturbance, the agents of the state, distracted, bewildered, with no one to direct them or uphold them, were reduced to play the part of victims, or to be passive witnesses of the excesses of the populace. The convocation of the states was only a solemn admission of the utter powerlessness of the government. The ministry failed in the task, and succumbed beneath the heavy burden. Neither did the chiefs know how to command, nor the subordinates to obey. The administration itself vanished; the army melted away. Nothing was left of the formidable ruling instrument which was forged by Richelieu and brought to perfection by Louis XIV, but an inert and spiritless body, which stifled every attempt of those who tried to direct it. But all France knew that royalty could no longer contend against it. The assembly could rule no better. It showed itself by inexperience, by presumption, by idealism, as improvident and incapable of governing as the monarchy had become through routine and decrepitude. Their suspicions of the crown made the deputies snatch from it all power; their very idea of the principle of power forbade them to exercise it.

The new government found itself in a very short time reduced to the same extremity as the old. The ministry was dominated by the assembly, the assembly by the clubs, the clubs were ruled by the demagogues, and the demagogues by the armed populace, fanatical and famished, which they believed followed in their train, and which in reality drove them in front of it. This terrible driving commenced July 14th; it struck the first blow by breaking in the door of the Bastille, and showed to the nation the impotence of the monarchy. The days of October were only the outcome of it.

#### THE MISTAKE OF THE ÉMIGRÉS

The king was a prisoner in his capital, and a captive in his palace. He still had servants, but he no longer had a court. The 18th of July, his younger brother, the count of Artois, his cousins, the prince of Condé, the duke de Bourbon, and the duke d'Enghien, hurriedly left France. In consequence of the uprising of the peasants that broke out in the country districts, the smaller nobility took refuge in the towns, the nobility of the court withdrew to foreign parts. After the 6th of October the leaders of the right side, Lally Tollendal, Bergasse, and 120 deputies who voted with them, left the



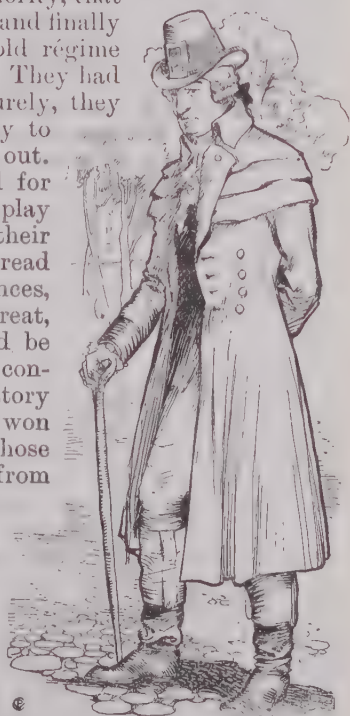
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assembly and gave up the struggle. A new wave of *émigrés* crossed the frontier, and from that time it did not cease.

Those who thus left the kingdom were not the victims, they were the malcontents. They left, far less to flee from peril than to get ready for revenge. They did not present themselves in the little courts which received them in Savoy and upon the Rhine as fugitives who sought a refuge, but as a political party which sought allies. They declared that there was no other remedy in this crisis of the French monarchy than a complete counter-revolution, the punishment of the rebels, the abolition of seditious laws, the restoration of the king in the fulness of his authority, that of the nobility in the fulness of their privileges, and finally the re-establishment pure and simple of the old régime in the state and the feudal régime in society. They had abandoned their party only to serve it more surely, they had left the field open to the Revolution only to reverse the state of affairs and finally to crush it out.

They proclaimed these plans, they caballed for the great day, and conspired with as much display as futility for the invasion and conquest of their country. The rumours that they themselves spread of their armaments, of their plots, and their alliances, their pride, their tone of command and of threat, gave credit to the idea that their return would be followed by an entire overthrow of men and conditions. The people took literally their comminatory diatribes; they trembled for the rights they had won for themselves, they turned with fury against those who were accused of wishing to snatch them from them. Their anger fell upon the court and upon the nobles remaining in France. They accused them of being the accomplices of the *émigrés*. This first emigration, entirely political and feudal, the most absurd and fatal of the anachronisms in France, in 1789, carried consequences in its train infinitely more extensive than the mediocrity of its leaders and the vanity of their plans should have given rise to. No event was more disastrous for the monarchy, or exercised a more pernicious influence upon the development of the Revolution.

That which from the beginning marked the French Revolution as something extraordinary, was the infinite contrast between the weakness of the government which it established, and the powerfulness of the ideas it introduced to the world. This assembly, which neither knew how to govern France, nor yet to govern itself, and whose very existence depended upon the boldness of some factions, did much work for the future amid the uncertainties of the present, and planted indestructible footprints in the shifting sands. The anarchy that it had not created, but that its warped measures had aggravated, concealed from the eyes of contemporaries the fecundity of reforms which could have borne full fruit only in less troubled times. The assembly simply did itself justice, when in the month of February it answered its detractors by bringing to light the work it had accomplished in eight months:



A STREET COSTUME, LAST PART OF EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

"Some feign to ignore the good the national assembly has done; we are about to recall it to you. The rights of men were not recognised; they have been re-established. The nation had lost the right to pass laws and impose taxes; this right has been restored to it. Our public law was composed of privileges without number; we have destroyed them. A vexatious feudalism covered the whole of France; it has disappeared, never to return. You wished for the abolition of venality in the finances; it has been pronounced. You proved the need of a reform at least provisional, of the principal faults of the criminal code; it has been decreed. A code of civil laws will make all these obscure, intricate, and contradictory laws disappear. The assembly has completed the work of the new division of the kingdom that alone could sweep away even the last traces of the ancient prejudices, and substitute, for the selfish love of the province, the true love of country. We shall complete our work by a code of national instruction and education, which will place the constitution under the safeguard of future generations. Behold our work, ye French, or rather behold yours — what an honourable heritage you are about to give to your posterity. Raised to the rank of citizens, eligible for every employment, since everything is done by you and for you, equal in the eyes of the law, free to act, to speak, to write, owing nothing to men only to the common will, there is no finer condition possible. Can it be that there is a single citizen, worthy of the name, who would dare to cast a glance behind, who would like to raise up again the fragments with which we are surrounded, to contemplate again the old edifice?"

History does not offer any other example of reforms so far reaching. For the immense majority of the people, it was the Revolution that did it all. It is in this form that it became pre-eminently the national work of the French. It freed persons and property, it took place for the benefit of France and its inhabitants, it made the citizens draw closer to their native soil, it made this great idea of country which centuries had been slowly instilling into their souls, both public and popular. In this respect it completed the work of the monarchy. Some one recounts how, upon his return from Italy in 1797, Bonaparte said to Sieyès, "I have made a great nation." "It is we," answered Sieyès, "who first made the nation." Both were boasting. If the origin of the ideas that were applied was vaguely discerned, the obscure course of these ideas at all times escaped the notice of contemporaries. When they sought to find in the collection of the king's statutes principles to which they could attach the laws, that they were ready to carry through, they could not find any. The rights of the king filled documents which encumbered the archives; the nation had lost her rights. Nevertheless, a foundation of right was necessary to this great reform of state and society. Lacking historical rights, they took metaphysical ones, and being unable to declare the rights of the French, the assembly declared the Rights of Man, in the abstract, of the citizen of the world. This was moreover, in this century, the tendency of the human mind, and especially of the French spirit; and this was one of the principal causes of the intellectual authority that France exercised upon Europe.<sup>c</sup>

#### LOUIS CONCILIATES THE ASSEMBLY

Having grasped thus the earnest spirit that moved as a solemn undercurrent to the wild eddies and torments of the surface of the Revolution, let us turn back to the course of events following the crumbling of the Bastille and the tradition it stood for.<sup>a</sup>

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The middle as well as the upper ranks furnished the first victims to insurrection.

In the meantime, where was the count of Artois, the baron de Breteuil, their bold projects, and their army? They slumbered or trembled, whilst the only fortress of the capital was attacked. Louis saw their weakness and incapacity; and, abandoning their counsels, hurried to the national assembly, intending to make peace with it, to proclaim his amity and sincere cordiality with it, and to crave its support and interference to restore order to the capital. At the same time he announced that orders were given that the troops should retire from the capital. Seeing the popular party thus victorious, the count of Artois, the Polignacs, and other inveterate courtiers, as we have seen, took their departure from France — as precipitate to fly as they had been tardy to act.

The national assembly, thus master of the sovereign through the influence of the Parisian mob, sent a deputation to thank the capital, and to organise anew its authorities, those of the monarchy having lost all influence. Bailly, formerly president, a man of letters and probity, headed this deputation, which was received with enthusiasm. Bailly himself was chosen to preside over the municipality, as mayor of Paris, in the place of the unfortunate Flesselles. A commander of the national guard was imperatively necessary. La Fayette, whose bust was in the Hôtel-de-Ville, recalling his campaigns in the cause of American liberty, was voted to this post. Lally-Tollendal, who was of the deputation, fascinated the mob by his eloquence, and, fortunately for him, was recompensed merely by their applauses. The Parisians were told that Louis was now cordially united with the national assembly. "He has hitherto been deceived," said La Fayette and Lally; "but he now sees the merit and the justice of the popular cause." The enthusiasm was general on this explication being made. Tears of joy were shed and there was universal rejoicing. The Revolution seemed already to have closed its list of horrors and of change.

Bailly, the new mayor, entertained this opinion; but he was soon undeceived. The suspicions of the populace returned. In a few hours they recommenced clamouring and crowding, and demanded the presence of the king in his capital, to reassure them, and repeat from his own mouth his intentions. Murmurs arose among the populace of the necessity of marching to Versailles, and bringing back the monarch. A deputation from the city was ordered to demand it. Louis anticipated their coming and request, by stating his readiness to visit Paris.

He accordingly proceeded thither on the 17th of July. Arrived at the gates of Paris, he was welcomed by the new mayor, who with a pedantic love of antithesis little worthy of Bailly, spoke the following poignant truth: "I present to your majesty the keys of the good city of Paris — the same which were presented to Henry IV. He reconquered his people. Here the people have reconquered their king." The procession, like funeral ones, had the appearance of a fête. The new militia was under arms. The tricolour cockade was in every hat. Blue and red were of old the colours of the city of Paris. White was now added, out of affection to the Bourbon king. The cockade being presented to the king by Bailly, at the Hôtel-de-Ville, he assumed it cheerfully, and bade the mayor state for him to the municipality that he approved of their acts. This royal adhesion to the Revolution being given, Louis returned to Versailles, rejoiced in heart that he had again escaped from his capital. The queen flung herself into his arms on beholding him: she had been prepared for worse.<sup>b</sup>



## THE END OF "PRIVILEGE" (AUGUST 4TH, 1789)

The celebrated night session of the 4th of August has from the beginning been very diversely criticised. At times it has been called the St. Bartholomew's night of property, and at others the greatest moment of modern history. Neither of these judgments is quite suitable. The first is in bad taste; the resolutions of the 4th of August did not call forth war against the property of the old aristocracy, but rather checked it and dammed the stream instead of accelerating its descent. The last, to say the least of it, is exaggerated, for the assembly only did what it could not leave undone, and only gave a legitimate form to what had been the position for weeks. All the burdens which had been justly alleviated disappeared, and the resolutions which were passed rather calmed than stirred up the billows.

On the morning of the 4th of August, the question concerning human rights was "ayed" with almost unanimity of opinion; on the evening of the same day the duke de Noailles stepped into the tribune and put forward the proposal that, before the dissuasive proclamation was made to the revolutionary people, another should be sent out which partly granted their demands and partly promised to redress their just grievances. To start the payment of taxes, it must be declared that the taxes like all public burdens must be equally shared by all, that all feudal rights should be redeemed according to certain just estimates, but that socage, mortmain, and other vassalage should cease without compensation.

This speech was listened to in solemn silence, and was followed by a somewhat excited movement, especially amongst the Breton Club, out of whose midst the duke d'Aiguillon rushed on to the tribune. According to agreement he made a supplementary proposal that for the establishment of equal taxes not only individuals, such as Noailles suggested, but also all corporations, towns, municipalities which up till now had enjoyed exemption from taxes or any other privilege, be it in the assessment or raising of taxes, in future should be subject to taxation without distinction. Thus seigniorial rights, "as a burdensome tax injurious to agriculture and tending to depopulate the land," would be commuted at an estimated cost, which the national assembly would fix in every province, according to the proposals made to them by the debtor.

Thus the noble himself took the lead in renouncing rights which could no longer be held. Two of the greatest and most illustrious families, the Noailles and Aiguillons, sacrificed their privileges; French vanity played a part, but there was also something of old French chivalry in it. The official report states that "this example was received with inexpressible joy," but the excitement began when a deputy from Brittany took the word and demanded the acknowledgment of human rights for the afflicted peasantry. He declared that the national assembly might have prevented the burning of castles if in time they had redeemed the contents of the "infamous parchment" of the feudal lords; he reminded them of the great wrong done to humanity in allowing the lords to harness their peasants to carts like domestic animals and to compel them to beat the swamps at night, so that the frogs should not disturb the sleep of their voluptuous masters. "A universal cry proclaims, you have not a minute to lose; a day's delay brings forth fresh arson. Do you wish to give your law to a devastated France?" The greatest enthusiasm arose, and soon exceeded all bounds. One proposal followed another and the excitement increased with every speech.

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The bishop of Nancy showed the example to the clergy, by sacrificing his feudal rights, and scarcely had the bishop of Chartres demanded the repeal of the same laws, when the whole nobility rose up to give their assent, and there was such a storm of applause and rejoicings that the proceedings had to be stopped. Then the play began again. When the nobility and clergy had nothing more to give, the provinces, towns, and corporations came and gave up their privileges. Many regretted that they could not give more, and those who had nothing to offer looked on dumbfounded and astonished to think that the agitation of one night had removed the difficulties which for fifteen years had caused so much bitter hatred, and prevented a regulation of affairs, the improvement of which the most circumspect statesmen had so long and in vain endeavoured to bring about.

The essential results of this remarkable session<sup>1</sup> were: The abolition of vassalage, the redemption of feudal rights, the abrogation of the jurisdiction of the lords of the manor, the repeal of their exclusive rights, such as pigeon-rearing and rabbit-breeding, etc., the abolition of the payment of tithes, equality of taxes, general admission to all offices in the state and army, suppression of the sale of offices, the removal of all town and provincial privileges, of ecclesiastical annates, the reorganisation of guilds, and the withdrawal of all pensions granted without legal titles.<sup>2</sup>

#### THE NEW CONSTITUTION

In a single hour of excitement, the proudest aristocracy and the most unbending church had levelled themselves with the peasant, and sacrificed those rights, rather than yield the smallest part of which they had, during the last ten years, persisted in risking, and at length precipitating monarchy and state. The privileged orders, which had so long weighed upon France, were swept away. The middle ranks succeeded to their place, and in a great measure to the difficulties and the envy of that place. What has been called the bourgeois class, in which now blended the professions and smaller agriculturists, had been completely victorious in that important struggle with the court and aristocracy. But already the working class, the artisan, the needy, began to feel the weight of that above it, and to look even upon simple citizens as aristocrats. The municipality was already clamoured against and bullied by the mob, which only wanted writers, orators, and demagogues to lead it on in the path of power. These did not yet exist. The dragon's teeth were sown indeed, but the crop of mutual slaughterers had not reached maturity. The shadow of royalty and of a court also existed, and attracted towards it a considerable share of popular attention and animosity. This averted for a time the struggle that was still inevitable betwixt the middle ranks of society and the lower.

An interval of two months now passed over without any flagrant scene

[<sup>1</sup> Haas *f* calls this act one of "hitherto unparalleled disinterestedness." Jervis *g* says: "The decree passed by the assembly on this occasion was an act of revolution more profound and sweeping than even the destruction of the Bastille. It entirely changed the face of society, and ended in extremes which were by no means contemplated when it was first proposed." Schlosser <sup>2</sup> complains of the "senseless precipitancy" of the deed and thus divides the Revolution into acts: "The changes effected by these resolutions of the night between the 4th and 5th have with great justice been designated as the fourth act of the Revolution, which suddenly broke out in 1789. The first was on the 5th of May, when the third estate summoned the members of the other two to appear in their chamber; the second was the act of holding the assembly on the 20th in the tennis court, in contempt of the royal authority; the third, the storming of the Bastille on the 14th, and the institution of the national guard, together with the municipality of Paris."]

of popular violence. The assembly employed the time in fixing the basis of the new constitution; the municipality was busied in procuring bread for the Parisians; and Necker, who had returned to assume the ministry, tried in anguish all expedients to raise funds, at a time when neither tax could be levied nor loan raised. Although the latter was the more pressing, the constitution was the more important question. Mounier, Lally, Necker, proposed the English model; a scheme that

was neither supported by the small body of noblesse, nor tolerated by the great majority. The existence of but one chamber was voted by an overwhelming majority. It was the question of the royal veto that excited difference. Should it exist at all—should it be absolute or suspensive? Sieyès would not allow of the word: he called it a "*lettre de cachet* against the will of the nation." The country joined in the discussion. The provincial towns sent addresses against the veto. The mob of the Palais Royal prepared a formidable deputation. La Fayette and Bailly stopped it at the gates of Paris. They had, for the time, recovered mastery of the popular mind. The king was advised by Necker to interfere, and state to the assembly his acceptance of the suspensive rather than the absolute veto. The former was accordingly decreed. Thus a single representative chamber, and a sovereign possessed merely of the power of deferring a law by his dissent, formed the outlines of the new constitution.



MARQUIS DE LA FAYETTE  
(1757-1834)

As yet the lower orders had no exclusive party, and scarcely an avowed partisan in the assembly, though Robespierre and other future demagogues sat silent and unnoticed on its benches. But their voices may be discerned in the cry for a national bankruptcy, that was raised on Necker's making a statement of financial distress. Mirabeau, however, whose want or disregard of principle was often supplied by the instinct of genius, started up in behalf of the middle ranks. With ironical force he proposed to take two thousand of the wealthiest citizens and fling them into the gulf of the public debt—to immolate them in order to fill it up. Such was his hardy metaphor. The assembly recoiled. "Aye," continued he, "and what is bankruptcy but this? The other day when mention was made of an imaginary insurrection of the Palais Royal, we heard amongst us the exclamation, 'Catiline is at the gates of Rome and the senate does naught but deliberate.' Certes there were round us then nor Catiline, nor perils, nor factions, nor Rome. But bankruptcy, hideous bankruptcy, is at our gates and in the midst of us, menacing our lives, our properties, and honour—and yet we deliberate!" Struck by this apostrophe, the assembly voted by acclamation to uphold the national credit, and assent to the financial scheme of Necker.



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## PUBLIC DISCOMFORT AND DISCONTENT

There were plans, however, at the moment in agitation, of more serious importance than either bankruptcy or credit. Both the court and the popular party had drawn breath; the one had recovered from its terrors, the latter had resumed its suspicion and impatience. Both conspired, the aristocracy as well as the rabble; whilst the middle ranks and the assembly were doomed to wait, and to submit to whichever should prove conqueror. Bailly and La Fayette in vain exerted themselves to keep the capital quiet. Famine prevailed (there having been a scant crop in some provinces about Paris). The people, always confined to one idea, and seeking in it a remedy for every woe, resumed the cry, "To Versailles! let us go to seek bread and the king at Versailles!"

The court, recurring to its warlike ideas, brought the regiment of Flanders to Versailles. The orangery, the gardens, were again occupied with troopers and bodyguards. The municipality of Paris was alarmed. La Fayette himself spoke openly of the plot against liberty. The mob caught the suspicion. On the 2nd of October a banquet was given by the bodyguards to the officers of the newly arrived regiment; those of the national guard of Versailles were also invited. It took place in the palace-theatre. Wine circulated; enthusiasm was excited. The soldiers of the regiments were admitted into the building; cups being handed to them, they drank to the health of the queen, and of the king. With drawn swords the banqueters pledged them. The queen, hearing of the fête, presented herself with the dauphin. A fresh effusion of loyalty ensued. Swords again flashed, with vows to support the royal cause, whilst the military band played the air of *Cœur de Lion*, "*O Richard, O mon roi, l'univers t'abandonne!*"<sup>1</sup> Accounts of the fête soon came to exasperate the Parisians, and to offer the agitators a pretext to excite tumult.<sup>b</sup>

## CARLYLE'S ACCOUNT OF THE WOMEN'S INSURRECTION (OCTOBER, 1789)

Fancy what effect this Thyestes Repast, and trampling on the National Cockade, must have had in the famishing Bakers'-queues at Paris! Here with us is famine; but yonder at Versailles is food, enough and to spare! Patriotism stands in queue, shivering hungerstruck, insulted by Patrollotism; while bloodyminded Aristocrats, heated with excess of high living, trample on the National Cockade. Are we to have military onfall; and death also by starvation?

At the Café de Foy, this Saturday evening, a new thing is seen, not the last of its kind: a woman engaged in public speaking. Her poor man, she says, was put to silence by his District: their Presidents and Officials would not let him speak. Wherefore she here with her shrill tongue will speak.

Insurrection, which, La Fayette thought, might be "the most sacred of duties," ranks now, for the French people, among the duties which they can perform. Other mobs are dull masses; which roll onwards with a dull fierce tenacity, a dull fierce heat, but emit no light-flashes of genius as they go. The French mob, again, is among the liveliest phenomena of our world. So rapid, audacious; so clear-sighted, inventive, prompt to seize the moment;

[<sup>1</sup> "Wines flowed, heads were lost, ladies distributed white cockades, and the tricolour was said to have been trampled underfoot. Meanwhile Paris died of hunger."—DURUY.<sup>2</sup> The air "*O Richard, O mon roi*," became the royalist hymn, as later the Marseillaise became the popular war-cry.]

instinct with life to its finger-ends ! That talent, were there no other, of spontaneously standing in queue, distinguishes, as we said, the French People from all Peoples, ancient and modern.

Let the Reader confess too that, taking one thing with another, perhaps few terrestrial Appearances are better worth considering than mobs. Your mob is a genuine outburst of Nature ; issuing from, or communicating with, the deepest deep of Nature. Here once more, if nowhere else, is a Sincerity and Reality. Shudder at it ; or even shriek over it, if thou must ; nevertheless consider it. Such a Complex of human Forces and Individualities hurled forth, in their transcendental mood, to act and react, on circumstances and on one another ; to work out what it is in them to work. The thing they will do is known to no man ; least of all to themselves. It is the inflammablest immeasurable Fire-work, generating, consuming itself. Battles ever since Homer's time, when they were Fighting Mobs, have mostly ceased to be worth looking at, worth reading of or remembering. How many wearisome bloody Battles does History strive to represent ; or even, in a husky way, to sing : — and she would omit or carelessly slur-over this one Insurrection of Women ?

A thought, or dim raw-material of a thought, was fermenting all night, universally in the female head, and might explode. In squalid garret, on Monday morning Maternity awakes, to hear children weeping for bread. Maternity must forth to the streets, to the herb-markets and Bakers'-queues ; meets there with hunger-stricken Maternity, sympathetic, exasperative. O we unhappy women ! But, instead of Bakers'-queues, why not to Aristocrats' palaces, the root of the matter ? *Allons !* Let us assemble. To the Hôtel-de-Ville ; to Versailles ; to the Lanterne !

In one of the Guardhouses of the Quartier Saint-Eustache, "a young woman" seizes a drum, — for how shall National Guards give fire on women, on a young woman ? The young woman seizes the drum ; sets forth, beating it, "uttering cries relative to the dearth of grains." Descend, O mothers ; descend, ye Judiths, to food and revenge ! — All women gather and go ; crowds storm all stairs, force out all women : Robust Dames of the Halle, slim Mantua-makers, assiduous, risen with the dawn ; ancient Virginity tripping to matins ; the Housemaid, with early broom ; all must go. Rouse ye, O women ; the laggard men will not act ; they say, we ourselves may act !

And so, like snowbreak from the mountains, for every staircase is a melted brook, it storms ; tumultuous, wild-shrilling, towards the Hôtel-de-Ville. Tumultuous ; with or without drum-music : for the Faubourg St. Antoine also has tucked up its gown ; and with besom-staves, fire-irons, and even rusty pistols (void of ammunition), is flowing on. Sound of it flies, with a velocity of sound, to the utmost Barriers. By seven o'clock, on this raw October morning, fifth of the month, the Townhall will see wonders. Grand it was, says Camille,<sup>i</sup> to see so many Judiths, from eight to ten thousand of them in all, rushing out to search into the root of the matter !

The National Guards form on the outer stairs, with levelled bayonets ; the ten thousand Judiths press up, resistless ; with obtestations, with outspread hands, — merely to speak to the Mayor. The rear forces them ; nay, from male hands in the rear, stones already fly : the National Guard must do one of two things ; sweep the Place de Grève with cannon, or else open to right and left. They open ; the living deluge rushes in. Through all rooms and cabinets, upwards to the topmost belfry : ravenous ; seeking arms, seeking Mayors, seeking justice ; — while, again, the better-dressed speak kindly

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to the Clerks ; point out the misery of these poor women ; also their ailments, some even of an interesting sort.

And now doors fly under hatchets ; the Judiths have broken the Armory ; have seized guns and cannons, three money-bags, paper-heaps ; torches flare : in few minutes, our brave Hôtel-de-Ville, which dates from the Fourth Henry, will, with all that it holds, be in flames ! In flames, truly, — were it not that Usher Maillard, swift of foot, shifty of head, has returned !

Maillard snatches a drum ; descends the Porch-stairs, ran-tan, beating sharp, with loud rolls, his Rogues'-march : To Versailles ! *Allons ; à Versailles !* As men beat on kettle or warmingpan, when angry she-bees, or say, flying desperate wasps, are to be hived ; and the desperate insects hear it, and cluster round it, — simply as round a guidance, where there was none : so now these Menads round shifty Maillard, Riding-Usher of the Châtelet.

The seized cannon are yoked with seized cart-horses : brownlocked Demoiselle Théroigne, with pike and helmet, sits there as gunneress, “with haughty eye and serene fair countenance” ; comparable, think the Deux Amis, to the Maid of Orleans, or even recalling “the idea of Pallas Athene.” Sight of sights : Bacchantes, in these ultimate Formalised Ages !

Remarkable Maillard, if fame were not an accident, and History a distillation of Rumour, how remarkable wert thou ! He hastily nominates or sanctions generalesses, captains of tens and fifties : — and so, in loosest-flowing order, to the rhythm of some “eight drums” (having laid aside his own), with the Bastille Volunteers bringing up his rear, once more takes the road.

Chaillot, which will promptly yield baked loaves, is not plundered ; nor are the Sèvres Potteries broken. The press of women still continues, for it is the cause of all Eve's Daughters, mothers that are, or that ought to be. No carriage-lady, were it with never such hysterics, but must dismount, in the mud roads, in her silk shoes, and walk. In this manner, amid wild October weather, they, a wild unwinged stork-flight, through the astonished country wend their way.

Nevertheless, news, despatches from La Fayette, or vague noise of rumour, have pierced through, by side roads. In the National Assembly, while all is busy discussing the order of the day — Mirabeau steps up to the President, experienced Mounier as it chanced to be ; and articulates, in bass under-tone : “*Mounier, Paris marche sur nous* (Paris is marching on us).” “Paris marching on us ?” responds Mounier, with an atrabilious accent : “Well, so much the better ! We shall the sooner be a Republic.” Mirabeau quits him, as one quits an experienced President getting blindfold into deep waters ; and the order of the day continues as before.

La Fayette is dictating despatches for Versailles, when a Deputation introduces itself to him. “*Mon Général*, we are deputed by the Six Companies of Grenadiers. We do not think you a traitor, but we think the Government betrays you ; it is time that this end. We cannot turn our bayonets against women crying to us for bread. The people are miserable, the source of the mischief is at Versailles : we must go seek the King, and bring him to Paris. We must exterminate (*exterminer*) the *Régiment de Flandre* and the *Gardes-du-Corps*, who have dared to trample on the National Cockade. If the King be too weak to wear his crown, let him lay it down. You will crown his Son, you will name a Council of Regency : and all will go better.” Reproachful astonishment paints itself on the face of La Fayette ; speaks itself from his eloquent chivalrous lips : in vain. “My General, we would shed the last drop of our blood for you ; but the root of the mischief



is at Versailles ; we must go and bring the King to Paris ; all the people wish it, *tout le peuple le veut*."

My General descends to the outer staircase ; and harangues : once more in vain. "To Versailles ! To Versailles !" The great Scipio-Americanus can do nothing ; not so much as escape. "*Morbleu, mon Général*," cry the Grenadiers serrying their ranks as the white charger makes a motion that way, "you will not leave us, you will abide with us !"

On the white charger, La Fayette, in the slowest possible manner, going and coming, and eloquently haranguing among the ranks, rolls onward with his thirty thousand. St. Antoine, with pike and cannon, has preceded him ; a mixed multitude, of all and of no arms, hovers on his flanks and skirts ; the country once more pauses agape : *Paris marche sur nous*.

About this same moment, Maillard has halted his draggled Menads on the last hill-top ; and now Versailles, and the Château of Versailles, and far and wide the inheritance of Royalty opens to the wondering eye. Beautiful all ; softly embosomed ; as if in sadness, in the dim moist weather !

Cunning Maillard's dispositions are obeyed. The draggled Insurrectionists advance up the Avenue, "in three columns," among the four Elm-rows ; "singing *Henri Quatre*," with what melody they can ; and shouting *Vive le Roi*. Versailles, though the Elm-rows are dripping wet, crowds from both sides, with : "*Vivent nos Parisiennes*, Our Paris ones forever !"

The Bodyguards are already drawn up in front of the Palace Grates ; and look down the Avenue de Versailles ; sulky, in wet buckskins. Flanders too is there, repentant of the Opera-Repast. Also Dragoons dismounted are there. Finally Major Lecointre, and what he can gather of the Versailles National Guard.

President Mounier of the National Assembly had his own forebodings. The order of the day is getting forward. Members whisper, uneasily come and go : the order of the day is evidently not the day's want. Till at length, from the outer gates, is heard a rustling and justling, shrill uproar and squabbling, muffled by walls ; which testifies that the hour is come ! Rushing and crushing one hears now ; then enter Usher Maillard, with a Deputation of Fifteen muddy dripping Women,—having, by incredible industry, and aid of all the macers, persuaded the rest to wait out of doors. National Assembly shall now, therefore, look its august task directly in the face : regenerative Constitutionalism has an unregenerate Sansculottism bodily in front of it ; crying, "Bread ! Bread !"

• President Mounier, with a speedy Deputation, among whom we notice the respectable figure of Doctor Guillotin, gets himself forthwith on march. Vice-President shall continue the order of the day ; Usher Maillard shall stay by him to repress the women. It is four o'clock, of the miserablest afternoon, when Mounier steps out.

Innumerable squalid women beleaguer the President and Deputation ; insist on going with him : has not his Majesty himself, looking from the window, sent out to ask, What we wanted ? "Bread, and speech with the King (*Du pain, et parler au Roi*)," that was the answer. Twelve women are clamorously added to the Deputation. Finally the Grates are opened ; the Deputation gets access, with the Twelve women too in it.

But already Pallas Athene (in the shape of Demoiselle Théroigne) is busy with Flanders and the dismounted Dragoons. She, and such women as are fittest, go through the ranks ; speak with an earnest jocosity ; clasp rough troopers to their patriot bosom, crush down spontoons and musketoons with soft arms : can a man, that were worthy of the name of man, attack

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famishing patriot women? Théroigne had only the limited earnings of her profession of unfortunate-female; money she had not, but brown locks, the figure of a Heathen Goddess, and an eloquent tongue and heart.

Behold, however, the Twelve She-deputies return from the Château. Without President Mounier, indeed; but radiant with joy, shouting "Life to the King and his House." Apparently the news are good, Mesdames? News of the best! Five of us were admitted to the internal splendours, to the Royal Presence. His words were of comfort, and that only: there shall be provision sent to Paris, if provision is in the world; grains shall circulate free as air; millers shall grind, or do worse, while their millstones endure; and nothing be left wrong which a Restorer of French Liberty can right.

Good news these; but, to wet Menads, all-too incredible! There seems no proof, then? Words of comfort,—they are words only; which will feed nothing. The miscredited Twelve hasten back to the Château, for an "answer in writing." So sink the shadows of night, blustering, rainy; and all paths grow dark. Strangest Night ever seen in these regions,—perhaps since the Bartholomew Night.

The Assembly melts into deliquium; or, as it is officially called, adjourns. Mounier arrives at last to find his Senate all gone; and in its stead a Senate of Menads! For as Erasmus's Ape mimicked, say with wooden splint, Erasmus shaving, so do these Amazons hold, in mock majesty, some confused parody of National Assembly. They make motions; deliver speeches; pass enactments; productive at least of loud laughter. All galleries and benches are filled; a Strong Dame of the Market is in Mounier's Chair.

Experienced Mounier, in these circumstances, takes a twofold resolution: To reconvoke his Assembly Members by sound of drum; also to procure a supply of food. Swift messengers fly, to all bakers, cooks, pastrycooks, vintners, restorers; drums beat, accompanied with shrill vocal proclamation, through all streets. They come: the Assembly Members come; what is still better, the provisions come. On tray and barrow come these latter; loaves, wine, great store of sausages. All benches are crowded; in the dusky galleries, duskier with unwashed heads, is a strange "coruscation,"—of impromptu bill-hooks. It is exactly five months this day since these same galleries were filled with high-plumed jewelled Beauty, raining bright influences; and now? To such length have we got in regenerating France.

Towards midnight lights flare on the hill; La Fayette's lights! The roll of his drums comes up the Avenue de Versailles. He has halted and harangued so often, on the march; spent nine hours on four leagues of road. There are with him two Paris Municipals; they were chosen from the Three Hundred. He gets admittance through the locked and padlocked Grates, through sentries and ushers, to the Royal Halls.

The King, with Monsieur, with Ministers and Marshals, is waiting to receive him: He "is come," in his highflown chivalrous way, "to offer his head for the safety of his Majesty's." The two Municipals state the wish of Paris: four things, of quite pacific tenor. First, that the honour of guarding his sacred person be conferred on patriot National Guards;—say, the Centre Grenadiers, who as Gardes Françaises were wont to have that privilege. Second, that provisions be got, if possible. Third, that the Prisons, all crowded with political delinquents, may have judges sent them. Fourth, that it would please his Majesty to come and live in Paris. To all which four wishes, except the fourth, his Majesty answers readily, Yes. To the fourth he can answer only, Yes or No; would so gladly answer, Yes and No! There is time for deliberation. Whereupon La Fayette and the two

Municipals, with highflown chivalry, take their leave. A stone is rolled from every heart. The fair Palace Dames publicly declare that this La Fayette, detestable though he be, is their saviour for once.

The National Assembly is harangued, on motion of Mirabeau, discontinues the Penal Code, and dismisses for this night. Menadism, Sansculottism has cowered into guardhouses, barracks of Flanders, to the light of a cheerful fire; failing that, to churches, officehouses, sentry-boxes, wheresoever wretchedness can find a lair. The troublous Day has brawled itself to rest: no lives yet lost but that of one warhorse. Insurrectionary Chaos lies slumbering round the Palace, like Ocean round a Diving-bell,—no crevice yet disclosing itself. Deep sleep has fallen promiscuously on the high and on the low; suspending most things, even wrath and famine. Thus, then, has ended the First Act of the Insurrection of Women. How it will turn on the morrow? The morrow, as always, is with the Fates!

### *The Attack on the Palace*

The dull dawn of a new morning, drizzly and chill, had but broken over Versailles, when it pleased Destiny that a Bodyguard should look out of window, on the right wing of the Château, to see what prospect there was in Heaven and in Earth. Rascality male and female is prowling in view of him. Ill words breed worse: till the worst word come; and then the ill deed. Did the maledicent Bodyguard, getting (as was too inevitable) better malediction than he gave, load his musketoon, and threaten to fire; nay actually fire? Were wise who wist! It stands asserted; to us not credibly. But be this as it may, menaced Rascality, in whinnying scorn, is shaking at all Grates: the fastening of one (some write, it was a chain merely) gives way; Rascality is in the Grand Court, whinnying louder still.

The maledicent Bodyguard, more Bodyguards than he do now give fire; a man's arm is shattered. Lecointre will depose that "the Sieur Cardine, a National Guard without arms, was stabbed." But see, sure enough, poor Jérôme l'Héritier, an unarmed National Guard he too, "cabinet-maker, a saddler's son, of Paris," with the down of youthhood still on his chin,—he reels death-stricken; rushes to the pavement, scattering it with his blood and brains!—Allelu! Wilder than Irish wakes rises the howl; of pity, of infinite revenge. In few moments, the Grate of the inner and inmost Court, which they name Court of Marble, this too is forced, or surprised, and bursts open: the Court of Marble too is overflowed: up the Grand Staircase, up all stairs and entrances rushes the living Deluge! Deshuttes and Varigny, the two sentry Bodyguards, are trodden down, are massacred with a hundred pikes. Women snatch their cutlasses, or any weapon, and storm-in Menadic:—other women lift the corpse of shot Jérôme; lay it down on the Marble steps; there shall the livid face and smashed head, dumb forever, speak.

The terrorstruck Bodyguards fly, bolting and barricading. Whitherward? Through hall on hall: wo, now! towards the Queen's Suite of Rooms, in the furthest room of which the Queen is now asleep. Five sentinels rush through that long Suite; they are in the Anteroom knocking loud: "Save the Queen!" Trembling women fall at their feet with tears: are answered: "Yes, we will die; save ye the Queen!"

Trembling Maids of Honour hastily wrap the Queen; not in robes of state. She flies for her life, across the *Œil-de-Bœuf*. She is in the King's Apartment, in the King's arms; she clasps her children amid a faithful few.



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The Imperial-hearted bursts into mother's tears: "O my friends, save me and my children, *O mes amis, sauvez moi et mes enfans!*" The battering of Insurrectionary axes clangs audible across the *Quil-de-Bœuf*. What an hour!

On a sudden the battering has ceased! Wild rushing; the cries grow fainter; there is silence, or the tramp of regular steps; then a friendly knocking: "We are the Centre Grenadiers, old Gardes Françaises: Open to us, Messieurs of the Garde-du-Corps; we have not forgotten how you saved us at Fontenoy!" The door is opened; enter Captain Gondran and the Centre Grenadiers: there are military embracings; there is sudden deliverance from death into life.

Strange Sons of Adam! It was to "exterminate" these Gardes-du-Corps that the Centre Grenadiers left home: and now they have rushed to save them from extermination. The memory of common peril, of old help, melts the rough heart; bosom is clasped to bosom, not in war.

Now too La Fayette, suddenly roused, not from sleep (for his eyes had not yet closed), arrives; with passionate popular eloquence, with prompt military word of command. National Guards, suddenly roused, by sound of trumpet and alarm-drum, are all arriving. The death-melody ceases. The King's Apartments are safe.

The Bodyguards, you can observe, have now of a verity "hoisted the National Cockade": for they step forward to the windows or balconies, hat aloft in hand, on each hat a huge tricolour; and fling over their bandoleers in sign of surrender; and shout *Vive la Nation*. To which how can the generous heart respond but with, *Vive le Roi; vivent les Gardes-du-Corps?* His Majesty himself has appeared with La Fayette on the balcony, and again appears: *Vive le Roi* greets him from all throats; but also from some one throat is heard, "*Le Roi à Paris, The King to Paris!*"

Her Majesty too, on demand, shows herself, though there is peril in it: she steps out on the balcony, with her little boy and girl. "No children, *Point d'enfans!*" cry the voices. She gently pushes back her children; and stands alone, her hands serenely crossed on her breast: "Should I die," she had said, "I will do it." Such serenity of heroism has its effect. La Fayette, with ready wit, in his highflown chivalrous way, takes that fair queenly hand, and, reverently kneeling, kisses it: thereupon the people do shout *Vive la Reine*. And still "*Vive le Roi*"; and also "*Le Roi à Paris,*" not now from one throat, but from all throats as one, for it is the heart's wish of all mortals.

### *The King taken to Paris*

Yes, The King to Paris: what else? Ministers may consult, and National Deputies wag their heads: but there is now no other possibility. You have forced him to go willingly. "At one o'clock!" La Fayette gives audible assurance to that purpose; and universal Insurrection, with immeasurable shout, and a discharge of all the fire-arms, clear and rusty, that it has, returns him acceptance. What a sound; heard for leagues: a doom-peal!—That sound too rolls away; into the Silence of Ages.

And thus has Sansculottism made prisoner its King; revoking his parole. The Monarchy has fallen; and not so much as honourably: no, ignominiously; with struggle, indeed, oft-repeated; but then with unwise struggle; wasting its strength in fits and paroxysms; at every new paroxysm foiled more pitifully than before. Were Louis wise, he would this day abdicate. Is it not strange so few Kings abdicate; and none yet heard of has been

known to commit suicide? Fritz the First, of Prussia, alone tried it; and they cut the rope.

As for the National Assembly, which decrees this morning that it "is inseparable from his Majesty," and will follow him to Paris, there may one thing be noted: its extreme want of bodily health. After the Fourteenth of July there was a certain sickliness observable among honourable Members; so many demanding passports, on account of infirm health. But now, for these following days, there is a perfect murrain: President Mounier, Lally-Tollendal, Clermont-Tonnerre, and all Constitutional Two-Chamber Royalists needing change of air; as most No-Chamber Royalists had formerly done. For, in truth, it is the second Emigration this that has now come; most extensive among Commons Deputies, Noblesse, Clergy: so that "to Switzerland alone there go sixty thousand." They will return in the day of accounts! Yes, and have hot welcome. — But Emigration on Emigration is the peculiarity of France. One Emigration follows another; grounded on reasonable fear, unreasonable hope, largely also on childish pet. The high flyers have gone first, now the lower flyers; and ever the lower will go, down to the crawlers.

But here, meanwhile, the question arises: Was Philippe d'Orléans seen, this day, "in the Bois de Boulogne, in grey surtout"; waiting under the wet sere foliage, what the day might bring forth? Alas, yes, the Eidolon of him was, — in Weber's<sup>1</sup> and other such brains. The Châtelet shall make large inquisition into the matter, examining a hundred and seventy witnesses, and Deputy Chabroud publish his Report; but disclose nothing further.

Now, however, the short hour has struck. His Majesty is in his carriage, with his Queen, sister Elizabeth, and two royal children. Not for another hour can the infinite Procession get marshalled and under way. The weather is dim drizzling; the mind confused; the noise great. Processional marches not a few our world has seen; Roman triumphs and ovations, Cabiric cymbal-beatings, Royal progresses, Irish funerals; but this of the French Monarchy marching to its bed remained to be seen. Miles long, and of breadth losing itself in vagueness, for all the neighbouring country crowds to see. Slow; stagnating along, like shoreless Lake, yet with a noise like Niagara, like Babel and Bedlam. A splashing and a tramping; a hurraing, uproaring, musket-volleying; — the truest segment of Chaos seen in these latter Ages! Till slowly it disembody itself, in the thickening dusk, into expectant Paris, through a double row of faces all the way from Passy to the Hôtel-de-Ville. Consider this: Vanguard of National troops; with trains of artillery; of pikemen and pikewomen, mounted on cannons, on carts, hackney-coaches, or on foot; — tripudiating, in tricolour ribbons from head to heel; so leaves stuck on the points of bayonets, green boughs stuck in gun-barrels. Next, as main-march, "fifty cart-loads of corn," which have been lent, for peace, from the stores of Versailles. Behind which follow stragglers of the Garde-du-Corps; all humiliated, in Grenadier bonnets. Close on these comes the Royal Carriage; come Royal Carriages: for there are a Hundred National Deputies too, among whom sits Mirabeau, — his remarks not given. Then finally, pellmell, as rearguard, Flanders, Swiss, Hundred Swiss, other Bodyguards, Brigands, whosoever cannot get before. Between and among all which masses, flows without limit St. Antoine, and the Menadic Cohort. Menadic especially about the Royal Carriage; tripudiating there, covered with tricolour; singing "allusive songs; pointing with one hand to the Royal Carriage, which the allusions hit, and pointing to the Provision wagons with the other hand, and according to Toulangeon!

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these words: "Courage, Friends! We shall not want bread now; we are bringing you the Baker, the Bakeress and Baker's Boy (*le Boulanger, la Boulangère et le petit Mitron*)."

Mercier,<sup>k</sup> in his loose way, estimates the Procession and assistants at two hundred thousand. He says it was one boundless inarticulate Haha; — transcendent World-Laughter; comparable to the Saturnalia of the Ancients. Why not? Here too, as we said, is Human Nature once more human; shudder at it whose is of shuddering humour: yet behold it is human. It has "swallowed all formulas."

Thus, however, has the slow-moving Chaos, or modern Saturnalia of the Ancients, reached the Barrier; and must halt, to be harangued by Mayor Bailly. Thereafter it has to lumber along, between the double row of faces, in the transcendent heaven-lashing Haha; two hours longer, towards the Hôtel-de-Ville. Then again to be harangued there, by several persons; by Moreau de Saint-Méry among others; Moreau of the Three-thousand orders, now National Deputy for Santo Domingo. To all which poor Louis, "who seemed to experience a slight emotion" on entering this Town-hall, can answer only that he "comes with pleasure, with confidence among his people." Mayor Bailly, in reporting it, forgets "confidence": and the poor Queen says eagerly: "Add, with confidence." — "Messieurs," rejoins Mayor Bailly, "you are happier than if I had not forgotten."

Finally, the King is shewn on an upper balcony, by torchlight, with a huge tricolour in his hat: "and all the people," says Weber,<sup>l</sup> "grasped one another's hands"; — thinking now surely the New Era was born. Hardly till eleven at night can Royalty get to its vacant, long-deserted Palace of the Tuileries; to lodge there, somewhat in strolling-player fashion. It is Tuesday the sixth of October, 1789.

Poor Louis has two other Paris Processions to make: one ludicrous-ignominious like this; the other not ludicrous nor ignominious, but serious, nay sublime.<sup>m</sup>

#### THE PROPERTY OF THE CLERGY ABSORBED

Twenty months now elapsed of comparative tranquillity. There is no striking event; much intrigue, indeed, fiery debating, the training, dividing, and forming of parties. The revolutionary monster slumbered, stirring at times, and showing life by starts, but not awakening fully. La Fayette possessed most power out of the assembly; and he exercised it with a firmness, a disinterestedness, and courage that did him immortal honour. His first act was to drive the duke of Orleans to exile. It is not well known whether his departure was procured by menace or inducement. His absence had certainly the effect of allowing agitation to subside.<sup>b</sup>

On October 10th, the assembly renewed the discussion concerning the goods of the clergy. The abolition of tithes had concluded the first part of this discussion. It remained to come to some decision regarding the livings. Besides the tithes, producing about 120,000,000 livres, the clergy had immense landed properties,<sup>1</sup> bringing in about 80,000,000 of revenue. They possessed in the largest part of France one-third of the land, half in certain counties, and a good deal more than half in others. Before the abolition of tithes, this gave the clergy 200,000,000 in revenue, without counting 30,000,000

[<sup>1</sup> Said to amount to one-fifth of all real property. The average salary of a curé, in 1784, was 720 francs; of the lowest of higher clergy, about 4,000 livres. The pay of the lower clergy aggregated 50,000,000 livres, that of the higher clergy 250,000,000. The lower clergy numbered 60,000; the higher, 11,000. There were 23,000 monks and 37,000 nuns.]



that the nation paid for expenses of worship, keeping up the buildings, and fees to the clergy—in all, 230,000,000, which would amount nowadays to 600,000,000. Of these 230,000,000, only 45,000,000 went to parish priests, the rest went to higher dignitaries and the monks.

It was a noble who proposed that church goods should belong to the nation, it was a bishop who took up the motion—the bishop of Autun, Talleyrand de Périgord, a young prelate of good family, very witty, a Vol-

tairian of rather loose morals, and one who joined the revolutionists merely through ambition and a desire to join in anything new. His political rôle, like that of La Fayette, was not to finish for more than forty years after '89, but this was the only connection there existed between the two rôles. The high morality of La Fayette never changed. With Talleyrand it was quite the contrary. He began by serving the Revolution well. He presented the assembly with a plan by which the nation could put its hand on the whole of the church property and gain a revenue of one hundred millions. These properties could be sold to pay up a great many judicial salaries owing and to make up deficits.

Mirabeau and the other deputies, though accepting the principles, modified the proposition

of Talleyrand. The greater part of the bishops made determined resistance.

On Mirabeau's proposition, the assembly declared November 2nd, by a majority of 568 against 346, that all church goods should be at the national disposal, but that the nation was to provide for expenses of public worship, salaries for ministers, and the relief of the poor.<sup>1</sup> So ended the Clergy Act. The clergy were no longer an order in the state, they were only a class of citizens charged with looking after public worship.

The assembly ordered a visitation and opening of monastic prisons, those clerical bastilles where so many secret cruelties were practised, and where

[<sup>1</sup> The state was authorised to sell church property to the amount of 400,000,000 livres. The purchasers were the lower middle classes in the country, who thus became attached to the Revolution.]



TALLEYRAND

[1789-1790 A.D.]

victims of both sexes, monks and nuns, condemned by un pitying superiors, were imprisoned in frightful underground vaults. These vaults were called in derision the *In pace*, and *Allez en pair*. Cruelty had become more rare. There was in the eighteenth century, in the convents as everywhere else, a relaxation rather than strictness of manners. But what had not stopped was parental compulsion of daughters to become nuns against their will.

The assembly gave a temporary edict against taking monastic vows; then, some time after, it attacked the question of the religious orders, a question which was closely related to that of clerical goods. The organisation of monastic orders was attacked as incompatible with the rights of man and with all the principles that the Revolution wished to establish. "These are," said Barnave, "societies contrary to society." "In a moment of passing fervour," said Deputy Garat, "a young man vows to know thenceforth neither father or mother, never to be husband or citizen; he submits his will to the will of another, his soul to the soul of another, he renounces all liberty at an age when he could not dispose of any property; his oath is a civil suicide. Man has no more right to attempt his civil than his natural life."

The assembly deemed that the religious orders, which had formerly rendered service to the state in agriculture, in education, and in science, had become for the most part both useless and harmful. After two days of stormy discussion it was decreed, February 13th, 1790, that the law no longer recognised monastic vows, that the orders and congregations of both sexes should be suppressed in France.

The assembly, in striking at institutions, took every care of individuals, and showed neither violence nor harshness. It also made a considerable exception to its decree. It did not touch, provisionally, orders or congregations charged with public education or the care of the sick. Those powerful monastic institutions, which had played so considerable a rôle in France and Europe since the commencement of the Middle Ages, were not utterly to disappear. Uprooted in the eighteenth century, they took root again in the nineteenth. The struggle between the modern spirit and that of the past was not ended by a single victory.

#### THE ISSUE OF ASSIGNATS, SALE OF NATIONAL PROPERTIES, ETC.

Before the return of Necker to manage affairs, the government, which had already 70,000,000 livres in bank, authorised the bankers to pay their bills in letters of exchange instead of money, and enforced their circulation. The bankers, with Necker as their centre, sustained for a little while the credit of the bank. But when Necker had drawn ninety fresh millions, the credit declined; merchants began to refuse the bills; capitalists in their turn ceased to back Necker. The two loans that he had attempted in the autumn of 1789 fell through, perhaps more from the assembly's fault than his, they having reduced the advantages offered by Necker to the lenders. Bills of exchange, already looked on as a resource, were the next resource. A new advance of 80,000,000 was asked, making in all 240,000,000 to add to the 878,000,000 of a floating debt.

What could be done to avoid bankruptcy and settle this enormous debt? There was only one way—national property; that is to say, the crown domains and church holdings. The assembly decided to sell (1) the lands and buildings belonging to the crown, which were not very considerable, leaving the king the royal castles and the forests; (2) a part of the church property, the whole to produce 400,000,000. As this sale could not be immediately effected,

the assembly decided to create negotiable orders for a similar amount of 400,000,000 assigned on the goods about to be sold. These orders were called assignats, a name soon to become sadly famous.<sup>o</sup>

It was at this memorable epoch that the great reformation in the assembly began. The division of France into provinces was done away with; departments were created, private privileges abolished, and administration given by one regular and uniform way. That was one of the greatest glories of the constitution. In better times, the creation of departments became for France a fruitful and inexhaustible source of progress. The centralisation of power was consummated and already one could foresee the basis of a unique and strong government. Great changes were also introduced in the superintendence of dioceses. The assembly forbade the bishops to have any communication with the pope. Henceforth they would be elected by the people. All priests had to take an oath of fidelity to the new constitution. The greater part preferred exile or death. Their ecclesiastical dignities were taken from them and given to priests who had taken the oath.<sup>f</sup>

The assembly abolished parliaments, and remodelled the judicature. [Among other things, they separated administrative and judicial powers, and introduced the jury trial in criminal courts.] Tithes and feudal services had been previously done away with. Titles of honour were now abolished, Matthew de Montmorency being foremost to make the sacrifice.

This career of legislation was, one should think, sufficiently democratic. It fully satisfied the middle classes, La Fayette, and those who rallied round him, as well as the majority of the assembly. Within its precincts the demagogues, who aspired to form and head a popular party, with difficulty found an opportunity to develop their sentiments or forward their plans. They succeeded, however, in becoming masters of a club, first established by the moderate friends of liberty. This, on the removal of the king and assembly to Paris, had installed itself in the convent of the Jacobins. Here, as violence gained ground, the moderates, such as La Fayette, seceded and formed a separate club. Barnave, a young Protestant barrister, and the Lameths, assumed the lead in the Jacobins at their departure. This trio envied and detested equally Mirabeau and La Fayette, and seemed actuated, more by the ambition of pre-eminence than by any profound conviction or principle, to separate and form a schism. They coquetted with the genuine party of the lower orders rather than embraced it.

Mirabeau was actuated by more independent opinions. Towards the end of 1789 he had begun to rein in the zeal which hitherto had borne him headlong in the path of revolution. His ardour cooled, and he could not but disapprove of that constitution which he had contributed to form. "He thought it too democratic for a monarchy; for a democracy there was a king too much." His sagacity saw the impracticability of the existing system. He consequently leagued secretly with the court to support the crown, and recover for it a portion of strength requisite for its existence. La Fayette, on the contrary, held firm to the constitution now established. It was not in the power of the king to unite in his behalf two such powerful men, who in fact represented the same cause — that of the middle orders.

#### THE CIVIC OATH (JULY 14TH, 1790)

Louis XVI is accused of irresolution by some writers, of insincerity by others. Never was man more deserving of commiseration and excuse. In February, 1790, we find him embarked frankly with the nation, coming down



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spontaneously to the assembly, and giving an uncalled-for adhesion to its acts, that excited universal enthusiasm. In July of the same year he presided over the famous Federation, or union of the Parisians with deputations from the provinces, to swear to the constitution on the altar of the country. Talleyrand was the officiating bishop in this ceremony, so minutely detailed and honoured by French historians, though in itself a pomp of little importance, a fête at once to celebrate the anniversary of the destruction of the Bastille, and to honour the birth of a constitution destined to be ephemeral.

The ceremony, so racial in its expression, is thus described by the marquis de Ferrières, who was an eye-witness :

"More than 300,000 men and women of Paris and the suburbs had been assembled since six o'clock in the morning on the Champ-de-Mars, and, seated on steps of turf which formed an immense circus, wet, muddy, armed with parasols against the torrents of rain which deluged them, wiping their faces at the least ray of sunshine, rearranging their head-dress, waited, laughing and talking. A large amphitheatre had been erected for the king, the royal family, the ambassadors, and the deputies. The federates who arrived first began to dance farandoles ; those who followed joined them, and formed a circle which soon enclosed part of the Champ-de-Mars. It was a sight worthy of a philosophic spectator, this crowd of men who had come from the most distant parts of France, carried away by the impulse of the national character, banishing every memory of the past, every thought of the present, every fear of the future, abandoning themselves to delightful unconcern, and 300,000 spectators of all ages and of both sexes watching their movements, beating time with their hands, forgetting the rain, their hunger, and the weariness of the long waiting. At last, when the entire procession had entered the Champ-de-Mars, the dance ceased, and each federate joined his banner.

"The bishop of Autun [Talleyrand] prepared to celebrate mass on an altar of ancient style, raised in the middle of the Champ-de-Mars. Three hundred priests wearing white surplices, crossed by wide tricolour sashes, took their places at the four corners of the altar. The bishop of Autun blessed the oriflamme and the eighty-three banners ; he chanted the *Te Deum*. Twelve hundred musicians played the hymn. La Fayette, at the head of the staff of the Parisian militia, and of the deputies of the land and naval troops, went up to the altar and swore, in the name of the troops and federates, to be faithful to the nation, to the law, and to the king. The discharge of forty guns announced this solemn oath. The twelve hundred musicians made the air re-echo with military songs, the flags and banners waved ; drawn swords glittered. The president of the national assembly repeated the same oath. The people and deputies answered by cries of, 'I swear it !'

"Then the king rose, and pronounced in a loud voice : 'I, king of the French, swear to use the power which the constitutional decree of the state has intrusted to me, to maintain the constitution which has been enacted by the national assembly and accepted by me.' The queen took the dauphin in her arms, held him up to the people, and said : 'This is my son ; he joins with me in those sentiments.' This unexpected action was greeted by repeated cries of : 'Long live the king. Long live the queen. Long live M. le dauphin.' The solemn sound of the guns still mingled with the warlike sounds of military instruments, and with the shouts of the people ; the weather had cleared, the sun shone out in all his glory ; it seemed as if the Eternal himself wished to witness this mutual engagement, and ratify it by

his presence. Yes, he saw it, he heard it; and the fearful evils which, since that day, have not ceased to afflict France, O ever active and ever faithful Providence, are the just punishment of perjury. Thou hast smitten both the monarch and his subjects, because monarch and subjects broke their oath!" *p*

#### THE REVOLT OF THE TROOPS (AUGUST, 1790)

The assembly had decreed on the 28th of February, and the 19th and 31st of July, 1790, some important things with regard to the army — that the purchase of military commissions should be abolished; that the soldiers' pay should be increased; the maximum number for the standing army in time of peace was to be 156,000 men.

The greatest danger was the absence of a good understanding between the officers and men. The former, except in the artillery and engineers were aristocrats. The soldiers and non-commissioned officers were for the Revolution. Besides political opposition there were interested quarrels. Each regiment had its bank, formed of the stoppages kept back out of each man's poor pay. Officers were charged with the bank administration; but they did it badly and returned no banking sheets. Constant waste and negligence prevailed. Under the Old Régime, the soldier had been obliged to put up with everything; now he rose up, claimed his rights, demanded an account. The officers were not at all pleased, and secretly incited men of their own rank, who were expert swordsmen, to provoke the chief complainants and those who were founding patriotic societies in the army to duels. Finally they drove out of the regiments the most patriotic by giving them the *cartouches jaunes* — a sort of brand of infamy. All this brought about new troubles in the garrisons of the eastern provinces. At Nancy the king's regiment (King's Own), a corps *d'élite*, who had almost the same privileges as the old *gardes françaises*, rose to hinder the arrest of a soldier who had disobeyed orders. The commander was obliged to yield. A riot of the same kind, with regard to the bank of a regiment, took place at Metz, under the very eyes of General Bouillé.

All discipline was over. The despatches sent by the commander at Nancy to Paris exaggerated the gravity of the situation. La Fayette was alarmed by the disorganisation of the army and only thought of establishing order at any price. The sedition spread to other regiments, founded on a rumour that General Bouillé, who was at Metz, and Malseigne had come to an understanding with the Austrians to make a counter revolution. The soldiers had arrested and imprisoned at Nancy the commander of that place. Now it had come to open rebellion. The duty of repressing this was given to the marquis de Bouillé, commander-general of the northern and eastern frontiers. He took with him the most dependable of the German and Swiss troops and marched on Nancy with 3,000 foot and 1,400 horse.

Bouillé marched his troops on the Stainville gate. Its defenders, who had a cannon, wanted to fire. A young officer of the King's Own, Désilles, threw himself at the cannon's mouth to prevent at any cost the battle signal being given. They pushed him away, but he heroically persisted under shot and bayonet and was dragged away only when riddled with bullets. The cannon was fired, but Bouillé's soldiers dashed on and forced the gate. Its defender took refuge in the houses, from whence they kept up a deadly fire, and a fierce fight raged in the centre of the town. The two French regiments hesitated. They took no part, and the Swiss of the Châteaueux regiment and the people

[1790 A.D.]

of Nancy who fought with them were finally crushed. There were several hundred killed on one side and the other (August 31st, 1790).

That which followed outdid this carnage. The officers of the Châteaueux regiment, who, according to the capitulation of the Swiss cantons with France, were entitled to judge their own men, hanged twenty-one of them, made the twenty-second undergo the horrible torture of the wheel, and condemned sixty-four to the galleys. The last of those condemned to death, when stretched on the wheel, cried: "Bouillé is a traitor, I die innocent! *Vive la nation!*"

The national assembly passed a vote of thanks to Bouillé, "for having restored order," which later on they regretted. A funeral *fête* was celebrated in the Champ-de-Mars in memory of the national guards and Bouillé's soldiers who were killed in the attack on Nancy. A funeral *fête* indeed! There was a wide gulf between it and that other *fête* which the Champ-de-Mars had seen some weeks before. The Revolution was now divided against itself. Among the mass of the people there was deep rage and sorrow. Another misfortune was the diminishing popularity of La Fayette, which rapidly declined after Federation Day. La Fayette had not changed and never did change; but he deceived himself and was deceived, becoming thenceforward more and more an object of suspicion to the active and ardent portions of the revolutionary party.<sup>o</sup>



FRANÇOIS CLAUDE, MARQUIS DE BOUILLÉ  
(1739-1800)

#### LAST DAYS OF MIRABEAU

Many weeks of the summer of 1790 were passed by the royal family at St. Cloud; escape would have been practicable, but was not once contemplated. Hence we may infer that Louis had completely resigned himself to his humbled position, and resolved to look for no other than legislative support.

The emigrant noblesse, collecting first at Turin, afterwards at Coblenz, endeavoured with their wonted imbecility and ill success to stir up rebellion in the provinces, for which the discontent of the clergy, and consequently of the devout, gave them ample facilities. They solicited Louis to sanction their plans and join their meditated armaments. He had already suffered much by their counsels.

But how could he resist the opinions and counsel of Mirabeau, when this leader of the redoubtable assembly owned it as his opinion that royalty, in order to exist, must be raised from its present prostrate condition; that this must be effected by a force foreign to the assembly; and that the only means to bring about this end was that the king should retire to Metz, beyond the



power of the Parisians,<sup>1</sup> and there, at the head of an independent force, treat with the nation, and conclude some more equitable adjustment between the rights of the crown and those of the people?

Such was the plan of Mirabeau, and it gained at once the monarch's approbation. But a fatal event came to retard it, and deprive Louis of what he most wanted—a man of capacity to conduct him. Mirabeau kept his ascendency in the assembly to the last. Barnave and the Lameths in vain endeavoured to shake his supremacy. On the great question, whether the power of deciding on war or peace should rest with the monarch or the nation, Mirabeau took the monarchic side. His enemies saw the opportunity, and attacked him with a virulence and truth that would have overborne any other man. The Jacobins made use of their arm, and the "great treason of Count Mirabeau" was cried through the streets. "I had no need of this example," cried the orator, "to learn that there is but one step from the Capitol to the Tarpeian rock." Mirabeau's eloquence conquered in the assembly, and even partially exculpated him with the multitude.

The 28th of February, 1791, was the day of his most memorable triumph.<sup>2</sup> The émigrés, collected at Coblenz, were menacing France with their own force, and with that of the sovereigns of Europe. It was proposed to stop the tide of emigration, by intrusting the power of granting passports to a committee of three persons. Mirabeau exclaimed against such an inquisition. "As for me," cried he, "I should feel myself absolved from my oath of allegiance to any government, that had the infamy to propose this dictatorial commission. I swear it"—(loud cries interrupted him). "The popularity that I have so ambitioned, and that I have enjoyed like many others, is not a feeble reed. I will fix it deep in the earth. I will make it vegetate and live in the soil of justice and reason."

This bold allusion, more to his purposes than to the question, was received with a blind applause, that maddened the popular leaders. They cried out against Mirabeau as a dictator. "Silence, ye thirty voices!" was his overwhelming rejoinder. His last triumph was his greatest. The orator died, like a general, in his crowning victory. He returned thence to a bed of sickness, from which he never arose. That organic disease of the heart, supposed principally to affect men of strong passions, carried him off.<sup>b</sup>

At the news of Mirabeau's illness not only the people of Paris, the court the revolutionists, but all men of all parties had been seized with profound consternation. Yet Mirabeau supported the attacks of pain with great fortitude, while friends greedily drank in his words. "You are a great doctor," said he to the materialistic Cabanis, "but there is one who is greater—He who made the wind which overthrows all things, the water which penetrates and fertilises all, the fire which purifies all." This was the only homage he rendered to the deity. "Support my head," said he to his valet, "it is the strongest head in France, I wish I could leave it to you."

A noise of artillery just then came to him: "They are celebrating the funeral feast of Achilles." Then, returning to the state of the country, he

[<sup>1</sup> There he might be supported by the department not at the mercy of the Paris mob, or of the convention which the mob controlled. Marie Antoinette's influence was probably bad. She hated Mirabeau and was plotting with the émigrés. The insincerity of the king, and especially that of the queen, largely accounted for the loss of confidence by the people in the royal pair.]

[<sup>2</sup> It was that of La Fayette also, who in the morning attacked and dispersed an insurrectionary force that menaced Vincennes, and in the evening disconcerted a similar kind of movement of the royalists who frequented the Tuilleries. Thus, inside and outside the national assembly, the leaders of the middle class were triumphant over those of the lower orders. The death of Mirabeau and the unsuccessful flight of the king destroyed this superiority.]

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said with effort : " Monarchy is buried with me, the factions can only destroy the relics of it." Another time, he said, " The man who will gain most by my death will be Mr. Pitt, for I do not know anyone else in Europe who can counterbalance his power." " What epitaphs," he said again, " will they place on my tomb ? " Feeling himself growing weaker and weaker, he said to those around him, " Clear away these sad surroundings, replace these useless medicine flasks by flowers. Take care of my hair. Surround me with perfumes. Let me hear the sounds of harmonious music." He drew his last breath on April 2nd, 1791.

The assembly decided to go in a body to the funeral. Never were obsequies celebrated with more pomp. There was general mourning for eight days and at the end came the climax of this fleeting glory. The assembly decreed that the church of St. Geneviève should thenceforth be consecrated to the burial of citizens whom their country wished to honour, and that Mirabeau should be the first to be interred in its vaults. The church was thenceforth known as the Panthéon; on the porch ran this inscription : " To illustrious men, from a grateful country (*Aux grands hommes, la patrie reconnaissante*)."

Later on, a decree of 1793 ordered the statue of Mirabeau to be veiled until his memory could be cleared. Then, one night, two police officers carried off his corpse and buried it in a cemetery only used for the interment of criminals.<sup>f</sup>

## SOREL'S ESTIMATE OF MIRABEAU

Mirabeau surveyed Europe with as firm and penetrating a glance as that with which he looked at the interior of France. He did not content himself with designing a plan, but selected the most suitable man for carrying it out. This was the future negotiator of the Treaty of Vienna, Talleyrand. In the month of October, 1789, he proposes him as the man best fitted to inherit the succession of Vergennes. All his policy tends towards neutrality and the maintenance of the defensive. France has only one sure ally, Spain, who has the same interests and the same enemy — England. " The enmity of England will be eternal. It will grow each year with the products of her industry or, rather, with ours." Mirabeau had all the same conceived an idea of coming to an understanding with England, but renounced it in face of the hostility that she showed. To gain the English, it would have been necessary to renounce the commercial interests of France.

Mirabeau said : " Just so much as the French Revolution rallies the majority of nations round legitimate authority in well-constituted and peaceably organised countries, just so much does she put in peril governments that are purely arbitrary and despotic, or those which have recently experienced great commotions. Thus the example of the French Revolution only produced in England a greater respect for the law, a greater rigidity in discipline and social hierarchy. Burke has said that French politics is practically a great emptiness. Burke said a most foolish thing. The emptiness is that of a volcano, in which one should never forget there are subterranean disturbances and forthcoming eruptions.

" Everyone in France and out of it makes mistakes concerning our nation. It is not to be expected nor hoped that a just idea can be formed in France of our position in Europe, nor in Europe a just idea of our situation. Because we are feverish, we think ourselves strong, because we are ill, foreigners think us dying. We deceive ourselves, and they deceive themselves equally. If France is wise and understands her own welfare, she can form federations that

are worth more than any conquests. Thus by the force alone of a good constitution we shall soon gain the Rhine borders, and, what is more, an invincible influence over all the governments of Europe by the amelioration and the greater prosperity of the human race."

The design was powerfully conceived, but lacked an executor, and the means that Mirabeau proposed were miserable and contradictory. He could not find an impulse for this grand work in intrigue and corruption. He prepared the restoration of monarchy as one plans a sedition. It was a lofty way of founding a royal democracy, of regenerating a dynasty by revolution, of giving to reconstructed power civil liberty and equality guaranteed by political liberty; but it was a strange and scandalous idea to nourish democracy by wounding her at her birth and to guarantee liberty by abusing it. Mirabeau's plan took a formidable and repulsive form that overstepped the limits of humanity. Mirabeau never looked behind him, but always in front. When he seemed to unite in himself by a sort of terrible resurrection Macchiavelli, Father Joseph, and Richelieu, he foreshadowed the consulate of Bonaparte and the ministry of Fouché. But to attain this he would have suppressed ten years of history, and what history—victorious anarchy, regicide, demagogic tyranny, committees of inquisition, the Terror which crushed the brave, the Directory which let corruption reign, the ruin of illusion, the lowering of principle, universal disgust for liberty, an irresistible hunger for peace, order, and authority; that is to say, the effects of the Revolution he wished to control, and which would only be controlled by his own weakening.

Neither the king nor the assembly could, in 1790, penetrate the designs of Mirabeau. The king was too short-sighted, the assembly too chimerical. Both knew too little of politics and had too much goodness to deliver themselves into the hands of this monstrous operator. He frightened them. The king dared not summon him to the ministry, the assembly made a law expressly to keep him out. "An eloquent genius seduces and subdues you," cried Lanjuinais; "what would he not do if he were minister?" "I should be," answered Mirabeau, "that which I have always been, the defender of monarchical power regulated by law, and the apostle of liberty guaranteed by monarchical power."

The fatality of his life so willed it that to his country's misfortune he was to his last days only a mighty tribune, condemned even by his own genius to succeed against his own plans, to excite the people whom he professed to control, to hasten the fall of a monarchy he wished to save, to become suspected both at the court by the favour he possessed in the assembly, and in the assembly by the favour they attributed to him at court. He had conceived a deep-laid plan of corruption of which he was the first dupe and victim.

He wasted the treasures of his magnificent genius in orgies of thought and excess of sordid labour. His fine character was blunted, and although the die had been finely grained the metal was rusted and eaten.

Mirabeau's contemporaries saw only his follies, weaknesses, and vices. His thoughts passed over without penetrating them; his words moved but did not convince them. He led them on when he appealed to their passions; he was powerless to moderate this passion when he appealed to their reason. The truth was, they knew him too intimately, he made himself too cheap, was known in too many little adventures, he had vaunted himself too much, his reputation was too soiled for them to confide in him or to seek in the agitator of yesterday the saviour of to-morrow. There was lacking in him that charm of the unknown, the mystery of isolation and all that prestige of



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hidden virtue of which men have need who seek to be masters of others. Madame de Staël said: "Mirabeau, by his overpowering eloquence, tried to reach that topmost rung from which his immorality had banished him."

Alas! the first rank he coveted was closed to him and he knew it. His intimate friends had seen him more than once shedding hot tears over the mistakes of his youth—mistakes which cut him off from gaining the confidence of the French people. "A strange destiny, mine, to be the mover of a revolution, and always between a hut and a palace," cried he in one of his moments of depression. It was a shadowy palace he entered, by a half-opened door and a servant's staircase. The court, which saw in Mirabeau only a conspirator, expected nothing from him but plots. All that grand ministry *à la Richelieu* of which he had conceived, was reduced in practice to the occult direction of a secret police.<sup>c</sup>

## AN ENGLISH ESTIMATE OF MIRABEAU (H. MORSE STEPHENS)

From the month of May, 1790, to his death in April, 1791, Mirabeau remained in close and suspected but not actually proved connection with the court, and drew up many admirable state-papers for it. In return the court paid his debts; <sup>1</sup> but it ought never to be said that he was bribed, for the gold of the court never made him swerve from his political principles—never, for instance, made him a royalist. He regarded himself as a minister, though an unavowed one, and believed himself worthy of his hire. Undoubtedly his character would have been more admirable if he had acted without court assistance, but it must be remembered that his services deserved some reward, and that by remaining at Paris as a politician he had been unable to realise his paternal inheritance.

With Mirabeau died, it has been said, the last hope of the monarchy; but, with Marie Antoinette supreme at court, can it be said that there could ever have been any real hope for the monarchy? Had she been but less like her imperious mother, Louis would have made a constitutional monarch, but her will was as strong as Mirabeau's own, and the Bourbon monarchy had to meet its fate. The subsequent events of the Revolution justified Mirabeau's prognostications in his first *mémoire* of October 15th, 1789.

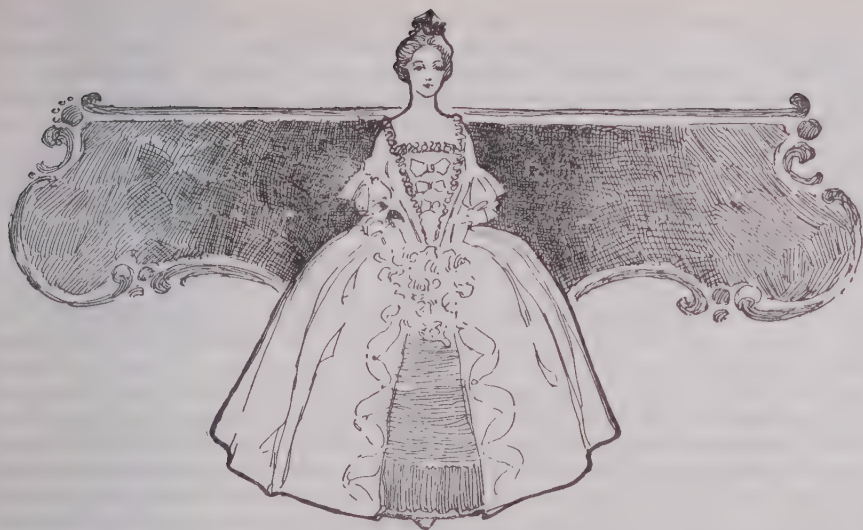
No man ever so thoroughly used other men's work, and yet made it all seem his own. Yet neither the gold of the court nor another man's conviction would make Mirabeau say what he did not himself believe, or do what he did not himself think right. He took other men's labour as his due, and impressed their words, of which he had suggested the underlying ideas, with the stamp of his own individuality; his collaborators themselves did not complain; they were but too glad to be of help in the great work of controlling the French Revolution through its greatest thinker and orator.

There was something gigantic about all Mirabeau's thoughts and deeds. The excesses of his youth were beyond all bounds, and severely were they punished; his vanity was immense, but never spoiled his judgment; his talents were enormous, but he could yet make use of those of others. As a statesman his wisdom is indubitable, but by no means universally recognised in his own country. Lovers of the *ancien régime* abuse its most formidable and logical opponent; believers in the constituent assembly cannot be expected to care for the most redoubtable adversary of their favourite theorists,

[<sup>1</sup> It was the count de la Marck who, at Marie Antoinette's suggestion and in her name, paid Mirabeau's debts of 208,000 livres, and gave him four promissory notes for 250,000 livres each, to be paid if he kept his promises to the court.]

while admirers of the republic of every description agree in calling him, from his connection with the court, the traitor Mirabeau. As an orator more justice has been done him. Personally he had that which is the truest mark of nobility of mind — a power of attracting love, and winning faithful friends. "I always loved him," writes Sir Gilbert Elliot to his brother Hugh; and Romilly,<sup>t</sup> who was not given to lavish praise, says, "I have no doubt that in his public conduct, as in his writings, he was desirous of doing good, that his ambition was of the noblest kind, and that he proposed to himself the noblest ends." What more favourable judgment could be passed on an ambitious man — what finer epitaph could a statesman desire?<sup>r</sup>





## CHAPTER VIII

### THE FALL OF THE MONARCHY

[1791-1792 A.D.]

That immense upheaval, known as the French Revolution, was really only a movement which affected, in varying degrees, the whole of western Europe. It was a consequence of the advance of civilisation which led society, towards the end of the eighteenth century,—and because of the philosophy of that century,—to the difficult passage from a lower to a higher state. Theology and militarism were to give place to science and industry. The two groups of secondary philosophers who led in this great age were those who followed Voltaire and Rousseau, one school attacking the altar, one the throne. Both in common with the original school—that of Diderot and the Encyclopædists—tended towards the overthrow of the ancient régime, although only the constructive group desired a systematic reorganisation without God or king, and the establishment of a state in which science and industry should replace theology and war.—ROBINET.<sup>c</sup>

THE great philosophical school of the eighteenth century, with Diderot as its chief representative in France, comprised: the cosmologist group, Clairaut, D'Alembert, Monge, Lagrange, Laplace, Lavoisier, Guyton de Morveau, Berthollet, Vicq-d'Azyr, Buffon, Lamarck, etc., who had already far advanced natural philosophy and natural science; the socialist group, Montesquieu, Turgot, Condorcet, Quesnay, Gournay, the elder Mirabeau, etc., who had definitely defined political science; and the moralist group, Diderot, D'Holbach, Georges Leroy, De Brosses, etc., who had more especially devoted themselves to the study of the human mind. This immortal phalanx of savants and philosophers was not confined to France. The same lines of thought were followed by Priestley, Beccaria, Kant, and above all, by David Hume—that great genius who, like Diderot, gave himself up to most profound reflections on politics, morals, and philosophy.



But the immediate and almost fatal disproportion between the swift decomposition of the old régime and the building up of the new, brought about the western upheaval and led to a social crisis. There was, so to speak, a stifled aspiration towards a higher social state, an aspiration which carried in it a death-blow to the old state of affairs, but which, for the time being, presented but did not solve the problem of actual reorganisation. Such was, then, the character of this eventful period of history, and it acted as the principal cause for the viciousness which followed the Revolution with its incomplete results.

But although the need of reform was common to all the West—that is, to all great nations which since the days of Charlemagne had united in the work of general civilisation, namely, France, Italy, Spain, England, and Germany, as the efforts of the Pombals, the Campomanes, the Arandas, Joseph II, and above all of Frederick the Great proved—it was in France that the efforts were most strongly marked. The double movement of decomposing the old régime, of emancipation from theology and politics; and the recomposition of the new régime, that is, the simultaneous development of industry, science, and philosophy, was there the most advanced, and this was the reason why she took the initiative in the crisis, or French Revolution. But the fundamentally organic doctrine necessary to determine the true character of the reconstruction was then neither constituted nor widely spread. A negative philosophy, or a revolutionary one, elaborated during three previous centuries, alone presented itself as a director in the movement.

It might be thought—giving human nature more mental power than it really has, and to the leaders in politics more foresight and wisdom than they usually possess—that the French Revolution should have operated systematically from above, that is, from a government sufficiently awake and devoted to the public good.

This hypothesis is more legitimate than at first sight it appears. If, for example, the great Frederick had arisen in the place of Louis XVI, or if the latter had only been capable, like Louis XIII with Richelieu, of submitting to a minister so apt to understand the nature, extent, and execution of an indispensable regeneration of the empire, all might have moved smoothly. A solution eminently favourable to the success of the Revolution would have consisted in the coming to the French throne of a king who spontaneously or acting under his chief minister, would have firmly and voluntarily transformed the highest monarchical powers, the retrograde dictatorship of Louis XIV and Louis XV into a progressive one.

Mignet<sup>b</sup> certainly had some such idea when, in speaking of Louis XVI, he said, “In this way he could have insured his safety from the excesses of a revolution, by himself acting. If, taking the initiative in changed times, he had fixed with firmness but with justice the new order of things; if only he had realised the wishes of France and determined what were the rights of citizens, the attributes of the states-generals, the limits of royal power; if he had left off arbitrating for his own interests, for favours for the aristocracy, for personal privileges; if, in fact, he had accomplished those reforms claimed by public opinion, this resolution would have prevented most disastrous consequences at a later date.”

Turgot wanted exactly, or nearly so, that which was effected later, in spite of the king, by a constitutional assembly. All that he projected was realisable, and it would have been much better if, in the place of Louis XVI, men could have been found like Frederick of Prussia or Louis XIII. That

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is why an hypothesis of a revolution beginning from above—by Turgot assisted by men of '89 called to rule—is not a decadent theory.

But Turgot found all the privileged classes of the old régime as obstacles in his way to reformation—all the royal favourites, clergy, nobles, parliamentarians, financiers, and, finally, the court itself with Marie Antoinette at the head, she leading the king to resist, although at first he formally sanctioned all reforms. Turgot was overthrown. The responsibility for his fall rests with Louis XVI, and remains as one of his greatest political mistakes.

Through this mistake, or rather by this first social crime, the Revolution thenceforth worked feverishly from below—that is, outside and against the government, by efforts growing more violent and spontaneous in proportion to the resistance encountered.<sup>c</sup>

#### MIRABEAU'S SUCCESSORS

After Mirabeau's death, Danton became as it were his successor, but he moved in a lower sphere; and externally, in knowledge as well as in importance, was so little distinguished in the circles in which his dreadful and thundering voice was not regarded as eloquence, that the court did not attempt to secure him by bribery and corruption till it was too late; he then put the money in his pocket, but rendered no service in return. Mirabeau and Talleyrand, as well as Danton, had need of the Revolution as a means of escaping the importunity of their creditors and of obtaining new resources to meet their colossal expenditure; in the highest circles they required hundreds of thousands, whilst Danton among his equals, corrupt advocates and adventurers, only needed thousands. He had purchased a place in the royal court, but had not paid the purchase-money, and was in daily apprehension of being thrown into prison for debt.

Mirabeau's eyes had no sooner been closed than he, Camille Desmoulins, and their companions in the clubs of the Cordeliers, became more powerful than La Fayette, Bailly, and the frequenters of Madame de Staël's salons; this appeared on the 18th of April, 1791.

La Fayette was desirous of proving to the world and the king that the latter was not the prisoner of the populace, although in fact the people had prevented him in the autumn of 1790 and at Easter, 1791, from proceeding to St. Cloud and receiving the sacrament of the Eucharist from a non-juring priest; the general maintained that the king must rely upon him and the national guards. The attempt was made; but the three republican parties of the Jacobins, the philosophical and rhetorical doctrinaires called Girondists,—



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the favourers of a sovereign democracy of the lowest class, of whom Marat was the organ and Robespierre the orator, — and the clever and desperate disturbers of public order belonging to the club of the Cordeliers, were then all united and remained so for two years, and were consequently far superior to the eloquent and distinguished constitutionalists.

This superiority was made manifest on the 18th of April, when La Fayette attempted to conduct the king to St. Cloud under the protection of the national guard. The Jacobins had filled the streets with women and pikemen consisting of the dregs of the people, who made a regular opposition to the national guards and mingled in their ranks; the king's progress was obstructed, and it was found impossible to penetrate the mass; the infantry of the national guard remained inactive, and La Fayette issued orders to the cavalry to draw their swords and open a way through the opposing throng; they however refused to obey. La Fayette himself was then obliged to announce to the king that he must return. This failure produced a deep impression upon the general, who immediately resigned his command, and could only be persuaded to resume it after the lapse of three days.

It is now sufficiently proved from the writings formerly published in foreign countries, and in still greater numbers during the restoration in France, and even by the ringleaders of the conspiracies themselves, what an unholy activity the adherents and friends of the old régime at that time displayed. These persons drove the king to the adoption of measures the very opposite of his public declarations; they showed him to be weak and equivocal, injured him, and furnished his enemies with the opportunity of utterly destroying the monarchy itself. The committee of the Jacobins who superintended the police, and the corresponding committee of the national assembly, were informed of everything which was carried on at foreign courts in the busy year 1791 in the name of the queen, the king, the princes, and émigrés; the excited nation was offended in its honour by the declarations of the foreign powers, and willingly threw itself into the hands of the enemies of the existing monarchy. Meanwhile the king was importuned by his partisans to escape from the hands of the Parisian demagogues, and to take refuge in some fortified town on the frontiers; for no idea was at first entertained of a flight beyond the limits of the country.

As long as the count of Artois and the whole body of émigrés remained in Turin, the plan was to bring the king to Lyons; but when the emperor Leopold gave promises, the elector of Treves allowed the émigrés to assemble in Worms and Coblenz, and King Gustavus of Sweden entered into correspondence with them. It was then thought desirable that the king should take refuge in some fortress on the eastern or northern frontier of the kingdom. Long before Mirabeau's death, negotiations respecting a flight had been carried on with the marquis de Bouillé, the commander-in-chief of the army in Nancy.

There were, in fact, whole volumes written on the various plans of effecting an escape, and the printed secret correspondence proves how actively these plans were agitated. They were however only seriously pursued after Mirabeau's death. In this affair the weak king was the mere instrument of his wife, his brother, and the ancient aristocracy, who had just then lost all influence among the people. The emperor Leopold played a very equivocal part, for he excited great attention by his negotiations with Prussia and with the French court, without any serious intention to lend speedy and effectual assistance.<sup>d</sup>



[1791 A.D.]

## THE KING TAKES TO FLIGHT

Six hundred *sectionnaires* kept constant watch over the castle. Bayonets bristled everywhere, even in the passages leading from the king and queen's private rooms. Spies mingled with the royal attendants, and were to be suspected from the first lady-in-waiting down to the lowest footman.

Unhappy royalty! — reduced to using certain signs instead of speech, for the very walls listened and heard. But hope was not abandoned. It was arranged between Bouillé and his master that the place of retreat should be Montmédy, a fortified town on the Champagne borders. There they would be almost in the emperor's territory, in the neighbourhood of Luxemburg, and in case of emergency the Austrians would be ready with help.

There was in the basement of the Tuileries an apartment which opened on the Cour des Princes and the Cour Royale. Neither of these exits was guarded. If an escape were possible it would be by one of them. The queen charged Count Fersen, a young Swedish nobleman who rendered her most poetic worship, to have horses and carriages ready. Three of the bodyguard were chosen as couriers. A passport that would serve for all the royal family was absolutely necessary. By a lucky coincidence Baroness Korff, a friend of the count of Fersen, had just had a passport made out for herself, two children, a valet, and two maids. Fersen had not much difficulty in persuading Madame de Korff to pretend that she had inadvertently dropped this in the fire and to ask for another.

Bouillé had mentioned Count d'Argout to the king as a man suited to act in emergencies and full of courage and ready wit, but this place in the carriage was loudly claimed by Madame de Tourzel, the children's governess. She claimed it by right! And, such was the absurdity of court etiquette, that her right was absolutely inviolable. So Madame de Tourzel took the title of Baroness Korff. The queen was to be the governess and take the name of Madame Rochet. It was arranged that Princess Elizabeth should be Rosalie, lady's companion, and Louis XVI, under the name of Durand, should play the part of a valet. Count Fersen was to be coachman from Paris to Bondy.

But all was miserably bungled in these preparations. It was absurd to take as couriers three young men of the bodyguard knowing nothing of the roads, instead of three real couriers. The latter would have known the route, have had no appearances to keep up, would have urged on the postillions and spoken in the same style. The royal family almost betrayed themselves in advance. If only these bodyguards had known Paris! Not even that! And, what was more absurd, Fersen, the coachman, did not know it either! But, added to this, one might have thought they were bent on blundering. One of the queen's chief solicitudes—who will believe it? — was to have a complete trousseau for her own and the children's use in Brussels! Charged to buy it or have it made, Madame Campan<sup>e</sup> relates how she was obliged to go out almost disguised, and buy six chemises in one shop and six in another; here dresses, there dressing-gowns. All one evening was spent packing up diamonds.

At the same time, with singular inconsequence, dissimulation took the form of downright lies. Louis XVI formally declared to General Rochambeau that he had no intention of leaving Paris, and he said this with such apparent sincerity that Madame de Lamballe told it to her doctor, M. Staëffert. But the veil of mystery with which they sought to hide their intentions was constantly torn aside by themselves.

Suddenly a terrible blow fell. Marat, with his prophetic pen (prophetic in the popular estimation), let fall therefrom these startling words:

A person attached to the royal household has found the king weeping in his own room and trying to hide his grief at being forced to go to the Low Countries under the pretext that his cause is the same as that of all the kings in Europe. You are idiotic enough not to foresee the flight of the royal family. Parisians! foolish Parisians, I am tired of telling you to keep the king and the dauphin within your walls. Guard them carefully; shut up the Austrian woman, her brother-in-law, and the rest of the family. The loss of a single day may be fatal to the nation and dig a grave for three million Frenchmen.

Here is the explanation: among the patriots who furnished *l'Ami du Peuple* with news was a certain Javardin, the lover of a laundress having among her customers several court ladies. This woman found in the dress-pocket of one of these ladies-in-waiting a letter half torn up, but decipherable: "The papers are ready, they are getting the carriages ready for starting." The laundress gave this letter to Javardin, who showed it to Marat! Suspicion, moreover, was awakening on all sides. Bailly kept the secret at the risk of proving traitor to the people. La Fayette and Gouvion-Saint-Ayr imitated him, but became doubly careful.

A delay of twenty-four hours happened because one of the dauphin's ladies was taken ill, and her substitute was strongly suspected of Jacobinism; therefore it was considered better to wait. Such a *contretemps* was a real misfortune. It necessitated fresh orders, and one of the inconveniences was prolonging the stay of Bouillé's troops along the road, just where their presence was likely to bring on the dreaded storm.

The day of departure having arrived, the queen, to allay suspicion, went for a drive on the boulevard with her sister and son. Towards half past ten, the king and queen having supped as usual retired as if going to bed. As soon as they imagined all asleep they went to Madame Royale's apartments. "My brother," relates this princess with touching simplicity, "was dressed as a little girl. As he was not nearly awake he did not know what was going on. I asked him what he thought we were going to do. 'We are going to act, because we are dressed up,' he answered."

Louis XVI, who was to pass as Madame de Korff's valet, wore a gray suit and a wig. Count Fersen awaited the fugitives, sitting as coachman on the seat of a hired carriage. The dauphin, with the *insouciance* of his age, curled himself up to sleep.

Unfortunately, neither the queen nor her guide knew Paris. After having hopelessly lost their way they were obliged to ask it of a sentinel on the bridge. They turned back, having lost much time, when perhaps an hour, a minute, gained meant safety.

At last all were in the carriage. The horses which were to bear them from the Revolution tore along under the whip. They were really gone! The travelling *berline* was awaiting them at the St. Martin barrier. All got in and left the hired carriage, horsed and harnessed, in the street, without anyone to drive it back to its owner. Fersen held the reins as far as Bondy, to which place the royal family had been preceded by two waiting-maids and a royal carriage. The postillion who had driven it there was not a little astonished to see a man dressed as a coachman descend from his box and take leave in an elegant and affectionate manner of the people he had driven, then get into a beautiful carriage, which apparently belonged to him, to go back to Paris.

Two carriages, nine travellers, eleven horses, three couriers in bright yellow waistcoats, one on the box, one galloping by the door, a third hurry-

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ing on to command relays, and all this without taking any precautions, on a route haunted by the phantom of emigration, where thousands of men were suspicious even to madness!

All Paris was up at daybreak on the 21st of June, for the fatal news was spreading from mouth to mouth that the royal servants had found the king and queen's apartments deserted. In crowded streets, in the market, in stirring faubourg, in shop doors, the citizens met with the same words: "Well, so he is gone!" Astonishment, anxiety, anger, were the first feelings of the hour. How had they fled? Where had they gone? Who were their accomplices? Had La Fayette, the traitor, shut his eyes? But with what terrible plot was this departure connected! Was France to perish, strangled between a civil and a foreign war? Oh, this Louis XVI! this king who had pretended to be so honest, who swore so many times that he was not going away! So this was how kings kept their word! The assembly met hastily. The municipality officially announced the king's flight by three cannon-shots. Orders were given to put seals on the Tuileries. No one was to leave Paris.

Troops were everywhere called out. The famous pikes used on the 14th of July, now refound, were greeted on the place de Grève by thunders of applause. At the roll of the drums the *invalides* of the Gros-Caillou hôpital forced the guard, seized their swords, and, dressed in their uniforms, went out to defend their country. The woolen caps reappeared, this time eclipsing the bearskin ones. An immense crowd went to the Tuileries and took possession of it.

But to various other parties the king's escape was a general source of satisfaction, although for very different reasons. The nobles, priests, and courtiers waited with carefully veiled satisfaction to see a foreign sword cut this Gordian knot which they themselves were impotent to untie. The constitutionalists hoped to compel Louis XVI to accept a constitution more easily now that he had lost all other title to a crown. The republicans reckoned on proving that the monarch's flight was an annulling of the contract between him and the people, and so equivalent to an abdication.<sup>f</sup>

#### LOUIS TAKEN PRISONER

The carriage bearing the royal family reached Châlons in safety, and subsequently Ste. Menehould. The detachments of Bouillé, weary of waiting, had already taken their departure. At Ste. Menehould Louis was recognised by Drouet, son of the postmaster; but the carriage was then setting off. Drouet set off also by a cross-road, and reached Varennes, the next place of halt, and within but two stages of Bouillé's camp, before the fugitives. There were no post-horses in Varennes, but an officer of Bouillé was appointed to have a relay in waiting. There were no symptoms of horses or guards about the hour of eleven at night when the royal family entered the town. They were obliged to alight, to question, to parley with the postillions; whilst Drouet had aroused the municipal officer, and called together the national guards of the canton. Whilst the carriage was slowly proceeding under an arch that crossed the road, Drouet, with the well-known Bilaud, and one or two others, stopped it, demanding their passports. The *gardes du corps* on the box wished to resist. The king forbade them. Here the presence of a man of resolution was wanted.<sup>g</sup>

"Alas, it was not in the poor phlegmatic man," says Carlyle. "Had it been in him, French History had never come under this Varennes Archway to



decide itself.—He steps out; all step out. Procureur Sausse gives his grocer-arms to the Queen and Sister Elizabeth; Majesty taking the two children by the hand. And thus they walk, coolly back, over the Market-place, to Procureur Sausse's; mount into his small upper story; where straightway his Majesty 'demands refreshments.' Demands refreshments, as is written; gets bread-and-cheese with a bottle of Burgundy; and remarks that it is the best Burgundy he ever drank!

"Meanwhile, the Varennes Notables, and all men, official and non-official, are hastily drawing on their breeches; getting their fighting gear. Mortals half-dressed tumble out barrels, lay felled trees; scouts dart off to all the four winds,—the tocsin begins clanging, 'the Village illuminates itself.' Very singular: how these little Villages do manage, so adroit are they, when startled in midnight alarm of war. Like little adroit municipal rattle-snakes, suddenly awakened: for their storm-bell rattles and rings; their eyes glisten luminous (with tallow-light), as in rattle-snake ire; and the Village will sting. Old-Dragoon Drouet is our engineer and generalissimo; valiant as a Ruy Diaz:—Now or never, ye Patriots, for the soldiery is coming; massacre by Austrians, by Aristocrats, wars more than civil, it all depends on you and the hour!—National Guards rank themselves, half-buttoned: mortals, we say, still only in breeches, in under-petticoat, tumble out barrels and lumber, lay felled trees for barricades: the Village will sting. Rabid Democracy, it would seem, is not confined to Paris, then? Ah no, whatsoever Courtiers might talk; too clearly no. 'This of dying for one's King is grown into a dying for one's self, against the King, if need be.'"<sup>h</sup>

The royal prisoners were now conducted before the procureur of the town; and, the national guards crowding in, Louis was arrested. The troops of Bouillé's army arrived also, but refused to rescue him. An aide-de-camp of General La Fayette soon after made his appearance, bearing a decree of the national assembly for the re-conveyance of the fugitives to Paris.

Thus, within an hour, a league of safety, the unfortunate Louis and his family found themselves captive, and on their return to a capital, which, if it had before loaded them with contumely, would now, most likely, observe no moderation in cruelty. The assembly already showed that its opinions had taken a deeper dye of republicanism since the flight. Pétion, a rude and rigid democrat, with Barnave, the rival of Mirabeau, were the commissaries who re-conducted the king. Seated in the royal carriage, Barnave, with the sensibility ever attendant upon talent, felt his sympathy awakened for the sufferings of the fallen family.

During the eight days of their painful journey, he continually conversed with the monarch, and felt each moment deeper respect for a character so amiable and so just. Pétion, on the contrary, a man with few ideas, held rigid in those which he professed, and piqued by being obliged to play an inferior part, merely murmured that he cared for naught save a republic. Previous to the return of the king to Paris, it was placarded that whoever insulted him should be beaten; whoever applauded him should be hanged. He was received, then, with that silence which Mirabeau called "the lesson of kings."<sup>g</sup>

#### CARLYLE ON THE KING'S RETURN

On the Sixth of October gone a year, King Louis, escorted by Demoiselle Théroigne and some two hundred thousand, made a Royal Progress and Entrance into Paris, such as man had never witnessed; we prophesied him Two more such; and accordingly another of them, after this flight to Metz,

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is now coming to pass. Théroigne will not escort here; neither does Mirabeau now "sit in one of the accompanying carriages." Mirabeau lies dead, in the Pantheon of Great Men. Théroigne lies living, in dark Austrian Prison; having gone to Liège, professionally, and been seized there.

Smile of embarrassment, or cloud of dull sourness, is on the broad phlegmatic face of his Majesty; who keeps declaring to the successive Official-persons, what is evident, "*Eh bien, me voilà* (Well, here you have me);" and what is not evident, "I do assure you I did not mean to pass the frontiers"; and so forth: speeches natural for that poor Royal Man; which Decency would veil. Silent is her Majesty, with a look of grief and scorn; natural for that Royal Woman.

Thus lumbers and creeps the ignominious Royal Procession, through many streets, amid a silent-gazing people. It is not comic; ah no, it is comico-tragic; with bound Couriers, and a Doom hanging over it; most fantastic, yet most miserably real.

On Monday night Royalty went; on Saturday evening it returns: so much, within one short week, has Royalty accomplished for itself. The Pickleherring Tragedy has vanished in the Tuileries Palace, towards "pain strong and hard." Watched, fettered, and humbled, as Royalty never was. Watched even in its sleeping-apartments and inmost recesses: for it has to sleep with door set ajar, blue National Argus watching, his eye fixed on the Queen's curtains; nay, on one occasion, as the Queen cannot sleep, he offers to sit by her pillow, and converse a little, says Madame Campan!

In regard to all which, this most pressing question arises: What is to

be done with it? Depose it! resolutely answer Robespierre and the thorough-going few. For, truly, with a King who runs away, and needs to be watched in his very bedroom that he may stay and govern you, what other reasonable thing can be done? Had Philippe d'Orléans not been a *caput mortuum*? But of him, known as one defunct, no man now dreams. Depose it not; say that it is inviolable, that it was spirited away, was *enlevé*; at any cost of sophistry and solecism, re-establish it! so answer with loud vehemence all manner of Constitutional Royalists; as all your pure Royalists do naturally likewise, with low vehemence, and rage compressed by fear, still more passionately answer. Nay Barnave and the two Lameths, and what will follow them, do likewise answer so. Answer, with their whole might: terrorstruck at the unknown Abysses on the verge of which, driven thither by themselves mainly, all now reels, ready to plunge.

By mighty effort and combination, this latter course is the course fixed on; and it shall by the strong arm, if not by the clearest logic, be made



MAXIMILIAN MARIE ISIDORE ROBESPIERRE

(1758-1794)

good. With the sacrifice of all their hard-earned popularity, this notable Triumvirate, says Toulougeon,<sup>i</sup> “set the Throne up again, which they had so toiled to overturn: as one might set up an overturned pyramid, on its vertex”; to stand so long as it is held.

Unhappy France; unhappy in King, Queen, and Constitution; one knows not in which unhappiest! Was the meaning of our so glorious French Revolution this, and no other, That when Shams and Delusions, long soul-killing, had become body-killing, and got the length of Bankruptcy and Inanition, a great People rose and, with one voice, said, in the Name of the Highest: Shams shall be no more?

Petition after Petition, forwarded by Post, or borne in Deputation, comes praying for Judgment and *Déchéance*, which is our name for Deposition; praying, at lowest, for Reference to the Eighty-three Departments of France. Hot Marseillaise Deputation comes declaring, among other things: “Our Phœcean Ancestors flung a Bar of Iron into the Bay at their first landing; this Bar will float again on the Mediterranean brine before we consent to be slaves.” All this for four weeks or more, while the matter still hangs doubtful; Emigration streaming with double violence over the frontiers; France seething in fierce agitation of this question and prize-question: What is to be done with the fugitive Hereditary Representative? Finally, on Friday, the 15th of July, 1791, the National Assembly decides.<sup>h</sup>

#### THE KING'S CAPTIVITY AND THE PILLNITZ DECLARATION

The effect of the flight to Varennes was to destroy all respect for the king, to accustom the minds of men to his absence, and to stimulate the idea of a republic. Previous to the morning of his arrival, the assembly had provided for the emergency of the case by a decree. Louis XVI was suspended from his functions, and a guard assigned for his person, for that of the queen, and for that of the dauphin. This guard was made responsible for their safety. The greatest nicety was observed in the expressions, for never did that assembly betray a want of attention to delicacy: but the fact itself was not to be disguised — the king was provisionally dethroned.

Barnave dictated the king's answer to the commissioners named by the assembly. In that document, Louis XVI grounded his flight upon the desire to learn more accurately the state of public opinion, which he alleged to have closely studied during his journey; and he demonstrated by a series of facts that it was never his intention to leave France. As to the protests contained in his memorial delivered to the assembly, he said, with much reason, that they bore, not upon the fundamental principles of the constitution, but upon the means of execution which were permitted him. Now, he added, that the general desire was made manifest to him, he did not hesitate to submit to it, and to make all the sacrifices necessary for the general welfare.

Bouillé, with the view of drawing on his head the whole rage of the assembly, addressed to it a letter, which might be called insane, if the generous motive which prompted it were not considered. He avowed himself the sole instigator of the king's journey, whilst he had in fact opposed it; and he declared, in the name of the allied sovereigns, that Paris should answer for the safety of the royal family, and that the least injury perpetrated on it should be avenged in a signal manner. He added, what he knew to be inconsistent with fact, that the military resources of France were utterly exhausted; furthermore, that he was acquainted with the ways of invasion,



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and would himself conduct the foreign armies into the bosom of his country. The assembly lent itself to this generous bravado, and threw the whole odium upon Bouillé, who had nothing to fear, as he had already passed to the enemy.

The court of Spain, apprehensive that the slightest hostile demonstration might expose the royal family to greater dangers, declared to the French government that its friendly dispositions were unchanged. The northern powers conducted themselves with less reserve: excited by the émigrés, they assumed a threatening tone. Envoys were despatched to Brussels and Coblenz, to attempt an understanding with the émigrés, to communicate to them the friendly spirit of the assembly, and the hope of the possibility of an advantageous arrangement. But they were outrageously insulted, and immediately returned to Paris.

The émigrés levied troops in the king's name, and thus compelled him to give a formal disavowal. They pretended that Monsieur, then with them, was regent of the kingdom; and that the king, being a prisoner, had no longer a will of his own. They concluded that all the powers of Europe were at their disposition. They could not doubt that an invasion must succeed. And yet nearly two years were gone since they had quitted France; and in spite of their daily sanguine hopes, they had not yet returned as conquerors, according to their flattering anticipations. The powers seemed to promise much: but Pitt was awaiting events: Leopold, exhausted by war, and discontented with the émigrés, was disposed to peace; the king of Prussia, certainly, held out hopes, but he had little interest in gratifying them; Gustavus was eager to lead an expedition against France, but was at an inconvenient distance; and Catherine, who might have assisted him, though delivered from the Turks, had Poland to keep in subjection. Besides, in order to effect such a coalition, so many interests required to be brought into harmony that it needed a sanguine temperament to anticipate success in such a scheme.

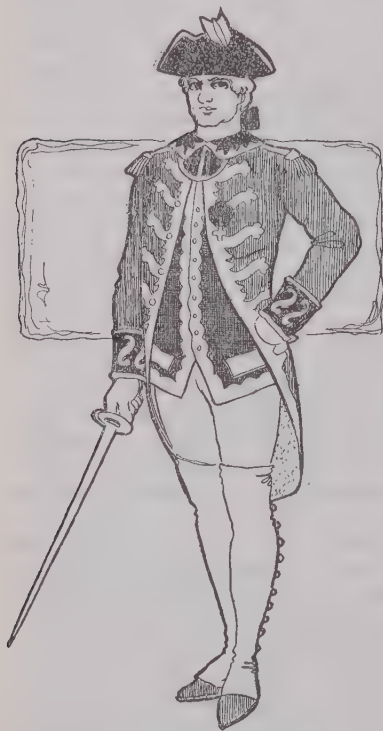
The declaration of Pillnitz, August 27th, 1791, ought especially to have opened the eyes of the émigrés to the zeal of the sovereigns. That declaration, published conjointly by the king of Prussia and the emperor Leopold, imported that the situation of the king of France was a matter of common interest to all monarchs, and that they were imperiously called upon to exert their united powers to assure Louis XVI the means of establishing a government conformable to the interests of the throne and the people. Upon that principle, the king of Prussia and the emperor expressed their readiness to co-operate with other princes to effect that desirable object. In the meantime, their forces were to be prepared for offensive operations when the emergency arrived.

France, it is true, was disarmed, but a whole nation on the alert is soon in arms; and, as the celebrated Carnot said somewhat later, "What is there impossible to twenty-five millions of men?" True it was, the officers were retiring; but they for the most part were beardless youths, promoted by favour, utterly without experience, and objects of hatred and contempt to the soldiers. Besides, the spirit imparted to all minds was soon to produce officers and generals. But at the same time it must be confessed that, without possessing the presumption so rife at Coblenz, it was not unreasonable to doubt that the resistance to be made by France to invasion would be so powerful as it subsequently proved.

The assembly, in the interim, sent commissioners to the frontiers, and ordered great preparations. All the national guards demanded to be led

against the enemy; several generals offered their services, and, amongst others, Dumouriez, who subsequently saved France in the defiles of the Argonne. Whilst directing its serious consideration to the external safety of the state, the assembly did not intermit its labours in perfecting the constitutional act, nor the less hasten to restore to the king his functions, and, if it might be possible, some of his prerogatives.

The new word "republic" had quickened the minds of men, already somewhat sickened of the old phrases—monarchy and constitution. The absence and suspension of the king had, as we have previously stated, shown that he was not indispensable. The newspapers and the clubs soon laid aside the respect with which his person had been hitherto treated. The Jacobins and Cordeliers agitated the question with extreme violence, and refused to understand how, after getting rid of the king, the nation should again and voluntarily impose him on itself.



A FRENCH OFFICER, TIME OF THE  
REVOLUTION

Numerous addresses were published. Amongst the rest was one affixed to all the walls of Paris, and even to those of the assembly. It bore the signature of Achille Duchâtelet, a young colonel. It was addressed to the French; it reminded them of the tranquillity they had enjoyed during the absence of the monarch, whence it drew the inference that it was more advantageous than his presence; adding that his desertion was an abdication, and that the nation and Louis XVI were relieved from all obligation towards each other; finally, that history was full of the crimes of kings, and that it behooved them to avoid giving themselves one again. This address, attributed to young Achille Duchâtelet, was the production of Thomas Paine, an Englishman, and a principal actor in the American Revolution. Robespierre, Pétion, and Buzot reiterated all the usual arguments against inviolability; Duport, Barnave, and Salles replied to them; and it was ultimately

decreed that the king could not be brought under accusation for the offence of flight. Two articles were merely added to the decree of inviolability. So soon as this decision was pronounced, Robespierre arose, and entered his solemn protest in the name of humanity.

#### THE CHAMP-DE-MARS AFFAIR

On the evening which preceded this decision, there was a great tumult at the Jacobins'. A petition was drawn up, addressed to the assembly, calling upon it to declare the king deposed, as a traitor faithless to his oaths, and to provide for his substitution by all constitutional means. It was resolved that this petition should be carried the next day to the Champ-de-

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Mars, and laid on the altar of the country for signatures. Accordingly, it was borne in the morning to the place agreed upon; and the crowd of the seditious was swelled by that of the curious, who desired to witness the ceremony. By this time the decree was already passed, and therefore no occasion existed for any petition. La Fayette arrived, broke down the barricades already raised, had execrations and threats hurled abundantly at his head, and, finally, a shot fired at him, which, although discharged with deliberate aim, passed harmlessly by. The municipal officers, having come to his aid, ultimately prevailed on the populace to disperse. But the tumult shortly recommenced. Two invalides standing, it is unknown for what purpose, under the altar of the country, were massacred, and thereupon the disorder became universal and boundless. Bailly repaired to the Champ-de-Mars, and unfolded the red flag, in token of martial law.

The employment of force, whatever may have been alleged, was just and indispensable. New laws were desired, or they were not: if they were desired, it was necessary they should be executed; that some fixed and settled order should prevail; that insurrection should not be perpetual, and that the determinations of the assembly should not be open to modification by the *plebis-scita*<sup>1</sup> of the multitude. La Fayette at first ordered the national guards to fire in the air; at this menace the crowd abandoned the altar, but soon rallied again. Thus reduced to extremity, he issued his orders to fire on the multitude. The first discharge laid low certain of the most seditious. Their number was exaggerated. Some have reduced it to thirty, others have raised it to four hundred, and the furious to some thousands. The latter were believed at the time, and a general terror was infused. So severe an example silenced the agitators for a period.<sup>m</sup>

#### END OF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY (SEPTEMBER 30TH, 1791)

The leading Jacobins, including Robespierre, slunk in terror to their hiding-places. This triumph, however, served but to render the assembly unpopular. The public was weary of them, and longed for its successor, as it was wont to hail a new reign. The assembly determined to show itself disinterested. It proceeded to complete and give the last touches to the constitution, the immortality of which it fondly augured. Barnave, in the access of his late loyalty, had hoped to have modified its democratic principles; and the right side, or partisans of the English constitution, are accused of having marred his efforts by their hostility or neglect.

But Barnave could never have executed his purpose. The time had gone by. And the fatal article, which excluded the present representatives from being elected members of the next assembly, was one which, in that day of affected disinterestedness, could certainly not be recalled.

Having fulfilled its task of presenting the constitution to the king, and having received his solemn acceptance of it, the *assemblée constituante* declared itself dissolved, on the 30th of September, 1791.<sup>g</sup>

Of this famous assembly, Thiers<sup>m</sup> says: "Notwithstanding its heroic courage, its scrupulous equity, its vast labours, it was execrated as revolutionary at Coblenz, and as aristocratical at Paris." Haas<sup>k</sup> sums it up as follows: "If the constituent assembly committed serious faults, it has also left glorious memories. Equality in the eyes of the law; civil and political liberty; the relaxing of penal law; the suppression of feudal rights; the organisation of

[<sup>1</sup> Laws made by the people alone, without the senate, in the Roman Republic, were thus called.]



a national guard; uniformity of laws throughout the kingdom; departmental government—all these reforms are titles to a country's gratitude." And Lamartine<sup>1</sup> said: "The work of the assembly was prodigious, its methods insignificant. All that enthusiasm inspired it undertook and finished. Without king, military chief, dictator or army; without any force but the conviction, which it held alone in the midst of an astonished people, of a demoralised army, an emigrant aristocracy, a despoiled clergy, a hostile court, a rebellious city, and of Europe in arms, it did what it had resolved to do. To such a degree is a determined will the real power of a people, and truth the irresistible ally of the men who devote themselves to her cause. If ever inspiration was seen in the ancient prophet or legislator it may be said that the constitutional assembly had two years of continued inspiration. France was the inspired prophet of civilisation."<sup>a</sup>

#### THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Had the united wisdom of the first national assembly applied itself to put together a constitution of the least possible durability, on the same principle that cardinals are wont to elect an octogenarian pope, they could scarcely have fixed upon one more likely than that decreed, to attain the desired end. Even the plan of Sieyès, that the nation should will, and the monarch execute, was more practicable, if such a monarch could be found. But here the king was left with precisely that particle of legislative power, the suspensive veto that loaded him with the responsibility of assent, and exposed him to the peril of dissent. The very originators of the system condemned and despaired of it; they knew, even before they launched it, that the vessel must founder. Still in this moment did they abdicate all power, and abandon the country to a set of new and unknown rulers.

The three natural parties of a country, those of the upper, the middle, and the lower classes, were all represented in the constituent. The Revolution, or, in other words, the descent of power through the successive ranks of society, advanced gradually and slowly: now, however, betwixt the constituent and the legislative, which followed, it proceeded *per saltum*, with astounding and fatal celerity. One great cause of this was the little experience which the country had of liberty. Men with political knowledge were rare. The notables, in this respect, had been chosen in the first assembly, and their re-election being denied, the electors were at a loss where to look. The moderate and the timid shrank at such a time from the public eye; and those whose zeal had distinguished them in the clubs, claimed and obtained universal preference. Elected under such influence, the legislative assembly soon displayed a totally new scheme of opinions and divisions.

The upholders of even a mitigated aristocracy had disappeared: in their place, as the band most favourable to royalty, sat, now in minority, the majority of the late assembly. They were called constitutionalists or *feuillants*, from the name of their club. Next in order sat the republicans. A conscientious and sage lover of royalty, to whom a monarch with kingly attributes was denied, would have embraced the idea of a republic as practicable at least, in preference to the vain idol of La Fayette's pedantic adoration, *viz.*, the name of a king and the essence of a commonwealth. The republicans were better known by the appellation of Girondins, their most celebrated leaders being members for the department of the Gironde, and originally lawyers in the court of Bordeaux. To the left of these sat the Jacobins, the anarchists, men without principles or imaginable form of government: their support

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was the rabble; their aim to sweep away, as obnoxious to their envious mediocrity, the united aristocracy of birth, wealth, and talent.

The constitutionalists and Girondins both represented equally the interests of the middle class, and disputed its opinions; but the Girondins carried away the palm of popularity, and also the sceptre of power: they soon ruled the assembly, and guided the legislature. The executive at that time resided in the municipality, for Paris was in a great measure revolutionary France. The constitutionalists had held paramount influence over this body through Bailly and La Fayette; but now, when the mania of self-denial became general, these functionaries resigned, and ceded their posts of influence to their rivals. Pétion, a Girondin, was chosen mayor in lieu of Bailly, and La Fayette did not recover the command of the national guard.

Such was the state of parties. The new assembly, that gave itself the name Legislative, by which it is distinguished in French history, met on the 1st of October. A deputation waited on the king to acquaint him. His reply was simple. The republicans did not find it sufficiently courteous; and, commencing their grave duties by a childish susceptibility about punctilio, they ordered the king's chair to be put on a level with that of their president. On the next day they repealed this important decree, Louis intimating that he would not come to open their session. Having, by pretended deference, enticed him to appear, they treated him with some marks of designed disrespect, such as sitting in his presence covered—advantages trifling to them, but wounding to the pride of the fallen monarch. Thus the assembly that ended in blood began in puerility.

Their next steps, though more distasteful to the king, had still the excuse of necessity. Two kinds of enemies threatened the present order of things—the émigrés collected on the frontier, and the discontented priesthood scattered throughout the realm. The latter were in communication with the émigrés, and were stirring and preparing the peasantry universally to revolt. The assembly passed a decree, declaring all émigrés, who continued in hostile meeting on the frontier beyond the month of January, civilly dead, and their property seized, without prejudice, however, to their wives, children, or creditors. Another ordained measures of similar rigour against those priests who refused the oath, and continued to excite agitation. These laws were certainly but a just measure of retaliation.

The king, from a personal feeling that may well be conceived, made the first use of his veto in suspending them: and then was instantly seen the absurd balance of powers provided by the constitution. The rage of the revolutionists in general knew no bounds, on finding their arms tied in their efforts to combat the enemies of the state; unable to attack the monarch directly, they turned their resentment against the constitutionalists, whose system thus obstructed them with its veto. They directed their scrutiny and eloquence against the existing ministers, whom Louis had chosen from that party. Delessart, the secretary for foreign affairs, was accused of feebleness, of betraying the dignity and interests of the country in his correspondence with the courts of Europe. Such being the opinion of the majority, Delessart was arrested, and sent for trial before the high court sitting at Orleans. Thus the constitutionalists, having yielded their influence in the senate and the municipality, were soon driven from the ministry, the Girondins and Jacobins uniting to complete their ruin.

It was in the debates excited by this question, and by the menaced interference of foreign countries, that Isnard, deputy of Provence, poured forth that eloquent diatribe, which soon resounded throughout the courts of

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Europe. "They would bring us back our noblesse!" cried he. "If all the nobles of the earth were to assail us, the French people, with their gold in one hand, their swords in the other, will combat that imperious race, and force it to endure the penalty of equality. Let us elevate ourselves in this conjuncture to a level with our high mission. Let us speak to ministers, to the king, and to Europe, with the dignity that becomes the representatives of France. Let ministers know our little satisfaction with their conduct, and that by the word responsibility we mean death. Tell Europe that we will respect the constitution of other governments; but that if a league of kings be made against us, we, in turn, will raise a war of people against kings."

The French excuse the violence and crimes of their revolution, by pleading that every fresh excess was provoked by the enemies of freedom. Thus, the oath of the tennis court, the insurrection ending in the capture of the Bastille, that of October which led the king forcibly from Versailles, were all indebted to the menacing approach of troops, and to the banquet of the *garde du corps*. The coalition entered into by the European sovereigns at Pillnitz, and their subsequent support of the émigrés at Coblenz, were destined to produce a still more fearful reaction.

With Europe certainly France was not the aggressor. Disunited in councils, the interior swarming with secret enemies, and the army disorganised, she had every reason to avoid a war. It was deprecated by the furious Jacobins, who dreaded alike to see the enemy, or their own generals, victorious. They thought on Cromwell, and trembled to see La Fayette, their enemy, acquire influence similar to his at the head of armies. The Girondists, on the contrary, clamoured for open war. Though not military men, they had the instinct of the nation's force, and augured triumph where others feared defeat. Almost all, being men of studious habits and pursuits, were deeply imbued with those classic ideas, that the vile Jacobins afterwards caught up and parodied. They believed themselves in ancient Rome, and looked not only to overthrow the Tarquin of the day, but to spread far and wide the glory and dominion of their country.



A FRENCH GRENADEIER, TIME OF THE  
REVOLUTION

In this proud spirit of emulation, the Girondists already carried their views beyond the poor boon of liberty, which the Jacobins, construing it however with license, would have been contented with. The Girondists it was who first conceived that bold project of extended conquest, afterwards realised by Napoleon.

The constitutionalists, however, still clung to the ministry, and, as officers and generals, prevailed in the army. Luckner, Rochambeau, and La Fayette commanded. The last the Girondists forgave, and wished to preserve, hoping at that time mighty achievements from his military fame. They were com-



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pelled, indeed, to recruit for heroes, and choose them elsewhere than in their own body. Dumouriez promised, above all others, to answer their views. This was a bold adventurer, enterprising, ambitious, talented; but too selfish, wayward, and passionate to have fixed principles. He affected to belong to all parties; flattered the king and the Jacobins, as well as the Girondists. The latter, at the recommendation of Brissot, adopted him. Madame Roland, the priestess of the party, was the only one who saw through him with a woman's penetration, and described him as "a talented *roué*, a bold cavalier, prepared to mock and trifle with everything except his interests and his glory."

The Girondists themselves deserve more particular mention. Brissot was long considered to be their leader. He was, in fact, their journalist, and the chief point of connection between them, who were provincials, and the capital. Being thus apparently the manager of their intrigues, the Jacobins called the whole party Brissotites. Vergniaud was their chief orator: he was a vulgar Fox; the same mildness, the same impassive appearance and equanimity of temper, contrasted with bursts of fervid eloquence when excited. Condorcet, of noble birth, was the philosopher and theorist of their ranks. He was their Sieyès, according to Mignet's<sup>b</sup> expression, but with more elevation, more elegance, and more disinterestedness. Madame Roland, in fine, was to the Girondists what De Staël was to the constitutionalists—the priestess of their temple; for politics had displaced religion; and deliberation, prayer. There were beauty, talents, firmness, heroism, and, at the same time, tenderness of sentiment in Madame Roland; and yet there is a tint of vulgar prejudice, even of ferocity, seen throughout her autobiography, that chills all sympathy.

Roland, the husband of this lady, an honest, rigid personage, a philosophic puritan, born to be at most the chief clerk of a ministerial office, was fixed on by Louis as the minister of interior that he was to select from the Girondists. Dumouriez had the department of war, and made himself agreeable to the king and to his diminutive court; whilst Roland, unkempt, in round hat, and strings in his shoes, stalked into the royal presence. A ghost would have excited more welcome and less horror. "What! a man without buckles!" exclaimed the horrified master of the ceremonies. "Ah!" ejaculated Dumouriez, covering with gravity an inclination to laugh outright, "if it be come to that, all is lost."

#### WAR DECLARED AGAINST AUSTRIA (APRIL 20TH, 1792)

The task of the new ministers and their party was to remove the state of suspense in which affairs, both domestic and foreign, remained, to bring matters to a crisis with the leagued sovereigns and with their own. An open manifestation of opinion was demanded of the emperor of Austria. He required, in reply, that France should recur to the state of government and parties which existed when the royal sitting took place at the commencement of the constituent assembly. This was a peremptory summons directed to the torrent or the whirlwind.

The assembly replied, in April, 1792, by a declaration of war. One-half of the scheme of the Girondists was thus fulfilled: the other was to force the king to resign himself freely to the current of the Revolution, join with it, that is, with them; else their resolve was to force or to dethrone him. Their powers of reasoning were first employed to bend the monarch: Vergniaud, Gaudet, and Gensonné drew up and sent to him a letter of exhortation to this

effect. But Louis was by no means so meekly disposed as he had been when the assembly met. His queen was irritated by the revival of the popular feeling against her, produced by the demands of the emperor her nephew. The Girondist ministers made themselves odious to what still called itself a court, by their uncouthness and pretensions; and, above all, Dumouriez was false. Feeling himself in office, he broke with the Girondists, as he had done with the constitutionalists, and influenced the king to resist their counsels and insinuations. He sought to play the part of Mirabeau, without that great man's tact and powers. The effect of this conduct was unfortunate. It raised the spirits of the old royalist party, and induced Louis once more to listen to them.

The first action that took place on the frontiers, near Tournay, April 28th, 1792, was unfavourable to the revolutionary soldiers. They fled in a panic, and massacred their leader, Dillon, who expostulated and sought to rally them. This raised still higher the hopes of the small knot of young military that still thronged in the outer saloons of the Tuileries. The populace were proportionally awakened and excited; and thus were sown afresh the seeds of insurrection.

Dumouriez endeavoured to support himself in a medium between contending parties. He caused Marat to be accused for exciting to sedition, in his journal called *l'Ami du Peuple*. A royalist writer was at the same time summoned to answer; but the minister could not communicate even his own share of prudence to the king. Pique, rather than policy, now came to govern Louis. The assembly had voted him a constitutional guard, the greater part of it to be raised from the youth of the middle classes composing the national force of the provinces. It had been tampered with: its officers showed that spirit of hostility to the assembly which had gained the favour of the court. The assembly at length issued a decree, breaking this troop. They at the same time, indeed, ordered its place to be supplied by new levies; but the king, irritated at finding himself thus controlled, refused to have any guard whatever, and occupied his solitary palace, exposed at all times to the interruptions of the rabble.

From the moment that Dumouriez, and with him the monarch, broke with the Girondists, or rather with the majority of the assembly (for Girondists and Jacobins were still united in their public measures), the latter directed all their batteries against the throne, determined to overturn the few bulwarks that yet remained, since it dared to contradict their wishes. Their decrees and votes adroitly prepared the way for this audacious scheme. In the commencement of June, Servan, minister of war, a tool of the Girondists, proposed to the assembly, without consulting either his colleagues or the monarch, to establish a camp of federals from the different provinces, under the walls of the capital. The assembly welcomed the proposal with delight. The federals, or volunteers, being naturally the most furious revolutionists of the nation, would serve as auxiliaries to the Parisian mob to keep in awe the more moderate and constitutional partisans that remained still attached to the king, amongst the better class of citizens. The national guard, especially the unpaid battalions of the respectable quarters, were of this colour. The republicans dreaded their stubbornness and interference. Here was the blunder and the crime of the Girondists, both of which they dearly expiated. Although enlightened, educated, professional men, they called in large reinforcements of the rabble to crush the middle ranks, which were their own, although they differed from them in degree.

This formed another crisis in the reign of Louis; had he seized it, the supremacy of the rabble might at least have been prevented. Many thousand

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national guards, of the more respectable citizens, petitioned against the federal camp. The middle class was aroused, perceived its danger, and its enemies; saw that the Girondists were betraying them, and that there was a necessity for defending the throne. It was the policy of Louis to have flung his whole influence into the scale of this party. Dumouriez's advice was rejected. The monarch defied the Girondists and popular body, without rallying to him the national guard or the citizens. It was then that Roland and his wife, with pedantic impertinence, drew up a letter of advice to their sovereign. It was uncalled for, and could not be useful; for Louis, refusing to hearken to the moderate revolutionists, was little likely to assent to the violent.<sup>1</sup> The royal family were maddened by the daily insults heaped upon them, especially on the unfortunate queen. Their enemies deprived them of all coolness, judgment, or prudence. The letter produced what the Girondists might and perhaps did expect, the dismissal of Roland, and an open rupture between them and the monarch. Dumouriez would still have remained, could he have induced Louis to adopt even now the course that he had recommended. The king could not be made to comprehend his interests; and Dumouriez resigned, in tears at the certainty of the catastrophe that must follow.

La Fayette, as sensible as Dumouriez to the danger of the throne, now came to its assistance; and at least recorded his principles, and vented his indignation, in a letter to the assembly, accusing the Jacobins of anarchic views, declaring that the clubs swayed the assembly and the nation, and that there was no safety for the country till they were put down. This was a thrust with a foil against an enemy in armour of proof. The assembly struck it aside with derision. La Fayette was now Cromwell in the public voice, and the little brilliancy of his exploits at the head of his army sank his reputation lower.

## THE 20TH OF JUNE, 1792

The populace were terrified at the menaced invasion. Even their leaders expected no less at this time than soon to see the Prussians and Austrians masters of the capital. The rabble shared their fears, and reasoned, or were taught to reason thus: "Yet this is the moment that Louis Capet prevents, by his single word of dissent, the levy of the federal army that might save us; this is the time chosen to dismiss ministers of honesty and zeal!"

The demagogues sought the first pretext to collect the people. They pleaded that it was necessary to excite their zeal, and to arm them in order to be in readiness for the approach of the enemy. Pikes were accordingly forged and distributed. And thus the mob had their peculiar force in the enrolled pikemen of the faubourgs, as the citizens had theirs in the national guard. The 20th of June was near. It was the anniversary of the oath of the tennis court. It was resolved to celebrate this by the assembling of the pikemen in view of the Tuileries. The Girondists favoured the plan; they did not imagine that it would end in blood, but merely have the salutary effect of frightening Louis, and forcing him to abandon his veto. As Pétion, one of the most violent of their party, was mayor, and thus in command of the police and the national guard, there was no opposition to be dreaded.

The rabble assembled accordingly on the morning of the 20th. Santerre,

[<sup>1</sup> "This moment was in fact the last chance for Louis to save his crown, by putting himself resolutely at the head of the Revolution. Far from that, he sent a secret agent, Mallet du Pan, to the allies. This was not known at the time, but everyone felt, no doubt, that the so-called 'Austrian Committee,' gathered about the queen, corresponded with the enemies." — DUBUY.]



a brewer, was at their head. With the tree of liberty and the "Rights of Man" borne in triumph before them, a redoubtable body of some 40,000 pikemen, mustering the whole of the lower class of the capital, first proceeded to present an address to the assembly. The Girondists and Jacobins received their auxiliaries with welcome. The pikemen had the honour of defiling through the hall of sitting. They then marched to the Tuileries, in order to present another petition to the king, making known their approach by shouts of "Down with the veto!"—"Vivent les Sansculottes!"—and the chorus of "*Ga ira.*" On first arriving at the gate of the palace, they were denied entrance.<sup>9</sup>

#### CARLYLE ON THE PROCESSION OF THE BLACK BREECHES

What Processions have we not seen : *Corpus-Christi* and Legendre waiting in his Gig ; Bones of Voltaire with bullock-chariots, and goadsmen in Roman Costume ; Feasts of Châteaux-Vieux and Simonneau ; Gouvion



A FRENCH CITIZEN, TIME OF THE  
REVOLUTION

Funerals, Rousseau Sham-funeral, and the Baptism of Pétion-National-Pike! Nevertheless this Procession has a character of its own. Tricolour ribands streaming aloft from Pike-heads ; ironshod batons ; and emblems not a few ; among which see specially these two, of the tragic and untragic sort : a Bull's Heart transfixed with iron, bearing this epigraph, "*Cœur d'Aristocrate*" (Aristocrat's heart), and, more striking still, properly the standard of the host, a pair of old Black Breeches (silk, they say), extended on cross-staff high overhead, with these memorable words : "*Tremblez tyrans, voilà les Sansculottes!*" (Tremble tyrants, here are the Sansindispensables.) Also, the Procession trails two cannons.

The shadows fall longer, eastward ; it is four o'clock : will his Majesty not come out ? Hardly he ! In that case Commandant Santerre, Cattle-butcher Legendre, Patriot Huguenin with the tocsin in his heart ; they, and others of authority will enter in. Petition and request to wearied uncertain National Guard ; louder and louder petition ; backed by the rattle of our two cannons ! The reluctant Grate opens : endless Sansculottic multitudes flood the stairs ; knock at the wooden guardian of your privacy. Knocks, in such case, grow strokes, grow smashings : the wooden guardian flies in shivers. And now ensues a Scene over

which the world has long wailed ; and not unjustly ; for a sorrier spectacle, of Incongruity fronting Incongruity, and as it were recognising themselves incongruous, and staring stupidly in each other's face, the world seldom saw.

King Louis, his door being beaten on, opens it ; stands with free bosom ; asking, "What do you want ?" The Sansculottic flood recoils awestruck ;

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returns however, the rear pressing on the front, with cries of, "Veto! Patriot Ministers! Remove Veto!"—which things, Louis valiantly answers, this is not the time to do, nor this the way to ask him to do. Honour what virtue is in a man. Louis does not want courage; he has even the higher kind called moral-courage, though only the passive-half of that. His few National Grenadiers shuffle back with him, into the embrasure of a window: there he stands, with unimpeachable passivity, amid the shouldering and the braying; a spectacle to men. They hand him a red Cap of Liberty; he sets it quietly on his head, forgets it there. He complains of thirst; half-drunk Rascality offers him a bottle, he drinks of it. "Sire, do not fear," says one of his Grenadiers. "Fear?" answers Louis; "feel then," putting the man's hand on his heart. So stands Majesty in Red woollen Cap; black Sansculottism weltering round him, far and wide, aimless, with inarticulate dissonance, with cries of "Veto! Patriot Ministers!"

For the space of three hours or more! The National Assembly is adjourned; tricolour Municipals avail almost nothing: Mayor Pétion tarries absent; Authority is none. The Queen with her Children and Sister Elizabeth, in tears and terror not for themselves only, are sitting behind barricaded tables and Grenadiers, in an inner room. The Men in black have all wisely disappeared. Blind lake of Sansculottism welters stagnant through the King's Château, for the space of three hours.

Nevertheless all things do end. Vergniaud arrives with Legislative Deputation, the Evening Session having now opened. Mayor Pétion has arrived, is haranguing, "lifted on the shoulders of two Grenadiers"; finally Commandant Santerre defiles; passes out, with his Sansculottism, by the opposite side of the Château. Passing through the room where the Queen, with an air of dignity and sorrowful resignation, sat among the tables and Grenadiers, a woman offers her too a Red Cap; she holds it in her hand, even puts it on the little Prince Royal. "Madame," said Santerre, "this People loves you more than you think."—About eight o'clock the Royal Family fall into each other's arms amid "torrents of tears." Unhappy Family! Who would not weep for it, were there not a whole world to be wept for?

Thus has the Age of Chivalry gone, and that of Hunger come. Thus does all-needing Sansculottism look in the face of its *Roi*, Regulator, King or Able-man; and find that he has nothing to give it. Thus do the two Parties, brought face to face after long centuries, stare stupidly at one another. This, it is I; but, good Heaven, is that Thou?—and depart, not knowing what to make of it. And yet, Incongruities having recognised themselves to be incongruous, something must be made of it. The Fates know what.

This is the world-famous Twentieth of June, more worthy to be called the "Procession of the Black Breeches."<sup>h</sup>

#### LA FAYETTE'S FALL

Of the events that followed fast, Croker makes this surprising statement: "The 'Fifty Days,' from the 20th of June to the 10th of August, 1792, comprised the stormy transition of France from the monarchy to the republic, and have already had, and will probably continue to have, a greater influence on the destinies of mankind than any other fifty days in the history of the world."<sup>o</sup>

This 20th of June was a day of delusion; for as no definite plan or object had been settled for the undertaking, nothing was really attained. and it even

appeared at first as if the originators of the tumult would have effected precisely the opposite of that which they intended to accomplish. The national assembly felt ashamed of being misused, and that they and the king had been disgraced before the eyes of all Europe. Paris, and all educated Frenchmen in the whole kingdom, felt indignant at the manner in which freedom and the new constitution had been dishonoured by the very dregs of the people, who had been excited and led on by the profligates and criminals of the wine-shops.

The elder Lacretelle,<sup>u</sup> in his small-talk respecting the Revolution, states that one petition against the scenes of the 20th of June was signed by 8,000 and another by 20,000 citizens, and that the public displeasure was so great as to cause the suspension of Pétion and Manuel for a time from their offices, because they had not fulfilled their duty. The national assembly, which had been previously alarmed for their safety and power, now recovered resolution and drew the prosecution before themselves. On the 13th of July the two Girondists were acquitted and restored, and on the following day (the 14th) they triumphed and insulted the king at the *fête* of the confederation.

La Fayette planned to carry the king away from the city and conduct him to Normandy, where the great majority belonged to the party of the monarchical constitutionalists, which was by far the strongest; but he could not resolve to act with boldness and rapidity without first writing and speaking much on the subject. A letter from him which was read on the 18th had already excited a great dislike to his pretensions; his arbitrary departure from the army, his appearance in Paris on the 28th of June, and his speech to the assembly, before which he appeared uncalled, caused universal displeasure.

La Fayette assumed such a tone in the national assembly that, if he was not prepared to give effect to his language by force of arms, he must necessarily lose all his political distinction by his insulting conduct. He reproached them severely on account of the events of the 20th, and demanded the suppression of the Jacobins. His address excited a violent storm: proposals were made to arraign him because he had left the army without leave, and it was only with difficulty accomplished that the assembly should contemptuously proceed to the order of the day.

Having failed in his attempt in the national assembly, he wished to persuade the king and the queen to put their confidence in him, and to suffer him to convey them from Paris to Rouen. His conversation with the queen convinced him that she felt too great a repugnance towards him fully to confide in his plans, even for her own deliverance. In fact nothing could be effected in the Tuileries by his instrumentality.

On the 7th of July, Lamourette, the constitutional bishop of Lyons, addressed the deputies on the evils and misfortunes of their bitter party-spirit in such a pathetic and affecting strain that all suddenly vowed to forget their mutual animosities, embraced each other and were reconciled, in the midst of the loud rejoicings and applause of the people in the galleries. This transitory reconciliation is called "Lamourette's kiss of peace."

#### FRANCE RISES EN MASSE

The reconciliation of the 7th of July might perhaps have borne some fruit, had not the constitutional deputies in the national assembly, and even some of the Girondists, insisted on the punishment of the originators of the scenes of the 20th of June. Manuel and Pétion, who were at the head of



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the municipal administration of Paris, were to be prosecuted, and it would therefore have been easy for them to deliver and destroy all the adherents of the monarchy by a new general insurrection. Since the 2nd of July, the national guard had been so organised by law that the guardsmen from among the lower classes, who were armed with pikes, played a leading part in all its operations, because all respectable persons were filled with disgust. By the law just referred to, the whole general staff of the national guard of Paris, and of all cities containing 50,000 inhabitants, were dismissed, and the grenadiers of the rifle companies disbanded, because such distinctions in names and dress were contrary to equality. As the insurrection prepared in July was to call forth an ideal republic, all the Girondists also, particularly Brissot, Vergniaud, Guadet, and Condorcet, from the middle of the month adopted the tone and language of Camille Desmoulins and Danton.

The declaration of war made on the part of Austria and Prussia was instrumental in promoting the success of the *coup de force* against the king, the monarchy, and everything in any wise connected with the old order of things. The Austrians, Prussians, and émigrés no sooner made a forward movement against France, and the Sardinians began to threaten the south, than advantage was taken of the pretext of the safety of the nation to effect the abolition of all the existing authorities and institutions. A levy of the people *en masse* was proclaimed in order to defend the frontiers, and a patriotic movement originated which must necessarily set all law at defiance. It was so much the easier to turn this general movement and national indignation against the king and the monarchy, as everyone knew that the court had kept up an uninterrupted correspondence with the enemies, and the queen was in the habit of anxiously calculating the number of days which it would take the allies to reach Paris.

On the entrance of the allied army into France, the duke of Brunswick, as commander-in-chief, was necessarily obliged to issue a manifesto, on the tenor of which the agents of Louis XVI and the princes were consulted. Heymann and Mallet du Pan entirely concurred in the opinion that it ought not to be threatening, and that the powers must not assume the right of entering the country as judges, but in the character of mediators between the king and the nation. This wish, which was expressed in the name of the king, for whose relief the whole expedition was designed, was warmly opposed by the count of Artois, who seems to have been born to bring calamity and ruin upon the elder branch of the Bourbons, and by the worthless Calonne as representatives of the émigrés, who were thirsting after a bloody revenge.

The duke of Brunswick, who bore the blame of this manifesto for his whole life, by which he was at once exposed to ridicule and hatred, was wholly dissatisfied both with its substance and its tone; but what could a Frenchman and complete courtier, such as he was, do?

This unlucky manifesto, which was full of ridiculous and cruel threats against all those who had at that time any influence and power in France, reached Paris at the very moment in which Danton's Cordeliers, Robespierre's Jacobins, and the enthusiastic republicans of the Gironde had come to a complete understanding on the necessity of abolishing monarchy and establishing a republic, in order to rescue the national honour, and on the lawfulness of any means by which these ends might be promoted. The Jacobins, who were under the leading of Robespierre, had not from the first approved of the reconciliation of the 7th of July, and the reconciled parties no sooner again disagreed, on account of the judicial investigation of the scenes enacted on the 20th of June, than they promoted anarchy.

Barbaroux and his over-sanguine friends called forth an insurrection in the southern departments of France ; Servan's decree relating to the army of patriots was placarded on the walls of Paris in another form, in which it did not require the king's sanction, and immediately eight hundred Marseillaise were ordered by Barbaroux to come to Paris. As early as the 9th of July, those ministers who had accepted office on Dumouriez's retirement in order to please the king, were compelled to relinquish their places.

By the decree issued on the 11th, in which the declaration was made that "the country was in danger," the system of legislation changed the whole of France into a great camp. All the legislative and executive bodies were to hold uninterrupted sittings, that is, were declared permanent ; the deputies of the people, the councils of the communes, and the sections in the cities therefore took the government upon themselves, and exercised immediate jurisdiction through their committees without an application to the ministry or any other intermediate authority, and their bodies received regular instructions as to their course of action from the leaders of the clubs. This artificial and forced condition was characterised by the name of the Crisis, and this crisis was to be announced throughout the whole of the kingdom by the firing of minute-guns. Measures were forthwith adopted throughout all the cities, towns, and villages of France, to enrol thousands of volunteers for the defence of the nation in the lists opened for that purpose.



MARAT

(From an old French print)

The *fête* of the 14th of July was celebrated this time by very different

persons from those who had been present on the two previous years. Those who attended the solemn act of confederation in 1792 were from that time forward called Confederates, which expression came to signify the same as Terrorists. Manuel and Pétion, it is true, as well as some other deputies of the Gironde, continued to be associated with the wild and destructive tools of Danton and Marat till September ; but the proper heads of the Girondist party, or all those republicans who were opposed to a state of lawlessness and anarchy, perceived as early as the 14th of July the object at which Robespierre, Marat, Danton, and Camille Desmoulins, who is not to be confounded with the three former, were aiming ; the most moderate of the party therefore endeavoured to free themselves from the fanatics and scoundrels and to draw nearer to the king. The ablest men among the republicans, Brissot, Guadet, and Vergniaud, opened a correspondence with the king : their letters were afterwards found during the plundering of the Tuileries, and were used by their enemies against them ; they were unable however to come to any understanding, because they only promised to save the king upon conditions to which the latter thought he could not possibly accede.

From this time forward the dethronement of the king was demanded on all sides by petitions from the communes, magistrates, and sections of Paris.

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It soon, however, became obvious that it was as little possible in any legal way to proclaim the king's forfeiture of his right to the throne, as to cause a republic to be decreed by an assembly of deputies whose powers were derived from a monarchical constitution: it was therefore necessary to have recourse to other means. The means adopted was a recourse to the pretended sovereignty of the mob, called the people, which had been called into action on the 20th of June, without however having any definite plan or following any systematic course; this was now to be done.

The insurrection, which was resolved upon for August, was chiefly promoted from the middle of July by two advocates of great talents, who devoted all their powers to the task, and acted under the influence of an ill-regulated enthusiasm. They were undoubtedly men of pure patriotism and good intentions, although they had recourse to criminal means. These men were Camille Desmoulins and Barbaroux, the former of whom was an advocate in Paris and led the people by his speeches, and the latter, who was an advocate in Marseilles, put the whole south of France in motion. The masses of the people who were to be worked upon in the wine-shops and streets, and to be roused to action by money and the payment of their scores, were intrusted to such people as Chabot, Bazire, and Danton, who employed for their object the writings of Marat, Fréron, and the innumerable pamphleteers of the time.

#### “THE RISE OF THE COMMUNE”

According to the political creed of the democrats of the time, the sovereign people alone could determine and execute what those who put themselves forward as their organs eagerly desired; the national assembly therefore adopted measures to justify them by supposing that the sovereign people was always assembled. It published a decree, in which the forty-eight assemblies of the sections of Paris were declared to be legally permanent, and it was therefore only necessary to wait each evening till all the prosperous, quiet, and peaceable inhabitants had retired to their homes, or become weary of the strife, disputation, and blustering, and there existed in the midst of Paris these forty-eight smoking volcanos.<sup>d</sup>

As the crisis of insurrection approached, these sections sent commissaries — deputies in fact — to the chief municipal assembly at the Hôtel-de-Ville, which, composed of citizens of some substance, and more Girondist than Jacobin, was little zealous in the cause of anarchy. The commissaries, accordingly, took upon them to expel the old municipality, and to establish themselves in its place. Such was the formation of the celebrated *commune*, that seconded the insurrection, and, afterwards, resisting the assembly itself, gave the Jacobins the victory over all antagonists. The municipal council of Paris was in fact the helm of the Revolution; whatever party succeeded in grasping it guided the vessel of state.<sup>e</sup>

The desperate men who had been assembled in the southern provinces of France by the friends of Barbaroux, and called Marseillaise, were to be employed for the execution of their design; these men obtained their name from having been collected in Marseilles, from the refuse of the seaports of Africa and the Levant. Barbaroux<sup>f</sup> has himself informed us of the zeal by which he was animated in urging the forwarding of the Marseillaise to Paris, but is very careful to conceal the fact that they consisted of bandits, varabonds, pardoned convicts, and other scum of the seaport towns. They met with a splendid reception on their entrance into Paris on the 30th of



July.<sup>1</sup> The most general hospitality was shown, and they were intentionally invited to entertainments with the national guards of the better class.<sup>2</sup> They were first quartered in a barrack, but as the time approached in which they were to be employed as instruments for the realisation of the plans of their leaders, they were removed into a section (*des Cordeliers*) where they would be near the central point of the storm, in which they were to be chief agents.

When at length the 9th of August arrived, and all was ready for storming the royal palace, the good-natured Santerre hesitated long before he could bring himself to consent to become the leader of a band of murderers; moreover he was not a man who had seen military service; but he was provided with one of those sergeants who in former times were the supports of the noble cadets, performed the real service, and became the generals of the Revolution. Westermann was obliged, it is said, to compel Santerre by force to obey Danton's hints. The same services were rendered by Fournier, a West Indian planter, who having lost his property during the first disturbances in the colonies afterwards played one of the most dreadful parts on every occasion in Paris under the nickname of "the American." On the 9th and 10th of August he marched at the head of the Marseillaise.

#### THE GATHERING OF THE "COMMUNE"

On the evening of the 9th of August, 1792, the same course was pursued as had become usual; the rabble, denominated "the Sovereign People," gathered together in the sectional assemblies to pass their resolutions, waited till the peaceful citizens were either scattered about on the various military posts or had retired to rest, before they commenced their deliberations in the forty-eight sections of Paris, on the propriety of suspending the functions of all the existing authorities. A decree was issued, by virtue of which the sovereign people resumed all the powers which it had at any time conferred, and undertook the immediate rights of legislation and government, or intrusted their execution to a committee of the sections, which was immediately chosen (only during the insurrection) and met in the hall of the archbishop's palace (*évêché*), where also the constituent assembly on their arrival in Paris had long held their meetings.

At midnight the signal was given by the firing of artillery; the alarm bells were rung during the whole of the night, and those who had been provisionally chosen to fill the places of the old magistrates under the new order of things were called into action. The immense mass of men of violence and blood began their march. Westermann, in connection with Santerre, led the people of the faubourg St. Antoine; Alexander, Santerre's brother-in-law, headed those of St. Marceau; Barbaroux the Marseillaise; and Panis the section of the arsenal. If, however, the departmental or municipal magistrates had done their duty the whole uproar would have been easily nipped in the bud.<sup>d</sup>

The royal inmates of the Tuileries had ample warning of their peril. The few royalists who still remained in Paris hurried to defend their sove-

[<sup>1</sup> During their march north the Marseillaise, in fraternising with the patriots sang the hymn of Rouget de Lisle, which was from that time called *La Marseillaise*.]

[<sup>2</sup> Pétion, as mayor, caused arms, powder, and ball to be distributed amongst these dangerous people. In this way quarrels arose, which led to absolute contests between the entertainers and the guests, the national guards of the sections *des filles de St. Thomas* and *des petits pères* and the Marseillaise. Many sons of respectable citizens were dangerously wounded in the fray, and followed from the Champs Elysées into the interior of the Tuileries.]



ROUGET DE LISLE SINGING THE MARSEILLAISE





[1792 A.D.]

reign; but, for the most part old helpless courtiers, they merely excited the jealousy of the national guard, without offering material aid. Where then were the gay troops of émigrés, the gallant youth of the French noblesse? This was the hour and the field where they might have perished with honour, or more probably triumphed. In their stead, the defenders of the palace consisted of a Swiss regiment, mustering eight hundred men, and two of the most staunch battalions of the national guard. They were commanded by Mandat, an old soldier, who happened to be the colonel in authority for the day.

At first the national guard were unwilling to act without orders from the municipality; but Pétion, the Girondist mayor, who dared neither to approve nor disapprove the insurrection, had wandered to the palace, in order to have after-proofs that he had not participated in it, so strong were the fears that the people might fail in their enterprise. Pétion, seized at the Tuileries, was compelled to sign an order to repel force by force. Authorised by this, Mandat made dispositions to resist the insurgents; he proposed to anticipate their attack, and fall upon the columns of rabble as they advanced. A summons from the municipality now reached Mandat; he thought it necessary to obey, hurried to the Hôtel-de-Ville, and was astonished to find it altogether changed, and composed of new members.

After interrogating Mandat, Huguenin, the president of the commune, ordered, with a side gesture of the hand, that he should be removed. He was removed effectually, by a pistol-shot; and thus the troops at the château were left without a commander. Louis himself might have supplied his place; the queen at one moment prompted him to this energy. Seizing a pistol from the belt of one of his attendants, Marie Antoinette presented it to Louis, "Now is the moment to show yourself." Louis was endowed with passive, not with active courage. He obeyed mechanically the spirited suggestion, showed himself at the balcony, descended and reviewed the different troops, but all the time as silent and unanimated as at an ordinary scene. A short speech, the wielding of his sword, his mounting on horseback, any of these acts, in short, that strike and carry away the feelings of a mass, would here have told, and rallied all hearts round the monarch, who was still saluted with cries of *Vive le roi!* The fuel was there in a thousand hearts, that could have been kindled into loyalty, had the cold nature of Louis been capable of striking out a spark: but the review was a complete failure. The execrations of the mob gained upon the national guard more than the sight of their pale, spiritless, and weeping monarch. The cannoniers turned their guns against the château, in token of their opinions; the gendarmerie dispersed; and the Swiss alone remained to defend the palace.

Seeing this, Roederer, *procureur* or attorney of the commune, advised Louis to abandon the château, and retire with his family to the national assembly. The queen violently opposed this step. "Madame," said he, "you will have to answer for the lives of the king and of all his family, as well as of those collected here to defend you." This apostrophe decided Louis. After suffering unnumbered insults, Louis, followed by his queen and children, the dauphin in the arms of a pioneer, entered the assembly betwixt eight and nine o'clock.

In the meantime the masses of insurgents had penetrated into the courts in front of the château. The Swiss, and the few national guards that remained, made signs of amity from the windows, flinging down cartouches, and putting their caps upon their bayonets. The pikemen accordingly advanced to the great entrance under the vestibule, and demanded posses-

sion of the château, at the same time preparing to force a kind of barricade. Three or four Swiss sentries were stationed in low open windows. Some of the rabble amused themselves by pulling these soldiers down with the crooks of their pikes, and slaying them. Their comrades, seeing this, fired down upon the assassins, and the combat became general.<sup>1</sup> The Swiss, enraged, formed in a body, rushed down the grand staircase, sweeping the rabble before them. Issuing into the first court, they charged the Marseillaise, who turned and fled, being imitated by the hordes of the faubourgs. In an instant every court and avenue was cleared; and had there been a single troop of cavalry to continue the rout of the fugitives, had Mandat, or any officer been there to follow up the advantage, the "cause of the people" was forever lost and disgraced.

But the king himself was destined to strike the fatal blow to his own cause. Hearing the cannon and the tumult, he sent M. d'Hervilly with an order for the Swiss to retire and abandon the château. D'Hervilly found the soldiers victorious, bringing in the cannon of the people, planting one piece in battery, spiking others. He made known the unseasonable command, most absurdly, to only one battalion of the Swiss. It thought proper to obey, and repair to the assembly, where it was instantly disarmed; and thus the remaining two or three hundred were left exposed to all the fury of the mob, rendered vindictive by their own cowardice and defeat.

In the lapse of an hour the Marseillaise, unpursued, had received courage; mustered once more their hordes; and began to flock back to the château. They found its approaches unguarded. They rushed in. The Swiss, surrounded on all sides, were overpowered and massacred. The victorious rabble once more filled the halls and salons of the palace, murdering most of those who fell in their way, yet sparing some from caprice more than mercy. Eighteen Swiss took refuge in the chapel, and offered to surrender, if their lives were spared. The promise was speedily given; and the Swiss were not the less inhumanly butchered. The first attack took place about nine o'clock; by eleven the mob were masters of the Tuileries.<sup>g</sup>

#### CARLYLE ON THE MASSACRE AND ITS RESULTS

One party flies out by the Rue de l'Échelle; is destroyed utterly, "*entier*." A second, by the other side, throws itself into the Garden; "hurrying across a keen fusillade"; rushes suppliant into the National Assembly; finds pity and refuge in the back benches there. The third, and largest, darts out in column, three hundred strong, towards the Champs Élysées, to escape in holes, to die fighting from street to street. The very Firemen, who pump and labour on that smoking Carrousel, are shot at: why should the Carrousel not burn? Some Swiss take refuge in private houses; find that mercy too does still dwell in the heart of man. The brave Marseillaise are merciful, late so wroth; and labour to save. Clemence, the Wine-merchant, stumbles forward to the Bar of the Assembly, a rescued Swiss in his hand; tells passionately how he rescued him with pain and peril, how he will henceforth support him, being childless himself; and falls a-swoon round the poor Swiss's neck: amid plaudits. But the most are butchered, and even mangled. Fifty (some say Fourscore) were marched as prisoners, by National Guards, to the Hôtel-de-Ville: the ferocious people bursts

[<sup>1</sup> Carlyle's notes: "Patriot onlookers have their misgivings; one strangest Patriot onlooker thinks that the Swiss, had they a commander, would beat. He is a man not unqualified to judge; the name of him Napoleon Bonaparte."]

[1792 A.D.]

through on them, in the Place-de-Grève; massacres them to the last man. "*O Peuple*, envy of the universe!" *Peuple*, in mad Gaelic effervescence!

Surely few things in the history of carnage are painfuller. What ineffaceable red streak, flickering so sad in the memory, is that, of this poor column of red Swiss "breaking itself in the confusion of opinions"; dispersing, into blackness and death! Honour to you, brave men; honourable pity, through long times! Not martyrs were ye; and yet almost more. He was no King of yours, this Louis; and he forsook you like a King of shreds and patches: ye were but sold to him for some poor sixpence a-day; yet would ye work for your wages, keep your pledged word. The work now was to die; and ye did it.

Thus is the Tenth of August won and lost. Patriotism reckons its slain by the thousand on thousand, so deadly was the Swiss fire from these windows; but will finally reduce them to some Twelve-hundred. No child's-play was it;—nor is it! Till two in the afternoon the massacring, the breaking and the burning has not ended; nor the loose Bedlam shut itself again.

How deluges of frantic Sansculottism roared through all passages of this Tuileries, ruthless in vengeance; how the Valets were butchered, hewn down; and Dame Campan<sup>e</sup> saw the Marseillaise sabre flash over her head, but the Blackbrowed said, "*Va-t-en*" (Get thee gone); and flung her from him unstruck; how in the cellars wine-bottles were broken, wine-butts were staved-in and drunk; and, upwards to the very garrets, all windows tumbled out their precious royal furnitures: and, with gold mirrors, velvet curtains, down of ript feather-beds, and dead bodies of men, the Tuileries was like no Garden of the Earth:—all this let him who has a taste for it see amply in Mercier,<sup>d</sup> in acrid Montgaillard,<sup>r</sup> or Beaulieu of the *Deux Amis*.<sup>s</sup> A hundred and eighty bodies of Swiss lie piled there; naked, unremoved till the second day. Patriotism has torn their red coats into snips; and marches with them at the Pike's point.

But the blackbrowed Marseillaise have struck down the tyrant of the Château. He is struck down; low, and hardly again to rise. What a moment for an august Legislative was that when the Hereditary Representative entered, under such circumstances; and the Grenadier, carrying the little Prince Royal out of the press, set him down on the Assembly-table! A moment—which one had to smooth-off with oratory; waiting what the next would bring! Louis said few words: "He was come hither to prevent a great crime; he believed himself safer nowhere than here." President Vergniaud answered briefly, in vague oratory as we say, about "defence of Constituted Authorities," about dying at our post. And so King Louis sat him down; first here, then there; for a difficulty arose, the Constitution not permitting us to debate while the King is present: finally he settles himself with his family in the "*Loge of the Logographe*," in the Reporter's-Box of a Journalist; which is beyond the enchanted Constitutional Circuit, separated from it by a rail. To such Lodge of the *Logographe*, measuring some ten feet square, with a small closet at the entrance of it behind, is the King of broad France now limited: here can he and his sit pent, under the eyes of the world, or retire into their closet at intervals; for the space of sixteen hours. Such quite peculiar moment has the Legislative lived to see.

But also what a moment was that other, few minutes later, when the three Marseillaise cannon went off, and the Swiss rolling-fire and universal thunder, like the crack of Doom, began to rattle! Honourable Members start to their feet; stray bullets singing epicedium even here, shivering in with window-



glass and jingle. "No, this is our post; let us die here!" They sit therefore, like stone Legislators. But may not the Loge of the *Logographe* be forced from behind? Tear down the railing that divides it from the enchanted Constitutional Circuit! Ushers tear and tug; his Majesty himself aiding from within: the railing gives way; Majesty and Legislative are united in place, unknown destiny hovering over both.

Rattle, and again rattle, went the thunder; one breathless wide-eyed messenger rushing in after another: King's order to the Swiss went out. It was a fearful thunder; but, as we know, it ended. Breathless messengers, fugitive Swiss, denunciatory Patriots, trepidation; finally tripudiation!—King Louis listens to all; retires about midnight "to three little rooms on the upper floor"; till the Luxembourg be prepared for him, and "the safeguard of the Nation." Safer if Brunswick were once here! Or, alas, not so safe? Ye hapless discrowned heads! Crowds came, next morning, to catch a glimpse of them, in their three upper rooms. Montgaillard<sup>r</sup> says the august Captives wore an air of cheerfulness, even of gaiety; that the Queen and Princess Lamballe, who had joined her overnight, looked out of the opened window, "shook powder from their hair on the people below, and laughed." He is an acrid distorted man.

For the rest, one may guess that the Legislative, above all that the New Municipality continues busy. Messengers, Municipal or Legislative, and swift despatches rush off to all corners of France; full of triumph, blended with indignant wail, for Twelve-hundred have fallen. France sends up its blended shout responsive; the Tenth of August shall be as the Fourteenth of July, only bloodier and greater. The Court has conspired? Poor Court: the Court has been vanquished; and will have both the scath to bear and the scorn. How the statues of Kings do now all fall! Bronze Henri IV himself, though he wore a cockade once, jingles down from the Pont Neuf, where *Patrie* floats in Danger. Much more does Louis Fourteenth, from the Place Vendôme, jingle down; and even breaks in falling. The curious can remark, written on his horse's shoe: "12 Août, 1692"; a Century and a Day.

The tenth of August was Friday. The week is not done, when our old Patriot Ministry is recalled, what of it can be got: strict Roland, Genevese Clavière; add heavy Monge the Mathematician, once a stone-hewer; and, for Minister of Justice, — Danton, "led hither," as himself says, in one of his gigantic figures, "through the breach of Patriot cannon!" These, under Legislative Committees, must rule the wreck as they can: confusedly enough; with an old Legislative water-logged, with a new Municipality so brisk. But National Convention will get itself together; and then! Without delay, however, let a new Jury-Court and Criminal Tribunal be set up in Paris, to try the crimes and conspiracies of the Tenth. High Court of Orleans is distant, slow: the blood of the Twelve-hundred Patriots, whatever become of other blood, shall be inquired after. Tremble, ye Criminals and Conspirators; the Minister of Justice is Danton! Robespierre too, after the victory, sits in the New Municipality; insurrectionary "improvised Municipality," which calls itself Council General of the Commune.

For three days now, Louis and his Family have heard the Legislative Debates in the Lodge of the *Logographe*; and retired nightly to their small upper rooms. The Luxembourg and safeguard of the Nation could not be got ready: nay, it seems the Luxembourg has too many cellars and issues; no Municipality can undertake to watch it. The compact Prison of the Temple, not so elegant indeed, were much safer. To the Temple, therefore!

[1792 A.D.]

On Monday, 13th day of August, 1792, in Mayor Pétion's carriage, Louis and his sad suspended Household fare thither; all Paris out to look at them. As they pass through the Place Vendôme, Louis Fourteenth's Statue lies broken on the ground. Pétion is afraid the Queen's looks may be thought scornful, and produce provocation; she casts down her eyes, and does not look at all. The "press is prodigious," but quiet: here and there, it shouts *Vive la Nation*; but for most part gazes in silence. French Royalty vanishes within the gates of the Temple: these old peaked Towers, like peaked Extinguisher or *Bonsoir*, do cover it up; — from which same Towers, poor Jacques de Molay and his Templars were burnt out, by French Royalty, five centuries since. Such are the turns of Fate below. Foreign Ambassadors, English Lord Gower have all demanded passports; are driving indignantly towards their respective homes.

So, then, the Constitution is over? Forever and a day! Gone is that wonder of the Universe; First biennial Parliament, water-logged, waits only till the Convention come; and will then sink to endless depths. One can guess the silent rage of Old-Constituents, Constitution-builders, extinct Feuillants, men who thought the Constitution would march! La Fayette rises to the altitude of the situation; at the head of his Army. Legislative Commissioners are posting towards him and it, on the Northern Frontier, to congratulate and perorate: he orders the Municipality of Sedan to arrest these Commissioners, and keep them strictly in ward as Rebels, till he say further. The Sedan Municipals obey.

The Sedan Municipals obey: but the Soldiers of the La Fayette Army? The Soldiers of the La Fayette Army have, as all Soldiers have, a kind of dim feeling that they themselves are Sansculottes in buff belts; that the victory of the Tenth of August is also a victory for them. They will not rise and follow La Fayette to Paris; they will rise and send him thither! On the 18th, which is but next Saturday, La Fayette, with some two or three indignant Staff-officers, one of whom is Old-Constituent Alexandre de Lameth, having first put his Lines in what order he could, — rides swiftly over the Marches, towards Holland. Rides, alas, swiftly into the claws of Austrians! He, long wavering, trembling on the verge of the Horizon, has set, in Ohnütz Dungeons. Adieu, thou Hero of two Worlds; thinnest, but compact honour-worthy man! Through long rough night of captivity, through other tumults, triumphs and changes, thou wilt swing well, "fast-anchored to the Washington Formula"; and be the Hero and Perfect-character, were it only of one idea.<sup>h</sup>

## THE FALL OF THE MONARCHY

The members of the new commune, having literally conquered power, intended to keep it, and to give the law to the assembly. They were the Revolution. They established themselves permanently at the Hôtel-de-Ville, received numerous deputations and petitions and without examination or discussion passed resolution after resolution, to the number of two hundred per day, eating, drinking, and sleeping in the hall. Their first cares were to take the charge of the police into their own hands, to close the barriers and inspect passports, to release those in custody, and to hand over to the patriots the presses of the royalist journals. They removed the busts of Bailly and La Fayette from the hall of the municipality. They sent commissioners direct to the armies. They suspended the directory of the department and set Pétion at liberty.

The leader and organ of the commune was Robespierre. Although he had gone into hiding on the 10th, according to his custom on days of danger, he presented himself at the Hôtel-de-Ville on the 11th, and, as within and about the hall and on the tribunes he nowhere found any but Jacobins and sectionaries affiliated to the Jacobins, he was received as an oracle; he was chosen to be the principal orator of the deputations. He then assumed a tone of brutal frankness. He avowed in so many words that the 10th of August had been a premeditated plot; that the sections "rousing and guiding the patriotism of the people had organised the whole and selected their moment." "The plot," he added, "was not shrouded in darkness; it was deliberated in open day, in presence of the nation. Notice of the plan was given by the placards, and the people, acting in its sovereign capacity, has not deigned to conceal its design from its enemies." Energy was now demanded. Robespierre complained that the assembly, which was guilty of having absolved La Fayette, had decreed the suspension, not the deposition of the king; that it had spoken of the distrust he inspired and not of his crimes; and that it had actually chosen the sitting of the 10th to appoint a governor for the royal child. Little by little he worked up to the words: "The kings or the French must succumb. Mercy is barbarous. All your enemies must fall under the sword of the laws."

Royalty was vanquished. The legislative was not vanquished, but it was made of no effect. The Revolution had passed over its head.







## CHAPTER IX

### THE COMMUNE AND THE KING'S EXECUTION

[1792-1793 A.D.]

THE Girondists now wore cheerful faces. They affected delight at what had taken place; they claimed their share in the triumph and the spoils; and the Jacobins for the moment thought fit to respect these allies. The old ministers of the Gironde, Roland, Servan, Clavière, were restored to their respective offices. Pétion was allowed to keep the place of mayor. Such were the terms tacitly offered by the Jacobins, as the price of having their new municipality recognised by the assembly. Nevertheless the commune spoke bold and independent language. They sent a deputation, which thus addressed the assembly:

"The people, which sends us to you, declares you still worthy of its confidence; but at the same time can acknowledge no power authorised to pass judgment on the late extraordinary measures, prompted by necessity, except the people itself, your sovereign and ours, convoked in its primary assemblies." In reply, the assembly had the weakness, inevitable indeed, to acknowledge the new municipality and applaud its acts. With the Girondist ministers were united Lebrun, who was intrusted with foreign affairs, and the redoubtable Danton, who was called, it must have been ironically, the minister of justice.

Themselves entrenched in the commune, and supported by Danton in the government, the Jacobins now pushed their violent measures with audacity. Marat was the soul of this diabolical faction. His was the system and conception that it was necessary to the success of the Revolution to sacrifice unrelentingly the lives of the aristocrats. "Behold the monarch," argued he, "how absurd to have compromised with him, or expected sincerity! From the first moment he ought to have been dethroned or rendered harm-

less. The aristocrats are the same. They can never forgive. In them the Revolution will forever find enemies. But where is the prison ample enough to contain the numbers of the upper classes, were the jailers faithful enough to guard them? The grave is the only prison, the executioner the only certain keeper. Slay, slay! such is the key of true policy. Your armies are of no avail. Give me two hundred Neapolitans, armed with poniards: with them I will revolutionise France!"

It is a great stain upon the moral courage of the French that in their representative assemblies the audacious minority always overpowered the majority. The constitutionalists of the first assembly were crushed by their less numerous adversaries, and now the Girondists were at the mercy of the Jacobins. The municipality usurped all legislative power. Vengeance was their object, terror their support. In order to wreak the one and inspire the other, they proposed the composition of a revolutionary committee, by which alone passports were to be granted, and which was charged to arrest and pursue the suspected. Domiciliary visits enabled their emissaries to penetrate into all the houses of the capital. Moreover, the establishment of a revolutionary tribunal was required, as necessary to the safety of the state. This, to be composed of one member chosen from each section, was to issue summary and irrevocable judgments.

To this atrocious demand the assembly, despite its timidity, demurred; and the commune immediately despatched one of its body to pronounce the following menace: "As citizen, and as magistrate of the people, I come to acquaint the assembly that this evening at midnight the tocsin will sound, and the drums beat to arms. The people are weary of being balked of vengeance. Beware that they do not do themselves justice. I demand that instantly you vote a criminal tribunal, composed of one member from each section." This command was obeyed, and the decree passed.

While the Jacobins were thus directing their efforts to private and domestic vengeance, the Girondists were taking counsel as to the defence of the kingdom. Longwy was taken. In a fortnight the enemies might be in Paris. It was then that the latter party conceived the plan of abandoning the capital, and defending the country behind the Loire. The domineering conduct of the Jacobins and of the municipality, no doubt, rendered this project less displeasing to them. Yet it came ill from men who had been the first to sound the cry for war, even when the anarchists deprecated its chances. Now, however, the parties had changed sides. The Girondists adopted the subdued tone of despair; the Jacobins the uncompromising language of audacity. Danton, above all, inspired those around him with courage, and prepared, rather than surrender the capital, to bury himself beneath its ruins. To this was joined an inveterate resolve that, if the Revolution was destined to succumb, its internal enemies, the aristocrats and royalists, should not survive to enjoy their triumph. Such was the fierce motive of the massacres of September.

Throughout the month of August the revolutionary tribunal and the sections had crowded the prisons with the suspected. There was absolutely no room for more. And it was upon learning this that an agent of the Jacobins was directed to examine the quarries beneath the faubourg St. Germain. They were found to offer a capacious receptacle for the dead. Maillard, the man who had headed the female deputation of the expedition to Versailles, was now chosen, and supplied with funds to collect a band of sturdy assassins like himself, together with all fit instruments of death, such as swords, knives, and mallets.<sup>b</sup>

[1792 A.D.]

## THE POLICY OF EXTERMINATION

The advance of the allies against Paris, and the ridiculous threats of the émigrés, which were strengthened by the signature and authority of the duke of Brunswick, gave great weight to the principle advocated by Danton and Marat, who maintained that there was no other means of rescuing the cause of freedom and the national honour than by a war of extermination carried on by the poor against the rich, and the uneducated against the educated classes.

From the 10th of August the doctrine was universally preached that everything old must be thoroughly extirpated, and the religion and morality of former times put in abeyance till a new order of things was founded; and both Robespierre and Danton acted on this principle to its fullest extent. Horrible as it may seem, it is yet perfectly true that Danton, as minister of justice, employed the administration of the sacred duty with which he was intrusted for the protection of his fellow-citizens, for their murder, and the funds of the state for the payment and reward of the murderers.

The national assembly made preparations for another St. Bartholomew's day in the beginning of September, by passing a decree, on the 15th of August, that the fathers, wives, mothers, or children of émigrés should not be suffered to remove out of the bounds of their respective communes. Previous to this, a decree had been passed with a view to divide the great estates, and to raise a multitude of families from a condition of feudal bondage to the rank and comfort of small proprietors; it had been resolved that the large estates of the émigrés should be divided and sold, and thus brought by portions into the hands of the new possessors.

After the 12th, all those who were called aristocratic journalists in Paris were arrested, and their printing-presses transferred to the patriots. Audouin, accompanied by a band of three hundred and fifty patriots, traversed the whole neighbourhood of Paris, in order to hunt out and arrest aristocrats. Domiciliary visits of all kinds were organised on a great scale, and Fouquier Tinville, together with some other similar persons, is said to have ordered the violation of private correspondence. Similar laws and measures were all resolved on by the council of the commune, and were only brought to light in the necessary form through the instrumentality of the national assembly; this council therefore called itself the General Revolutionary Council.

The council empowered Chaumette, one of the most fanatical of the Jacobins, and who was afterwards appointed Pétion's successor in the mayoralty, to cause all suspected persons to be judicially interrogated and arrested. The tribunal of the 10th of August was a prelude to those of the Revolution, and the mere mention of some decrees which were issued by the legislative assembly at the end of August will show the manner in which, and the reason why the legislative assembly was used in order to seize upon individuals, who were afterwards murdered without trial or sentence in the September massacres.

First, by the resolution of the 26th of August, the clergy were devoted to death, and on the 28th and 29th care was afterwards taken that no one who was disaffected to the reigning system should escape the eyes of the demagogues. It was decreed that domiciliary visits should be made throughout the whole kingdom, in order to drag to light the persons suspected by the clubs; next, nightly searches were ordered to be made through all the houses of Paris, and everyone was threatened with death who should offer the



least obstruction to the agents of the provisional government in tracing out and discovering their enemies. The commune completed this general law by a municipal order. It resolved that every house should be lighted in the evening, and no one be allowed to drive in the streets after ten o'clock.

The most dreadful of all these regulations, however, and one whose scope and object was not made obvious till the September days, was that by virtue of which all needy but able-bodied men were put in requisition, because the commune might require their services (for the September massacre), and to whom therefore a daily allowance in money was given as a retaining fee. As the day appointed for the massacre approached, a feeling of universal dread was diffused by the preparations made for the event. The barriers on all the approaches to the city were closed; patrols were constantly on foot around the whole circuit of Paris, and all suspected persons who had an appearance of seeking safety by flight were detained and arrested.

What is most horrible is that Danton, as minister of justice, had devised and arranged the whole affair, with that cold-blooded and diplomatic political wisdom which he had learned from Talleyrand and Mirabeau. As it was quite impossible even for the tribunal of the 10th of August to condemn whole masses of human beings, he adopted the very original idea of collecting together a number of people from the wine-houses, who in this night of slaughter and death were to assume the office of judges, and in the midst of intoxication and clamour to condemn or apparently acquit those devoted to destruction.<sup>c</sup>

#### THE SEPTEMBER MASSACRES

The 2nd of September was a Sunday. A rumour was prematurely spread that Verdun had surrendered (it surrendered later that day). The excitement was intense; the streets were crowded, people sought places of safety, and cries of "death to traitors!" were heard on all sides. The assembly, seized with the universal frenzy, decreed that all who should refuse to serve, either in person or by contributing arms, should be punished with death. "This is not the time for talking," says Vergniaud, "we must dig the enemy's grave, else every step he advances he digs ours." "Everything upheaves, everything totters," shouts Danton, "let one part of the people go to the frontiers, another dig trenches, and the third defend the heart of the town with pikes. The tocsin which rings is no alarm signal, it sounds the charge upon the enemies of the nation. To defeat them, gentlemen, it needs boldness, still more boldness, always boldness, and France is saved."

In answer to these startling phrases the commune had the following placard posted everywhere: "To arms, citizens, to arms! the enemy is at our gates. The council of the commune has decreed that the gates be shut, that all citizens betake themselves to the Champ-de-Mars to form an army that shall hold itself in readiness to march upon the enemy; all suspected persons will be arrested," etc. At the same time alarm guns were fired, the muster was beaten and the tocsin rung; the whole town was afoot — sections, commune, and assembly.

The assembly now sent twelve deputies to work at the Montmartre camp; the commune distributed its members throughout the sections to stir up the popular fury; the sections were full of excitement, and three amongst them doomed all prisoners to death in a body. Then a rumour was whispered abroad that the royalists were advancing on the prisons and going to deliver the town up to the Prussians — an absurd fiction, blindly swallowed by the populace.

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"To the prisons!" — this cry resounded with unanimous and fearful spontaneity in the streets, public places, and wherever there were gatherings of the people; and even in the national assembly itself. "Let not a single enemy remain behind, living, to rejoice in our defeats and to strike at our women and children."

At this moment 24 priests were led by federals from the Hôtel-de-Ville to the Abbaye, amidst the hootings of the furious mob; four were killed on the way, and all the others — with the exception of Abbé Sicard, the founder of the deaf and dumb institute — had their throats cut in the courtyard by an armed party under the command of Maillard. The assassins then directed their ruthless steps to the Carmelites and to St. Firmin, where 244 priests were shot or cut down with swords, in the garden and in the church; only 49 succeeded in escaping. Then a return was made to the Abbaye, where 38 Swiss and 26 of the king's guard were massacred. A species of tribunal now was formed under Maillard, the prison register consulted, and after a summary interrogation, the prisoners were either killed or liberated. Seventy-seven prisoners were led out, 45 were restored to liberty "by the judgment of the people" (that is the expression of the prison register, preserved to this day); 32 were condemned to death by judgment of the people, and executed on the spot. In addition 27 priests were slaughtered; they were asked simply to swear to an oath, which they refused to do. The condemned were hustled out of the court into the yard, where they were hacked to pieces amidst the infuriated cries of a multitude of spectators, with swords and pikes. The acquitted were embraced by the blood-stained executioners to the accompaniment of cries of "Long live the nation!" and then conducted to their homes. A member of the commune, Billaud-Varennes, walked on the corpses, and shouted to the murderers: "You are saving the country, my brave citizens; go on with your work!" and he had wine distributed amongst them and promised each one 25 livres for his "work."

The slaughter continued during the following three days at the Châtelet, La Force, the Bernardines, and at Bicêtre. At La Force, out of 375 prisoners, 167 were condemned. Hébert, member of the commune, and editor of that most infamous journal, *Le Père Duchesne*, presided over the horrible tribunal, and it was there that Princess Lamballe, the unlucky friend of Marie Antoinette, perished; her body was torn to shreds, and her head, paraded through Paris, was carried as far as the Temple. Pétion rushed to the prison and strove vainly to stop the slaughter. "The men who judged, and the men who executed," he said, "were as self-confident as if the law had appointed them to carry out their functions; they bragged to me of their justice, their care in discriminating between the innocent and guilty, of the services they had rendered; they demanded payment for their time."

The number of the victims was, according to a royalist historian, 1,092. It was not only political prisoners who perished — ordinary criminals were included in the massacre; for instance, at the Châtelet, 189 perished, while 44 were liberated. Bicêtre was visited with some pieces of artillery, it being reported that there were arms there. The purification of that house of detention was carried out with the same horrible details as that of the cells in Paris. Prisoners for debt were set at liberty, and citizens whom misfortune had relegated there ran no risk, but all others fell under the swords, pikes, and clubs of the Herculean mob cleaning out the stables of King Augeas.

During these executions, Paris was stupefied; not one single hand in a town of 500,000 inhabitants was raised against the five or six hundred assassins. The national guard, already disorganised by Santerre, mystified with

contradictory orders, was in part occupied at the Champ-de-Mars, and in part shared in the massacres. The assembly, terrified, sent a deputation to the Abbaye, which was repulsed with threats, and afterwards they maintained a cowardly inactivity. Roland begged of Pétion to interpose his authority, but Pétion was disobeyed everywhere; he ordered Santerre to summon the national guard, Santerre refused; he held the commune responsible for the massacres; the "watch committee" launched a warrant of arrest at him, which, but for the opposition of Danton, would have been put into effect. Danton, who as a man loathed that which he had advised as revolutionary,

"hid his sympathy in his roar, and right and left screened as many victims as he was able."

The slaughter did not end till the 6th. The prisons were then empty. The commune sanctioned the crime in paying the murderers, and the "watch committee" wrote to all the communes of France a circular in which one reads: "Warned that barbarous hordes were advancing against it, the commune of Paris hastens to inform its brethren in all departments that a ferocious party of conspirators, detained in the prisons, has been put to death by the people, acts of justice which appeared indispensable to the commune in order, by terrorism, to retain within bounds the legions of traitors, shut up within its walls, at the moment when patriots march out against the enemy; and, doubtless, the country, after the many treacheries which have led it to the brink of an abyss, will hasten to adopt the same useful and necessary means, and then all Frenchmen will be able to say with the Parisians: 'We



MARIE THÉRÈSE LOUISE DE SAVOIE-CARIGNAN,  
PRINCESS DE LAMBALLE  
(1749-1792)

advance against the enemy, and we leave behind us no brigands to cut the throats of our women and children.'"

This revolting recommendation was accepted only in four towns. At Rheims there were 8 victims; at Meaux, 14; at Lyons 1; at Orleans 3. There were also outbreaks in Cambray, Caen, Charleville, Couches, Gisors, Bordeaux, and Versailles, at each place one or more being killed. A decree of the assembly had ordered the transportation to Saumur of all persons arraigned at the supreme court at Orleans. Fifteen hundred Marseillais and volunteers escorted them, to conduct them to Paris, but at Étampes, in obedience to secret orders, turned toward Versailles. Hardly had the line of march reached the latter city when the volunteers threw themselves on the prisoners, and massacred 46; only 7 escaped. Amongst the victims was the minister Delessart and the duke de Brissac. Then the assassins betook themselves to the prisons and killed 23 persons detained for ordinary crimes.



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After these revolting days, the commune was more than ever master of Paris, of the assembly, and of the whole of France; anarchy was at its zenith. Commissioners were sent into the departments to incite the municipalities into following the commune's example; the convention elections were coerced, and Robespierre, Danton, Marat, Desmoulins, Panis, Sergent, Billaud-Varennes, Legendre, the duke of Orleans (who called himself "Philippe Égalité"), and others were nominated at Paris; disorder was favoured and riot ran loose. The members of the commune, above all those of the "watch committee," whose thefts are proved, devastated national property, wasted the public funds, and it is said helped in the pillage of the Garde-Meuble, a great part of whose treasures disappeared; the authors of the robbery were never convicted. They made themselves masters of the church's wealth, of the émigrés' goods, of the spoil of the victims of September, and they refused to be accountable to any authority. The most repulsive democracy had at its disposal the life and property of the citizens. The prisons were filled up again with some four to five hundred suspects. Ordinary criminals enjoyed an undisturbed career; one saw them openly tear jewels from women in the street, to make, as they said, an offering to the nation. No more safety for the individual, no longer any public order. The national guard, reconstructed by a decree of the assembly under the title of "armed sections," was entirely corrupt; it was abandoned by all rich and decent citizens, the pikemen alone being left.

Roland, in the face of so much disorder, nearly succumbed. With praiseworthy courage he exposed all the excesses of the commune; he dared to speak against the massacres at the prisons, he gave voice to the just appeal of the departments against the despotism in Paris. "The convention," he said, "will establish itself beyond the Loire if the capital does not offer its inhabitants security and liberty."

The Girondins bestirred themselves to throw off the yoke of these outlaws in municipal garb. Vergniaud described the massacres in the prisons as human butchery. "The Parisians," he said, "are no longer the slaves of crowned tyrants, but of the vilest of men, of the most execrable rascals. It is time to break such shameful bonds, to crush this new tyranny. Let the national assembly and its memory perish, if it pardons crimes which will imprint an ineffaceable stain on the name of France; by its energy it must teach all European nations that in spite of the calumnies with which they endeavour to brand France, there is yet, even in the midst of the present anarchy into which outlaws have plunged us, public virtue and respect for humanity."

The assembly forbade obedience to the commissioners of the commune; it held them responsible on the forfeit of their own heads for the safety of prisoners, it ordered citizens to resist by force all domiciliary visits. But they only augmented the anarchy without regaining their own powers. The assembly was even obliged, its members being menaced with assassination, to put their lives under the protection of the nation. The commune continued its excesses and tyrannies, and hope was now centred only in the convention.

## CARLYLE ON THE SEPTEMBER ATROCITIES

From Sunday afternoon (exclusive of intervals and pauses not final) till Thursday evening, there follow consecutively a Hundred Hours. Which hundred hours are to be reckoned with the hours of the Bartholomew

Butchery, of the Armagnac Massacres, Sicilian Vespers, or whatsoever is savagest in the annals of this world. Horrible the hour when man's soul, in its paroxysm, spurns asunder the barriers and rules ; and shows what dens and depths are in it ! For Night and Orcus, as we say, as was long prophesied, have burst forth, here in this Paris, from their subterranean imprisonment : hideous, dim-confused ; which it is painful to look on ; and yet which cannot, and indeed which should not, be forgotten. The Reader, who looks earnestly through this dim Phantasmagory of the Pit, will discern few fixed certain objects ; and yet still a few.

So sit these sudden Courts of Wild-Justice, with the Prison-Registers before them ; unwonted wild tumult howling all round ; the Prisoners in dread expectancy within. Swift : a name is called ; bolts jingle, a Prisoner is there. A few questions are put ; swiftly this sudden Jury decides : Royalist Plotter or not ? Clearly not ; in that case, Let the Prisoner be enlarged with *Vive la nation*. Probably yea ; then still, Let the Prisoner be enlarged, but without *Vive la nation* ; or else it may run, Let the Prisoner be conducted to La Force. At La Force again their formula is, Let the Prisoner be conducted to the Abbaye. — “To La Force then !” Volunteer bailiffs seize the doomed man ; he is at the outer gate ; “enlarged,” or “conducted,” not into La Force, but into a howling sea ; forth, under an arch of wild sabres, axes and pikes ; and sinks, hewn asunder. And another sinks, and another ; and there forms itself a piled heap of corpses, and the kennels begin to run red. Fancy the yells of these men, their faces of sweat and blood ; the crueller shrieks of these women, for there are women too ; and a fellow-mortal hurled naked into it ! Jourgniac de Saint-Méard <sup>d</sup> has seen battle, has seen an effervescent Regiment du Roi in mutiny ; but the bravest heart may quail at this. The Swiss Prisoners, remnants of the Tenth of August, “clasped each other spasmodically,” and hung back ; gray veterans crying : “Mercy, Messieurs ; ah, mercy !” Man after man is cut down ; the sabres need sharpening, the killers refresh themselves from wine-jugs. Onward and onward goes the butchery ; the loud yells wearying down into bass growls. The brave are not spared, nor the beautiful, nor the weak.

Princess de Lamballe has lain down on bed : “Madame, you are to be removed to the Abbaye.” “I do not wish to remove ; I am well enough here.” There is a need-be for removing. She will arrange her dress a little, then ; rude voices answer, “You have not far to go.” She too is led to the hell-gate ; a manifest Queen's Friend. She shivers back, at the sight of bloody sabres ; but there is no return : Onwards ! That fair hind head is cleft with the axe ; the neck is severed. That fair body is cut in fragments ; with indignities, and obscene horrors of moustachio *grands-lèvres*, which human nature would fain find incredible, — which shall be read in the original language only. She was beautiful, she was good, she had known no happiness. Young hearts, generation after generation, will think with themselves : O worthy of worship, thou king-descended, god-descended, and poor sister-woman ! why was not I there ; and some Sword Balmung or Thor's Hammer in my hand ? Her head is fixed on a pike ; paraded under the windows of the Temple ; that a still more hated, a Marie Antoinette, may see. One Municipal, in the Temple with the Royal Prisoners at the moment, said, “Look out.” Another eagerly whispered, “Do not look.”

But it is more edifying to note what thrillings of affection, what fragments of wild virtues turn up in this shaking asunder of man's existence ; for of these too there is a proportion. Note old Marquis Cazotte : he is doomed to die ; but his young Daughter clasps him in her arms, with an

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inspiration of eloquence, with a love which is stronger than very death : the heart of the killers themselves is touched by it ; the old man is spared. Yet he was guilty, if plotting for his King is guilt : in ten days more, a Court of Law condemned him, and he had to die elsewhere ; bequeathing his Daughter a lock of his old gray hair. Or note old M. de Sombreuil, who also had a Daughter : — My Father is not an Aristocrat : O good gentlemen, I will swear it, and testify it, and in all ways prove it ; we are not ; we hate Aristocrats ! “ Wilt thou drink Aristocrats' blood ? ” The man lifts blood (if universal Rumour can be credited) ; the poor maiden does drink. “ This Sombreuil is innocent then ! ” Yes, indeed, — and now note, most of all, how the bloody pikes, at this news, do rattle to the ground ; and the tiger-yells become bursts of jubilee over a brother saved ; and the old man and his daughter are clasped to bloody bosoms, with hot tears ; and borne home in triumph of *Vive la Nation*, the killers refusing even money !

The Constituted Authorities are of yesterday ; all pulling different ways : there is properly no Constituted Authority, but every man is his own King ; and all are kinglets, belligerent, allied, or armed-neutral, without king over them. “ O everlasting infamy,” exclaims Montgaillard,<sup>e</sup> “ that Paris stood looking on in stupor for four days, and did not interfere ! ” Very desirable indeed that Paris had interfered ; yet not unnatural that it stood even so, looking on in stupor. Paris is in death-panic, the enemy and gibbets at its door : whosoever in Paris has the heart to front death, finds it more pressing to do it fighting the Prussians, than fighting the killers of Aristocrats. Indignant abhorrence, as in Roland, may be here ; gloomy sanction, premeditation or not, as in Marat and Committee of Salvation, may be there ; dull disapproval, dull approval, and acquiescence in Necessity and Destiny, is the general temper.

This is the September Massacre, otherwise called “ Severe Justice of the People.” These are the Septemberers (*Septembriseurs*) ; a name of some note and lucency, — but lucency of the Nether-fire sort.

That a shriek of inarticulate horror rose over this thing, not only from French Aristocrats and Moderates, but from all Europe, and has prolonged itself to the present day, was most natural and right. The thing lay done, irrevocable ; a thing to be counted beside some other things, which lie very black in our Earth's Annals, yet which will not erase therefrom. Sicilian Vespers, and “ eight thousand slaughtered in two hours,” are a known thing.

Kings themselves, not in desperation, but only in difficulty, have sat hatching their Bartholomew Business ; and then, at the right moment, also on an Autumn Sunday, this very Bell (they say it is the identical metal) of Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois was set a-pealing — with effect. Nay the same black boulder-stones of these Paris Prisons have seen Prison-massacres before now ; men massacring countrymen, Burgundies massacring Armagnacs, whom they had suddenly imprisoned, till, as now, there were piled heaps of carcasses, and the streets ran red.

To shriek when certain things are acted, is proper and unavoidable. Nevertheless, articulate speech, not shrieking, is the faculty of man : when speech is not yet possible, let there be, with the shortest delay, at least — silence. Silence, accordingly, is the thing we recommend and practise. Nay, instead of shrieking more, it were perhaps edifying to remark, on the other side, what a singular thing Customs (in Latin, *Mores*) are ; and how fitly the Virtue, *Vir-tus*, Manhood or Worth, that is in a man, is called his *Morality* or *Customariness*. Fell Slaughter, one of the most authentic products of the Pit you would say, once give it Customs, becomes War, with



Laws of War ; and is Customary and Moral enough ; and red individuals carry the tools of it girt round their haunches, not without an air of pride, — which do thou nowise blame. While, see ! so long as it is but dressed in hodden or russet ; and Revolution, less frequent than War, has not yet got its Laws of Revolution, but the hodden or russet individuals are Uncustomary—O shrieking beloved brother blockheads of Mankind, let us close those wide mouths of ours ; let us cease shrieking, and begin considering !

There can be no forgiveness for the butchers who put this eternal stain on French history, but the reader, especially the foreign reader, should try to regard the matter in perspective and proportion. One should not call the affair characteristically French, for there is no nation without the stain of horrible and unpardonable butcheries on its record. One should not call the affair typical of democratic sway, for the kings have slain their thousands for every one that was killed by the frenzied Paris mob. A few years later and there is a Society of the Exterminating Angel which marks the return to Spain of the expelled Bourbons and their priests. Carlyle, as above, has also pointed out that there is inconsistency in expressing horror at the taking of a thousand lives by men not in uniform, when paid soldiers are applauded for dutifully shooting down whole armies. But most important of all it is to avoid covering all Paris with the blame due only to the few grains of gunpowder that lurk in every city and explode at the first spark. These are the men who in our own day rob the corpses after a flood, and kill the wounded who resist robbery after a great fire. An eloquent defence of Paris in this matter has been voiced by Ternaux<sup>h</sup> who demands justice for the better element.<sup>a</sup>

#### TERNAUX'S APOLOGY FOR THE PEOPLE

After long years the memory of this tragic episode of the Terror weighs so heavily on the public conscience that certain historians have attempted to shift the responsibility for it in accordance with their personal prejudices. Nevertheless, all the questions they argue so hotly may be reduced to one only : Were the massacres of September the result of an instantaneous and irresistible impulse of the people of Paris, seized by a terrible fit of delirium at the news of the capture of Longwy and the siege of Verdun, and anxious, before attacking the invaders, to rid themselves, under the plea of public safety, of all the prisoners whom they had been taught to consider the accomplices of Brunswick and of the emigration ? Or, were they not rather the crimes of a few wretches who, feeling the power slip through their fingers, resolved to seize it again in the blood-stained mud of the Abbaye ditch, and terrify the capital in order to remain its sole governors ?

That certain authors who praise the commune of Paris for having "cleansed the prisons," or who are not ashamed to give this great crime the title "great act of popular justice," should have tried to extend its merit to the whole population of Paris, we can easily believe. But that historians, who hold up to the execration of future centuries both the massacres of September and their authors, should deliberately associate themselves with the shameless lies originally spread abroad by pamphleteers in the pay of the dictators of the Hôtel-de-Ville, and should try to lay on the people themselves the terrible responsibility of inconceivable crimes, must arouse in the minds of all men of good sense, of all true patriots, a great feeling of amazement.

It is a lie to history, it is a betrayal of the holy cause of humanity, it is a desertion from the most manifest interests of democracy, it is slander

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against the "people," to take a few hundred wretches for it — wretches who were French only in name, human only in appearance, who went like cowards to seek their victims one by one in the cells of the Abbaye and La Force, sacrificing them in the light of day with all the refinement of cold-blooded cruelty, and insulting their too slow death by shameful sneers.

The people, the real people, consisting of industrious and honest workmen, with warm heart and patriotic fibre, young men of the middle class with generous hopes and dauntless courage, did not for an instant join with the scoundrels whom Maillard recruited in the kennels of the city. While the assassins of the *comité de surveillance* "opened a butcher shop of human flesh" (according to Vergniaud's energetic expression) in the prisons, the people, the real people, were at the Champ-de-Mars or at the enlistment platforms offering their purest blood for the defence of the country; they would have been ashamed to shed the blood of poor, weak, and defenceless creatures.

But, if the immense majority of the people of Paris were not accomplices to the massacre of the prisoners, how was it that they allowed it to be perpetrated? Because this crime was executed by order of the very men who should have enforced respect for the law; because the principal murderers wore the municipal scarf; because the murders were committed as an act of administration. When every principle is thus destroyed, every rôle thus inverted, men's consciences are troubled, the most courageous tremble, the most resolute hesitate, the living forces of a nation are paralysed. Brave men, having no longer a bond of union, seek each other, but hesitate to acknowledge each other, to reveal their thoughts; when at last indignation is about to unite all wills, to burst from every mouth, to give weapons to every arm, it is too late: the crime has been committed!

This is what happened on September 2nd, 1792. So, we, juror in the law-court of history, do not hesitate to answer the solemn and delicate question asked above, by this maturely deliberated verdict: On our soul and conscience, in the sight of God and man, the people of Paris were not guilty of the crime of September.

Who were the guilty and what were their motives? The guilty were Marat, Danton, Robespierre, Manuel, Hébert, Billaud-Varennes, Panis, Sergeant, Fabre-d'Églantine, Camille Desmoulins, and a dozen others less known, members of the committee of surveillance or only of the general council of the commune. Marat was the first to have the idea, and he vaunted it in his infamous journal and in his disgraceful advertisements. Danton also looked his crime in the face and did not hesitate: "We must frighten the royalists," he said; and, in order to do so, he coldly condemned to death more than a thousand victims. His hand is to be seen on all sides; it was to him that men applied for orders, and to him all communications were brought.

On September 2nd, as on August 10th, Robespierre kept partly in the shade. The evening before he had shot a Parthian arrow at his particular enemies, the Girondins, denouncing them as Brunswick's accomplices. The warrants of arrest issued against Roland, Brissot, and thirty other deputies, at the very moment when the massacres began in the prisons, showed clearly enough that the accusation had had effect. Later on, it is true, Robespierre declared that he had cursed the days of September; but what did he do to prevent them — he, the popular man above all others, the tribune who each day came to give notice of his orders to the legislative assembly, the idol of the Jacobin Club and of the general council of the commune?

How is it possible to divide the responsibility which weighs on each of these two men? We will leave this task to someone who cannot be suspected of ultra-revolutionary ideas. "Between Danton," says M. Louis Blanc,<sup>1</sup> "who assisted in the massacres because he approved of them, and Robespierre who did not prevent them, although he deplored them, I do not hesitate to declare that Robespierre was the guiltier."

As for the motives which caused the crime of September to be imagined, meditated, prepared, and executed, there were two kinds. The most important thing for certain organisers of the massacres was to establish themselves in the dictatorship which they had usurped; for others it was essential, at whatever cost, "to show no accounts"; for all it was essential to place a river of blood between them and their enemies.

The organisers of the massacres only half succeeded in their plans. Paris was not roused to a paroxysm of rage, it was only struck with stupor; there was even, a few days later, a somewhat violent reaction, which, for one moment, permitted the hope that liberty was not to be destroyed and lost in the most terrible of all tyrannies, the tyranny of the street. Almost the whole of another year was required by Danton, Robespierre, and Billaud-Varennes to establish their blood-thirsty dictatorship without opposition. The usurpers of August 10th had then two accounts to settle: the first with those whom they had arrested in consequence of their domiciliary visits—they put an end to it by murdering them on September 2nd; the second with those who wished to force them to restore what they had stolen—they settled this on May 31st, 1793, by driving them from the national representation, and on October 31st, 1793, by sending them to the scaffold.<sup>2</sup>

#### THE ROYALIST INVASION: VALMY

The allies in the meantime had not shown any activity in profiting by the dissensions and disorganisation of the French. The emperor Francis, having but lately ascended his throne, had not sufficiently matured his preparations; and the summer was far advanced ere the campaign commenced. On the 25th of July the famed manifesto of the duke of Brunswick had summoned the French to return to their allegiance.<sup>1</sup> It concluded by threatening that if the château of the Tuileries were forced or insulted, or any violence offered to the royal family, the emperor and king would take exemplary vengeance by delivering up the city of Paris to military execution and total subversion. This imprudent threat indicated the very crime that could most fully set it at nought: in a few days after the receipt of the manifesto at Paris, the Tuileries had been stormed, and the king hurled from his throne into a dungeon. The insurrection of the 10th of August was the reply of the Parisians to the duke of Brunswick, or rather to Calonne, who had drawn up the document. The rapid march of an overwhelming army upon the French capital could alone have given weight or sense to so haughty a menace.

The duke of Brunswick, however, had not this overwhelming force. His army, including the corps of émigrés, did not exceed 80,000 men, whilst the Austrians, prepared to support him on the right and left, did not muster half the stipulated number. The failure of this invasion is universally and

[<sup>1</sup> It is said that the duke of Brunswick did not approve of this proclamation; that De Limon wrote it and Artois approved it; that the violent last paragraph was added without the knowledge of Brunswick; that the king, Louis XVI, and Marie Antoinette had inspired it through Mallet du Pau, and that it was more violent than either wished.]



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exclusively attributed to the duke ; whereas a great part of the cause lies in the simple fact that the potent monarchies of Prussia and Austria thought proper to attempt the conquest of France with no greater force than that which their enemies could without effort oppose to them. The task of invasion requires something more than equality of strength. This the duke knew, and hence the feebleness, the incertitude, the tardiness of his operations.

The French army seemed no doubt to offer itself as an easy prey. Its first feat was a panic flight. It was distracted by the disorders of the capital. La Fayette tampered with his troops, and sought to array them against the anarchists. Failing in this, he fled, and the army remained without a leader until the appointment of Dumouriez. The duke of Brunswick might indeed have taken advantage of this disorganised state of the French army, have attacked and routed the portion of it under La Fayette. A Bonaparte would not have hesitated. The duke, over wary, feared to leave the smallest fortress unreduced behind him. He laid siege to Longwy, took it, then invested Verdun with the same success. In the capture of these towns was spent the month of August ; and early in September Dumouriez, promoted to the chief command, was able to take active measures of defence.

It was just at this moment, when the French had recovered unity and force, under a talented leader, that the Prussian monarch and his general thought fit to shake off dilatoriness, and march boldly towards the capital. The duke of Brunswick, indeed, still deprecated the hardihood of the scheme, for which he deemed his army not sufficiently strong. A month previous, it would have been more practicable ; now, Dumouriez, with the quick eye of military genius, had, by forced marches, occupied all the passes of the forest of

Argonne, the only route of the allied army leading towards the capital.

The grand merit of that general was his moral courage. When all his countrymen despaired of their cause — when the Parisian legislature meditated a retreat beyond the Loire, and the Parisian mob made what they considered to be the last use of their sovereignty, in massacring their imprisoned enemies, Dumouriez never once lost confidence. “Argonne is the French Thermopylæ,” wrote he ; “but I shall be more fortunate than Leonidas.” The ministry wrote to him in a panic to retreat, to come to their aid, to retire beyond the Marne. Dumouriez mocked their fears, and even when the passages of the Argonne were forced, he took another position at Ste. Menehould, and summoned the several divisions of the army,



CHARLES FRANÇOIS DUMOURIEZ  
(1733-1823)

scattered by the Prussians, having forced their lines, to rally thither, and stand again on the defensive. The tardiness of the Prussians here again saved the French. Strong detachments from Metz and from Lille were allowed to join Dumouriez; who, thus reinforced, determined to hold firm in the camp and position which he occupied, and which formed a line of heights protected by the Aisne and the Aube, and by the marshes on their banks.

The road to Paris was indeed open to the Prussians, if they wished to leave Dumouriez in their rear; but their object was now to capture that general and his army. With this view the king of Prussia by his personal order hastened forward his divisions to cut off the retreat of the French, occupying the road betwixt them and the capital. Dispositions were then made for the attack, concerning the success of which the monarch was sanguine, and his general by no means so. The latter, however, acted in obedience to the ardour of the king, and, on the 20th of September, a cannonade opened on both sides, and was supposed to be the prelude to an engagement. The advanced division of the French was at Valmy, an eminence surmounted by a mill. The duke of Brunswick formed his troops in column of attack, and advanced to carry this point by assault. Despite the cannonade, the Prussian bayonets already glistened at the foot of the eminence; the French unmoved showed themselves ready for the charge, and gave vent to their ardour in shouts of *Vive la nation!* This bold shout was sufficient to appal the duke of Brunswick, and awaken all his doubts of success. An instant order recalled the troops that were on the point of attacking. The assault was abandoned, and the French were left to exult in the irresolution, if not in the pusillanimity of their antagonist.

Such was the cannonade, miscalled the battle, of Valmy, which, however unproductive of loss or of glory, proved as decisive as a victory to Dumouriez. Henceforth the retreat of the Prussians, the unfulfilment of all their high menaces and schemes, became inevitable. Unable to force the French position, or leave it behind; finding it difficult to support themselves in an enemy's country, with the Argonne betwixt them and their magazines; afflicted by disease as well as by want, the Prussians commenced their retreat ten days after the affair of Valmy. There were some attempts made at negotiation; but the ruling powers at Paris would listen to none whilst an enemy trod the territory of France. The retreat of the Prussians, who but a few days since menaced Paris with destruction, was inexplicable to Europe, and has been accounted for as proceeding from a purchase or a bribe. The assertion is unproved and improbable. The duke of Brunswick retired with his troops towards the Rhine. The republicans re-entered Longwy and Verdun, and many of the inhabitants of the latter town, who had betrayed attachment to the royal cause, suffered under the guillotine; amongst these victims were six young ladies, who had offered a bouquet of flowers, in token of congratulation, to the king of Prussia.<sup>b</sup>

Thus, in its very first campaign, new France, by means of its young soldiers trained under fire, repulsed the attack of the kings, and grasped territories already half-French, that Louis XIV himself had not been able to seize. The great German poet Goethe was in the Prussian army at Valmy, not as a soldier but as a sight-seer; for it was less a war that the allies were making than a journey to Paris, a rapid flight or progress having at its end a triumphal entry. He shared their presumptuous confidence, a confidence that the cannon of Valmy were soon to destroy. At night, around the camp-fires, the poet was asked to dispel, with his usual cheerful vivacity, the gloomy presentiments

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that were assailing all. But he was himself in a sombre mood and remained for a long time silent. When at last he spoke his voice was grave and solemn, and his words were merely these: "In this place and on this day there commences a new epoch in the history of the world."<sup>1</sup>

## THE REPUBLIC PROCLAIMED (SEPTEMBER 21ST, 1792)

The state of things had of course its influence in the elections, more especially of the capital, where not to be royalist, but to be moderately republican, brought instant denunciation and arrest. Robespierre and Danton were the first names that came from the electoral urn; the famous David, Legendre, Collot-d'Herbois, Philippe Égalité [duke of Orleans], and Marat were their colleagues. The members elected by the city of Paris, says Thiers,<sup>k</sup> "consisting of some tradesmen, a butcher, an actor, an engraver, a painter, a lawyer, two or three journalists, and a fallen prince, did not ill represent the confusion and variety of personages that figured in this great capital."

The national convention assembled on the 20th of September, the very day in which the Prussians quailed at Valmy, and gave up victory to the cause of republicanism. The members of the Gironde had all been returned, and even their numbers reinforced; so indocile as yet were the provinces to the rule of the Jacobins. The Girondists occupied the Right of the assembly:<sup>1</sup> Robespierre and his comrades took post on the upper benches of the Left, in order to be near to and in communication with their supporters, the noisy audience of the public galleries. From this position the Jacobin party was called the Mountain, whilst those members who filled the middle place, both with respect to their seats and principles, were designated the Plain, or the Marsh. Barrère was considered the chief of this central and at first neutral party; principally consisting of men new to political questions or life, and whose public education was yet to be completed. These formed the majority of the convention: on their votes and leanings evidently depended the march of both legislature and government. At the present moment they were inspired by extreme respect for the Gironde. Pétion, one of the most influential of that party, was elected president; whilst Vergniaud, Condorcet, and Brissot filled the office of secretaries.<sup>b</sup>

The legislative assembly, which since the 10th of August had been sitting permanently, was informed on the 20th, by a deputation, that the national convention was formed, and the legislature terminated. The two assemblies had merely to resolve the one into the other, and the convention proceeded to occupy the hall of the legislative.

Manuel, procurator-syndic of the commune, who had been suspended after the 20th of June with Pétion, and become extremely popular on account of that suspension; who had subsequently taken office with the furious usurpers of the commune, but retreated from them, and drawn towards the Girondists at sight of the massacres in the Abbaye—Manuel, as early as the 21st, made a proposition which excited murmurs amongst the enemies of the Gironde. "Citizen-representatives," said he, "it is fitting that everything here bear a character of dignity and grandeur calculated to awe the universe. I move that the president of France be lodged in the national palace of the Tuileries; that he be preceded by the public force

[<sup>1</sup> Girondists, a part of the Left of the former legislative assembly, was now the Right.]



and the symbols of the law; and that the citizens rise at his approach." At these words the Jacobin Chabot, and Tallien, the secretary of the commune, protested with vehemence against a ceremonial imitated from royalty. Chabot said that the representatives of the people ought to assimilate themselves to the citizens from whose ranks they came — to the *sans-culottes*, who formed the majority of the nation. Tallien added that the president of the convention should be sought for in a garret, since it was in such abodes that genius and virtue dwelt. The proposition of Manuel was rejected, and the enemies of the Gironde asserted that it had intended to decree sovereign honours to its chief, Pétion.

After this motion had been disposed of, a multitude of others succeeded, without pause or order. On all sides the wish was expressed to record by authentic declarations the sentiments which animated the assembly and France. Various demands were made, to the effect that the new constitution should be based on absolute equality, the sovereignty of the people decreed, hatred sworn to royalty, to a dictatorship, to a triumvirate, to every individual authority; and the penalty of death pronounced against whomsoever should propose any project with that tendency. Danton put an end to all these motions, by procuring a decree that the new constitution should be valid only after being sanctioned by the people. It was subjoined that the existing laws should provisionally continue to have effect; the authorities, not displaced, be provisionally maintained; and the taxes levied as before, until the new systems of contribution were organised.

After these motions and decrees, Manuel, Collot-d'Herbois, and Gregoire entered upon the question of royalty, and demanded that its abolition should be forthwith pronounced. The people, said they, had just been declared sovereign, but they could not really be so until they were delivered from a rival authority — that of kings. The assembly, all the galleries, rose with one accord to express a unanimous reprobation of royalty. But Bazire wished a solemn discussion upon so momentous a question. "What occasion is there to discuss," exclaimed Gregoire, "when everyone is of the same opinion? Courts are the workshops of crime, the furnace of corruption. The history of kings is the martyrology of nations. Since we are all equally impressed with these truths, what need of discussion?"

The debate was in fact closed. A profound silence prevailed, and, according to the unanimous declaration of the assembly, the president pronounced royalty abolished in France. This decree was hailed with universal acclamation; its publication was instantly voted, as likewise its transmission to the armies and all the municipalities.

When the institution of a republic was thus proclaimed, the Prussians still menaced the country. Dumouriez, as we have related, had fixed himself at Ste. Menehould, and the cannonade of the 21st, so auspicious for the French arms, was not yet known at Paris. The next day, the 22nd, Billaud-Varennes proposed to date, no longer from the year 4 of liberty, but from the year 1 of the republic. This proposition was adopted. The year 1789 was no longer considered as the commencement of liberty, and the new republican era opened that very day, the 22nd of September.

In the evening the cannonade of Valmy was reported, and joy beamed on every countenance. On the petition of the citizens of Orleans, who complained of their magistrates, it was decreed that all the members of administrative bodies and tribunals should be re-elected, and that the conditions of eligibility, as fixed by the constitution of 1791, should be deemed null. It was declared no longer necessary to select the judges from lawyers, nor the

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administrators from a certain class of proprietors. The legislative assembly had already abolished the mark of silver, and conferred upon all citizens at the age of majority the electoral franchise. The convention effaced the last traces of distinction, by calling all the citizens to all, the most diverse, functions. Thus was commenced the system of absolute equality.<sup>k</sup>

GIRONDISTS *vs.* JACOBINS

Immediately now broke out the fierce war betwixt the Mountain and the Girondists, the most inveterate and fatal that the annals of any assembly record, and at the same time the most important to be studied, as a phase which every revolution in its downward course is likely to present.

In common with the Jacobins, the Girondists had warred upon royalty to its destruction. Aristocracy had been proscribed. Universal equality of political and civil rights had been decreed. There scarcely remained a public principle on which two republican parties could differ. Personal hatred, however, supplied any want of the kind; and royalty and republicanism never worked each other such mutual ill as did these parties, the colours of whose political creeds differed but by a shade. The Girondists were aristocratic in comparison with the Mountain: they were men of education and of talent.

Both parties courted popular favour, and pretended to lead the popular cause. But the Girondists were merely amateur democrats, would-be rabble, not the actual rabble itself, as Marat and his tribe were. And these were indignant that men respectable in birth and profession should dare to assume the place of representatives of the people. Favourers, as the Girondists were, to a certain degree, of law and social order, they required some more certain and congenial support than that of the mob. The middle classes, united, organised, and armed, would have been their natural auxiliaries; but the middle classes of the capital had supported the constitutionalists, or *feuillants*, and with them had been crushed by the Jacobins and Girondists themselves, during the latter months of the legislative assembly. The Girondists had favoured the insurrection of the 20th of June; and by having done so, by having fatally condescended to make use of the popular arm, had rendered themselves powerless to resist the movements of either the 10th of August or the 2nd of September. By the same fault they had alienated the middle classes of the Parisians, who thenceforth had, either in timidity or zeal, become blended in the ranks of the Jacobins. The Girondists had, however, a numerous body of partisans of the middle classes in the provinces; and to bring a chosen band of these to protect them against the insurrectionary spirit of the lower orders in Paris, became one of their early endeavours.

Of the ministry, or executive council, established on the king's suspension, the Girondists were indeed the majority; but the honest simplicity of Roland and his friends was overmatched by the energy of Danton. The Gironde was indignant at the massacre which had been perpetrated, and at the criminal stain cast by such deeds upon the Revolution. To wipe this away, to prevent the recurrence of these acts of blood, to disarm and reprove at least, if not to punish the perpetrators, was the first effort of the party now seated on the Right of the assembly.

Tidings arrived that assassinations, similar to those of the capital, were commencing in the provinces, no doubt produced by the circulars and instructions of the Jacobins. The choler of the Girondists instantly burst forth: and, on the proposal of Buzot, a triple decree was passed, appointing

a committee to inquire into the state of France and of the capital; to prepare a law against the provocation to murder, and also a plan providing a guard, to be drawn from the eighty-three departments, for the protection of the national convention. In this first outbreaking of the storm against them in the convention, Robespierre and his friends preserved silence. They raised some trifling objections, but dared not to oppose the decree: they rather seemed to affect moderation, and to deprecate the wrath of the Gironde.

Lasource, a Protestant clergyman, and member of the moderate party, attended a Jacobin meeting, and observed that the agitators aspired to establish a dictatorship in their own favour. He feared to see Paris become, what Rome was in the empire, the tyrant of the world, while itself was the slave of sedition. Rebecqui, deputy for Marseilles, also exclaimed: "I assert that there does exist a party in this assembly which aspires to establish the dictatorship: and the chief of this party—I will name him—is Robespierre!"

Amidst the tumult caused by this denunciation, Danton obtained possession of the tribune, and endeavoured to prevent these dissensions from going further. To avert the attack from Robespierre, he spoke of himself, "who had served the cause of liberty with all the energy of his temperament"; and of Marat, with whom indeed he affected not to be on terms of friendship; but whose violence he represented excusable, since his long concealment from vexation and arrest, in caverns and subterraneous hiding-places, had soured and corrupted his temper. To counterbalance the accusation brought against the Mountain, Danton insinuated that there was another party in the assembly, whose object was to partition France into as many republics as provinces, and thus to destroy the unity of the country. This was aimed at the Gironde. Danton proposed to decree the pain of death against whosoever should entertain either of these projects, whether the dictatorship or federalism.

The accusation, thus adroitly parried by Danton, might have been set at rest, had not Robespierre thought proper to undertake his own defence. He enumerated the acts of his past life with a cold arrogance, and in a speech so tedious and dull that even his own friends called out to him, in impatience, to have done with his *kyrielle*.

As Marat was alluded to in the debate, he, too, thought it necessary to enter upon his exculpation. His appearance at the tribune excited such an acclamation of disgust that to make himself heard was impossible. But the accusations against him were redoubled. Cambon produced a kind of placard, signed Marat, in which a dictatorship, or despotic triumvirate, was called for as the only means of public safety. It became necessary to hear the monster's defence. Taking from his head a cap, such as was worn by the people, Marat placed it on the tribune, and facing the general outcry, with distorted and nervous smile, he began: "I have a great many personal enemies in this assembly." "All of us! all of us!" was the clamorous interruption and reply of the greater part of the members.

Marat undauntedly continued: "I have many personal enemies in this assembly. I recall them to a sense of shame. I exhort them to cease their furibund clamours. The members for the city of Paris are accused of aspiring to the triumvirate, or the dictatorship. It is merely because I am one of them that this accusation is made. I owe it to Danton, and to Robespierre, to declare that they have always opposed the project of a dictatorship, which I have never ceased to recommend in my writings. I have a lance to break with them on that point. I am myself the first and the only writer in



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France who has proposed and supported the dictatorship, as the sole means of crushing traitors and conspirators. I am alone to blame or to be condemned for this. But first hear me.

"Amidst the machinations of a perfidious king, an abominable court, and of false patriots, who sold the cause of liberty in two successive assemblies, can you reproach me with having imagined the only means of public safety, with having invoked the hatchet of popular vengeance on the guilty heads? No, you dare not. The people would disavow you—the people, who, at length, in order to escape from tyrants and traitors, felt the necessity of turning dictator itself.

"Believe me, I shuddered as much as any of you at these terrible insurrections; and it was to obviate the necessity of their recurrence that I wished to see the popular force guided by one firm hand. Had this been understood at the taking of the Bastille, five hundred heads would have fallen, and tranquillity would have been secured. But no; events were left to themselves, and vengeance was abandoned to the people. And what has been the consequence? A hundred thousand patriots have been slaughtered, and a hundred thousand more are menaced with a similar fate. At any rate, to prove to you that the dictator, or the triumvir, which I recommended, was not to answer to the vulgar idea of a tyrant, my proposal was that his authority should last but for a few days; that his only office should be to condemn traitors; and that this dread magistrate himself should have always a cannon-ball attached to his leg, in order that he might continue under the hand of the people. Such was the dream of my patriotism; and if your intellects have not elevation enough to comprehend it, so much the worse for you."

While some were disgusted with the arrogance and blood-thirstiness of this speech, and others amused even to laughter by his impertinence, the too flexible majority were struck by the ferocious energy of Marat's character and views. The new deputies of the Plain, who had hitherto looked with abhorrence on the monster, here submitted to listen and learned to tolerate him. Boileau read an address to the people, signed Marat, and published that very morning. Its tenor was as follows: "Fifty years of anarchy are before us; and the only way of avoiding them is by appointing a dictator, a true patriot and statesman. O babbling people, did you but know how to act!"

An indescribable tumult took place on the perusal of this pithy address. "To prison with the wretch! to the guillotine!" was the general cry. The accusation of Marat was proposed. He again demanded to be heard, and once more took possession of the tribune with increased confidence and effrontery. "As to that writing which the member has denounced, I am far from disavowing it. A falsehood has never passed my lips, and fear is a stranger to my heart." Nevertheless Marat proceeded to state that the address just produced was written a week back, and suppressed, but republished that morning against his knowledge by his printer. Marat read them a more moderate article from a new journal which he had just commenced: "Had I not written a moderate paragraph this morning, you would have delivered me over to the sword of justice. But no, I had still a mode of escape from persecution. With this," said he, drawing forth a pistol, and putting it to his forehead, "I would have blown out my brains at this tribune. Such was to have been the reward of three years' sufferings, imprisonments, wakings and watchings, fears and labours, privations and dangers. As it is, however, I shall remain amongst you, and brave your fury."

Had the Gironde remained firm, and pressed the condemnation, at least of Marat, the final victory might have been on its side; but they gave up the struggle, in lassitude, or in contempt of their enemies; deeming, unwisely, that the thunders of their eloquence were sufficient to blight the brows and humble the power of the Jacobins. The newly returned deputies, who occupied the Plain, learned in this famous debate that the Jacobins were not altogether the monsters which they had been represented; or, if this was difficult, they at least saw that there was firmness, conviction, and even talent, in their monstrosity. The influence of the Gironde was shaken. The termination of this long and fiery debate proves forcibly this effect. It ended by a decree, declaring the republic one and indivisible; thus guarding, as it were, against the supposed federalism of the Gironde, rather than against the renewal of massacre and the establishment of a dictatorship by the Mountain.

Nothing could be more inconsequential and absurd than such a vote succeeding such a debate; nor can anything more strongly paint the vacillation of the assembly and the weakness of its leading party.

Whilst all the attention and zeal of the national assembly were spent in these quarrels, the Prussians were still at Ste. Menehould. But not even the menacing presence of a foreign enemy could distract the Mountain and the Gironde from the canine combat in which they tore each other, and struggled for mastery. Day after day it was renewed. The convention called for the accounts of the commune, and ordered its minister to draw up a report, which fully disclosed the system of fraud, murder, and anarchy established at the Hôtel-de-Ville. Yet, in spite of this, the municipality held its ground, and defied the efforts of its enemies.

The national convention at this time had the singular infelicity of displaying at once all the disadvantage of party, as well as all the disadvantages of wanting it. The public weal and fortunes were absolutely forgotten in the struggle betwixt personal foes; and at the same time there was so little concert, foresight, and party organisation, that the Gironde was continually marred and crossed in its attempts to restore order and consolidate liberty by the trimming timid inertness of the Centre or Plain. On the 29th of October, after hearing one of the courageous reports of the home-minister, an anonymous letter was read, giving an account



ROBESPIERRE ADDRESSING THE  
ASSEMBLY

of the efforts of the Jacobins to blacken the Gironde and excite a new insurrection to get rid of the *cabal* Roland. "They will hear of none but Robespierre," continued the letter.

The passions of the Girondists were excited. Louvet rushed to the tribune, instantly and solemnly accused Robespierre, and poured forth an extemporaneous philippic of unusual force and eloquence. He commenced by relating the rise of the anarchists, whom he described as "a party feeble in number and in means, strong in boldness and immorality," appearing in the club of the Jacobins not earlier than the January preceding, and soon

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driving the Girondists from them by their violence and the noisy aid of the galleries. "At first," continued Louvet, "they astonished rather than disquieted us, until we saw them commence to make war upon all talent, all distinction, all who were not of their coterie. They soon set up an idol in Robespierre.

"But what are their claims to popularity and rule? The insurrection of the 10th of August, which they attribute solely to themselves. I tell them, the revolution of that day belongs to us all—to the faubourgs, that rose to a man; to the brave federals, whom these men refused to admit within the walls. The revolution of the 10th of August belongs to the two hundred courageous deputies who issued the decree suspending Louis. To us all belongs the glory of the 10th of August. But that of the 2nd of September, atrocious conspirators, is yours—all yours—yours alone! Ye have made it your claim and your boast. Ye have named us, in your sanguinary pride, the patriots of August; yourselves, the patriots of September! May the distinction endure, for our justification and your eternal shame!

"The people, ye say, participated in these murders. Else, ask ye, why did they not prevent them? Why? Because the tutelary authority of Pétion was chained; because Roland spoke in vain; because Danton, minister of justice, did not speak at all; because the presidents of the forty-eight sections, ready to repress such disorders, waited for the summons that never arrived; because the officers of the municipality, wearing their scarfs of office, presided at these executions. But the legislative assembly? Representatives of the people! avenge its powerlessness. For that powerlessness, to which your predecessors were then reduced, was, even amongst the enormous crimes of the day, the most audacious and most fatal of all. What could the legislative assembly do—tormented, degraded, menaced by an insolent demagogue, who came to the bar to dictate its decrees; who returned to the commune but to denounce it; and who dared to threaten the executive council with the tocsin?"

This vehement apostrophe roused to such a pitch the indignation of the assembly against Robespierre, that his instant condemnation seemed inevitable. For a long time it refused even to hear his defence; which, nevertheless, when quiet was restored, he was utterly unable to enter upon. He demanded a week to prepare it, and his demand was granted. A week, however, was more than sufficient to allow the passion of the majority to subside; and when Robespierre appeared to pronounce his elaborate defence he no longer addressed an exasperated audience. Applauses as loud as those which cheered the resentment of Louvet hailed his reply. Louvet in vain sought to resume his accusation. The accusation was set aside by the order of the day, and the defence of Robespierre was ordered to be printed.

During this war of parties, Dumouriez paid a short visit to the capital. He was welcomed at the bar of the convention with applauses and embraces; in society, with fêtes, as the hero of the day. His aim was to stand well with all parties, in consequence of which both the most austere of the Gironde and the most ferocious of the Mountain suspected him. He had punished a regiment of his revolutionary soldiers for massacring some emigrant deserters. The Jacobins commissioned Marat to question the general on the subject; and Marat chose the moment when Dumouriez was present at a ball given in his honour, to intrude in his office of inquisitor. "It is you whom they call Marat," observed Dumouriez to the monster's summons; "I cannot hold converse with such a person." Still the general preserved his intimacy with Danton, who, though his hands were deeply imbrued in September's blood,



was not yet decided to join the knot of Robespierre, and who wavered betwixt the anarchists and the Gironde. Dumouriez, as well as every historian of the Revolution, censures the Gironde for not having conciliated Danton, who alone could have combated Robespierre. But they abhorred the minister of massacre.

#### BATTLE OF JEMMAPES (NOVEMBER 6TH, 1792)

The victorious general cared, indeed, little for either party. His only thought was conquest; his plan, to invade and subdue Belgium. It was to cause the adoption of this, and to prepare the means, that he visited Paris. The moment was one of elation. Custine had taken the important fortress of Mainz, the key of the Rhine, by surprise; Savoy and Nice were occupied by French armies; the Austrians had retreated from Lille,<sup>1</sup> as the Prussians from Valmy; and Dumouriez was determined, despite the lateness of the season, to assume the offensive.

The Austrians, about 25,000 strong, occupied several villages upon heights in front of Mons: the central village was Jemmapes. Despite these advantages in being entrenched and long stationed on the ground, Dumouriez attacked them on the 6th of November; his right, his centre, and his left each formed in column of attack. Both wings hesitated as they came into action. A brigade suddenly gave way; the habitude of sudden panic had not yet been forgotten by the French; and the entire body of the centre, suffering under the fire of the Austrian batteries, offered symptoms of backwardness and disorder. Had the Austrians been alert, a charge would have here told more effectually than all the batteries of Mons: one brave man, however, rallied the brigade. It is a singular proof of the revolutionary confusion of ranks, that the hero who rode up to this brigade, and brought it to resume at once its position and its sense of duty, was Renaud, a valet in the service of General Dumouriez. The centre itself was rallied by its commander, an officer of more illustrious birth, the then duke of Chartres, later duke of Orleans, and king of the French. Forming the most willing and brave into a close column, the young duke led them on to the attack of Jemmapes; their reawakened ardour carried everything before them, and drove the Austrians from their redoubts. The left being at the same time successful, the victory was complete. The vanquished lost 6,000 men, and Belgium fell at once into the possession of Dumouriez. That general made his triumphant entry into Brussels on the 14th of November.

#### THE KING IS BROUGHT TO TRIAL (DECEMBER, 1792)

It was at this moment of universal triumph over foreign enemies, that the republicans felt all their vindictive fury excited against the unfortunate Louis XVI. If the insurrection of August and the massacre of September had each its excuse in the danger and panic excited by foreign invasion,

[<sup>1</sup> Of the vain siege of Lille, Carlyle says: "The Austrian Archduchess (Queen's Sister) will herself see red artillery fired: in their overhaste to satisfy an Archduchess, 'two mortars explode and kill thirty persons.' It is in vain; Lille, often burning, is always quenched again; Lille will not yield. The very boys deftly wrench the matches out of fallen bombs: 'a man clutches a rolling ball with his hat, which takes fire; when cool, they crown it with a *bonnet rouge*.' Memorable also be that nimble Barber, who when the bomb burst beside him, snatched up a sherd of it, introduced soap and lather into it, crying '*Voilà mon plat à barbe*' (my new shaving-dish), and shaved 'fourteen people' on the spot. Bravo, thou nimble Shaver; worthy to shave old spectral Redcloak, and find treasures' — On the eighth day of this desperate siege, the

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the crime of immolating the royal victim could now have no such plea. The decapitation of Charles I is intelligible; it deprived royalism of a talented chief, a powerful partisan. The English republicans struck the lion of the forest, who had long held them at bay; the French employed equal fury in spilling the blood of the lamb, nay, in previously torturing the victim. After the sack of the Tuileries, the legislative assembly had assigned the Luxembourg as the residence of Louis; the municipality, however, thought the Temple more secure. They transferred the royal family thither, denying them the commodious apartments that even the Temple contained, and shutting them up in the small tower, where they were huddled together and visited with every privation and indignity. One domestic only was allowed them; the municipal officers penetrated at all times into the apartments; and openings in their dungeon doors left them continually under the eye of their guards. It was here that the queen was summoned to behold the head of her friend [the princess de Lamballe] borne on a pole; and hence she might daily overhear the proclamations or calumnies which the criers took care to vociferate under the windows of the Temple. After some time, Louis was separated from his family, and denied the sole consolation of his captivity, that of instructing his infant son.

What was to be his ultimate fate? It became urgent to decide. Petitions had been already presented, one especially from Auxerre, demanding not only his trial, but condemnation to death. Many of the French, under the influence of political rabies, deemed the Revolution incomplete till it had displayed the scene of a monarch's execution. England had done as much. Should history tell that she had surpassed France in audacity? It was far less the supposed guilt of Louis than the effect to be produced by his death that urged the fanatic revolutionists to demand it. National vanity sought to astonish Europe and to affright its kings, overlooking the crime of sacrificing the innocent. Another feeling, stronger than vanity, worked towards the napless monarch's destruction. This was the necessity all persons and parties felt to rival each other in zeal, and to outbid each other for popularity: that dread of the opinion of one's fellows, that of being thought lukewarm. The whole nation, whilst it invoked the goddess of liberty, was in reality prostrating itself before the demon of terror.

However the men of the Revolution might esteem themselves bound to disrespect the monarch's legitimate rights, there remained those which the constitution established by the first national assembly, and sworn to by the second, had secured to him: one of the first articles of this declared the king inviolable. This, however, was set aside. The convention decreed that itself should form the court of justice to try Louis. Even this, however, did not satisfy Robespierre, who argued that the monarch was already and *de facto* condemned. "People do not judge like courts; they pass not sentence, but merely send forth their thunder. They do not condemn kings, they annihilate them. As for me," continued Robespierre, "I abhor the pain of death, of which your laws are so prodigal, and I entertain for Louis neither love nor hate; I detest merely his misdeeds. I demanded the abolition of the pains of death in the constituent assembly; it is not my fault if my proposal was deemed a moral and political heresy. Since, however, this great principle

sixth day of October, Austria finding it fruitless, draws off, with no pleasurable consciousness; rapidly, Dumouriez tending thitherward; and Lille too, black with ashes and smoulder, but jubilant sky-high, flings its gates open. The *Plat à barbe* became fashionable; 'no Patriot of an elegant turn,' says Mercier several years afterwards, 'but shaves himself out of the splinter of a Lille bomb.'"]

of clemency has not been extended to minor offenders, how would you apply it to the king, the chief of criminals?"

The Girondists, during this early discussion of the question, kept their opinions in reserve: they wished the king's condemnation, not his death, yet feared to risk their popularity in endeavouring to save him. A circumstance occurred at this very time to render their position more delicate. A secret closet, formed of iron, was discovered by Roland in the royal apartments at the Tuileries; it contained documents of the connection of many popular chiefs with the court: Mirabeau's intrigues were brought to light, and the busts of that patriot were instantly thrown down, and his body torn from the Pantheon. The Gironde was inculpated, slightly indeed, but still sufficiently to paralyse any courageous resolves on their part to save the monarch.

In an early sitting, Buzot, one of this party, seeking either to cleanse it of the suspicion of being royalist, or to cast a similar accusation on the Mountain, moved that the penalty of death should be decreed against whosoever should even propose the re-establishment of royalty. Merlin, a Jacobin, thoughtlessly, and from a love of opposition, objected; urging that it belonged only to the people in their primary assemblies to decide such a question.

This afforded a triumph in turn to the Gironde, who instantly exclaimed that they had discovered the design of the Jacobins to raise up a king, either in the person of one of their demagogue chiefs, or in that of the duke of Orleans. Robespierre sought to repair the blunder of Merlin, and proposed to decree that "no nation should have the right to give itself a king"; and when a laugh put this down, he moved the instant condemnation and execution of Louis by virtue of an insurrection.

At length, on the 11th of December, Louis was dragged to the bar of the convention. His calm dignity silenced the noisy galleries, excited the pity of the Girondists, and even shook many of the Jacobins in their cruel resolves. Once alone he made use of a tone approaching to indignation; it was when he repelled the charge of spilling the blood of his subjects on the 10th of August. A new debate arose as to whether he should be allowed defenders: they were not conceded without a struggle. Louis selected Target and Tronchet: the former declined the dangerous office, which Lamoignon de Malesherbes proffered himself to undertake. The meeting betwixt this venerable man and the fallen prince, whose minister he had been in the old days of the monarchy, was touching in the extreme: Malesherbes fell at the feet of his royal master; words could not express the feelings of either.

Louis was allowed until the 26th to prepare his defence: the interval was spent in skirmishes betwixt the parties. Louvet proposed the banishment of the Bourbon race, aiming at Orleans. The leading Jacobins defended the prince who fraternised with them, denounced Brissot and Louvet, and demanded the exile of Roland. On the appointed day Louis appeared once more before the convention, attended by his defenders. The young Desèze, who had been added to their number, pronounced the monarch's defence. It was of considerable length, and elaborately drawn up, but wanted dignity, in appealing more to the compassion than to the justice of the assembly. Desèze thus concluded: "Frenchmen! the Revolution, which regenerated you, has developed great virtues; beware, lest it obliterate from your minds the sentiment of humanity, without which all others are false.

"Let me anticipate here the language of history. Louis ascended the throne at the age of twenty, and even thus young, gave in his high station an example of the purest morals. He showed then no guilty weakness nor



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corrupt passion : he was economical, just, severe, the constant friend of his people. Did they demand the abolition of an enormous tax ? — he abolished it. Did they complain of the remains of servitude ? — he did away with its last vestiges in his domains. Complaints were made of the criminal legislation ; they were met by reform. Thousands of French, previously deprived of the rights and privileges of citizens, recovered those rights by the laws of Louis. The people demanded liberty ; he granted the boon. He anticipated their demands ; he sacrificed all to them : and yet it is in the name of this people that some this day stand forth to demand — Citizens, I cannot go on, I leave the task to history. Reflect that history will pass judgment upon your sentence, and that hers will be also that of eternity !”

No sooner had Louis withdrawn, than the furious and contending passions of the assembly burst forth. Lanjuinais, unable to contain his emotion, rushed to the tribune, and made the wild demand that the whole process should be annulled. His voice was drowned with the cry of “Traitor !” Debate on this day was impossible. On the next, the Gironde declared its opinion by the mouth of Salles : he proposed to decree Louis guilty, but to leave the punishment to be fixed by the people in their primary assemblies. Salles drew a picture of the consequences of the king’s execution — the hatred of foreign nations, the depreciation of liberty and the abhorrence of its name excited amongst them ; at home the probable elevation of a revolutionary chief, “whom the very emigrants would return to support, and become his valets, provided he avenged them by the destruction of liberty, and rewarded them by a restoration of their titles.” The too faithful prophecy passed unhearkened to.

Robespierre was the principal orator of the extreme opinion : he stigmatised the proposal of appealing to the people as an excitement to civil war ; indulged in a warm panegyric of minorities ; and, as the spokesman of one, demanded the immediate execution of Louis. Vergniaud replied with that matchless eloquence, those powers of logic and persuasion, before which the cant and casuistry of the Jacobins shrank away. He defended the proposal of an appeal to the people, and denied that civil war or discord could spring from it ; he deprecated the execution of Louis, and followed Salles, in depicting its consequences, in a higher, a truer, and still more prophetic tone. The effects of a war against Europe he described as if a vision had placed the subsequent twenty years before his eyes.

“I do not presage defeat,” said he, “in case of war ; but even by the natural concurrence of the most prosperous events, the country must be consumed by her efforts. The population will be devoured by the ravages of war ; not a family but must lament a son or a father. Agriculture will want arms, manufacture hands. Your treasures will flow in imposts : the social system, wearied with shocks, will fall under the influence of a mortal languor. Beware, lest in the midst of her triumphs France should come to resemble those famed Egyptian monuments that have subdued time. The passing stranger is astounded by their grandeur ; but, if he penetrate within them, what doth he find ? — lifeless ashes, and the silence of the tomb !”

Vergniaud’s warning to the convention is still more prophetic. “When Cromwell sought to prepare the dissolution of that parliament by the aid of which he had upset the throne and sent Charles to the scaffold, he brought forward insidious propositions, which he knew would disgust the nation, but which he supported by hired applause and clamour. The parliament yielded ; the fermentation became general ; and Cromwell broke, without effort, that parliament which he had used as the footstool to climb to power.

“Have you not heard in these very precincts men crying out with fury ‘If bread be dear, the cause is in the Temple; if money be scarce, if the armies in want, the cause is in the Temple.’ The cause of all ill, in short, is in the Temple. Yet those who uttered this know right well that the dearth of bread, the want of money, or the bad state of the armies, had nothing whatever to do with the Temple. What then was their object? And who will guarantee to me that these same men, who are continually striving to degrade the convention,—these same men, who proclaim everywhere that a new revolution is necessary, that the sections ought to rise in permanent insurrection; who harangue in the municipality that when the convention succeeded to Louis there was but a change of tyrants; who clamoured for another 10th of August; who speak but of plots, death, treasons, and proscription, who argue the necessity of a defender, of a dictator,—who will guarantee to me that these same men, as soon as Louis is sent from the Temple to the scaffold, will not resume their cry, and changing but one word repeat, ‘If bread is dear, the cause is in the convention; if money be scarce and the armies unprovided, the cause is in the convention,’ etc.

This warning, the solemnity of which is to us increased by a knowledge of its speedy fulfilment, had not its due effect. Barrère, as usual, got up to state or lead the sentiments of the Plain; he thought the plan of the Girondists dangerous; and the convention agreed with him. An appeal to the people, as to the fate of Louis was rejected by a great majority.

The final question of the sentence was put on the evening of the 16th of January. Each member was called to the tribune to give his vote aloud, in the presence of the applause or execration of the galleries. Of the party of the Mountain the universal vote was, of course, death; still, that of *Égalité*, the duke of Orleans, as he pronounced the fatal word against his relation and sovereign, jarred upon the feelings even of that hardened assembly. Of the Gironde, many voted simply for death, in fear and despair, it should seem twenty-six of their number, amongst whom was Vergniaud, voted for death with reprieve or delay of execution. How deeply must they have rued that vote on hearing the result of the scrutiny! The number present was 721. The bare majority was thus 361; and but 361 voices were for death without condition. But Vergniaud and his friends had declared their vote independent of their condition, which was but a vow and recommendation; and by this means their faintheartedness raised the majority to 387 against 334 voices, which were for imprisonment during war, and exile after peace. In vain the Girondists endeavoured to amend their weakness by again agitating the question of reprieve: the hour of useful resolve was passed.

The motions for reprieve and delay were negatived, and, on the 20th, all efforts to save Louis were abandoned. Kersaint, an old sailor, resigned his seat in the assembly, refusing to herd longer with regicides. The capital was in the utmost agitation; the commune had taken every precaution to spread terror, and render the expression of pity dangerous. The middle orders commiserated, indeed, the fate of their sovereign, but knew not how to save him. The few royalists could but gnash their teeth in the powerlessness of despair. One, a *garde du corps*, resolved to have at least his mite of vengeance; he sought out one conventionalist that had voted for the death of Louis: Lepelletier de Saint-Fargeau was pointed out to him dining in a tavern, and the guard instantly buried his sword in the bosom of the regicide.

Meantime the executive council, with Garat, minister of justice, at its head, repaired, in the afternoon of the 20th, to communicate to Louis his condemnation. The monarch heard it without emotion, except a smile of

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indignation at one word, that which accused him of conspiracy. He was prepared; and taking the decree of condemnation from the secretary, he handed in return to that personage a written paper, asking, amongst a few other requests, three days to prepare for death, and a confessor of his choice.<sup>1</sup> The convention, as soon as consulted, refused the delay, but gave orders that a confessor should be admitted to the Temple. The abbé Edgeworth, being selected by the king, accordingly repaired to him. At seven in the evening his family was allowed to visit him, but not in private. His guardians insisted on witnessing, through a glass door, this most melancholy of domestic interviews. It lasted nearly two hours. Louis spoke the greater part of the time, related the circumstances of his trial, and endeavoured to soothe the distracted queen and princesses.<sup>2</sup> They found utterance but in the convulsive sobs of anguish. In parting, he promised to see them early on the morrow. But no sooner had they gone than he observed, "I cannot." He resolved to spare both them and himself this further trial. He was engaged until midnight with his confessor. He then went to bed, and slept soundly until five; when he arose, heard mass in his chamber, and received the sacrament, the guards affording the means of performing these ceremonies with the greatest difficulty. Neither would they allow him a knife for his last repast, nor scissors to cut off his locks and bare his neck for execution. "The executioner is a valet good enough for him," was the observation.<sup>b</sup>

## THE EXECUTION OF LOUIS XVI

Throughout his last ordeals, the king revealed a wonderful steadfastness in resignation and a moral courage of the highest order. Had he shown the same bravery previously, the cause of popular liberty might have been long delayed or perhaps more peaceably achieved. As it was, his behaviour deserved the words of "kingly" and "Christian" in their poetical, but alas, not their practical and historical significance. The very beauty of his soul in its last hours has thrown a light of horror on the whole cause of liberty reached by the destruction of kings, and has led many to forget how untypical of monarchy his character was, and what multitudes of lowly heroes have met martyrdom at the hands of merciless royalty with equal courage. But this again is said only as a counterweight in favour of a judicial attitude and in no sense as a diminution of the sweet and gentle glory of one who bravely paid a penalty he had not earned, but had inherited from generations of vicious ancestors. The king's farewell to his friends was not the least beautiful of his many beautiful deeds.<sup>a</sup>

[<sup>1</sup> He recommended to the nation's benevolence the persons who had been attached to his person or to his house, he expressed the wish that the convention would immediately take into consideration the care of his family and allow them to retire freely where they judged fit. He demanded: (1) a delay of three days in order to prepare to appear before God; (2) permission to see his family without witnesses during that interval; (3) the power to call in a priest of his own choice. Lastly he asked to be delivered from the constant supervision which the commune had established over him for some days. At the suggestion of Cambacérès, the following resolution was passed: "The convention authorises the provisional executive council: (1) to satisfy Louis' requests, except concerning the delay, in which respect it passes to the order of the day; (2) to answer Louis that the French nation, great in its benevolence as it is strict in its justice, will take charge of his family and procure them a suitable destiny." That destiny was to be the scaffold for the wife and sister, Simon's lessons for the son, and a harsh captivity for the daughter of the condemned man: but at least, at this moment the assembly deigned to allow a priest, freely chosen by Louis, to soften the last moments of the unfortunate king. This was Madame Elizabeth's confessor, who had remained in Paris braving all the rigour of the laws against unsworn priests. — TERNAUX.<sup>b</sup>]

[<sup>2</sup> After relating his lawsuit and speaking with the greatest generosity of those who had condemned him, the king made his son swear not to avenge his death. — TERNAUX.<sup>b</sup>]



When Malesherbes, his former minister, fell at his master's feet, and by his sobs informed him of the fatal news, the king, always calm and dignified, raised him, held him affectionately in his arms, and said in a gentle voice, "Ah, my dear Malesherbes, do not envy me the only refuge left me. I am ready to sacrifice myself for my people; may my blood save them from the evils which I fear for them." "Sire, many faithful subjects have sworn to rescue your majesty from the hands of the executioners or to die with you." "Thank them for their zeal; but tell them that I should not forgive them if a drop of blood were shed for me: I did not allow it to be shed when, perhaps, it might have preserved my throne and my life. I do not regret it." Then the king embraced his defenders and made them promise to return. But he was never to see them again; the door of the Temple had closed forever behind them.

On the day of his execution, January 21st, 1793, Paris had the appearance of a vast sepulchre. The streets were deserted, the armed citizens filled the posts which had been assigned them and were not allowed to leave them on any pretext. The rest of the citizens had orders not to leave their houses.

The windows were shut, doors closed. The weather was dark and foggy; since the previous day a shroud of snow was stretched over all the town; but the rain which had fallen in the night had already made part of it disappear.

It was eight o'clock. The king expressed a wish to see his family again, as he had promised them on the previous day; but the *aôbé* Edgeworth begged him not to allow the queen and her children such a painful ordeal. Louis submitted to this suggestion and asked that Cléry might be allowed to cut his hair; he did not wish to be touched by the hand of the executioner. But suspicion was so strong, pity so crushed in the hearts of all those who surrounded him, that this request, whose motive was so easy to understand, was brutally refused him.

Santerre appeared, followed by Claude Bernard and Jacques Roux, whom the commune had fixed upon to conduct the condemned man to the scaffold. The commissaries on guard and some of the armed police of the escort accompanied them. Louis XVI, who had heard, though without showing the slightest emotion, the entrance door open noisily, came out of his oratory where he had shut himself in with his confessor, and asked Santerre if it was now the hour. "Yes," laconically answered the commander-in-chief of the armed force. "I am busy; wait for me," replied the king with authority.

The only thought which occupied the king at this moment was his eternal salvation. He quietly went back to the turret, knelt before the minister of God, and received his blessing. Soon, returning to his room, he advanced to Santerre and those who accompanied him. "Is there a member of the commune among you?" Jacques Roux advanced, the king held out a sealed paper towards him; "I request you to place this writing in the hands of the president of the general council." "I can take charge of no packet, it is not my business; I have come to conduct you to the scaffold." The king then turned to one of the commissioners on service in the Temple, Baudrais; he at least did not refuse to carry out the last wish of a man who was about to die. Perceiving that all those who surrounded him wore their hats, Louis XVI put his on, and pointing out the faithful Cléry to the municipal guards, "I should like him to be left in the Temple," he said, "in the service of the queen — of my wife," he corrected himself. No one answered. The king advanced to Santerre; "Let us start!" he said.

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Immediately the armed police who were in the room went out, and Santerre after them ; the king and Abbé Edgeworth followed ; the municipal officers closed the march, Cléry remained alone. The king crossed the first courtyard with a firm step. After casting on the tower a look of tenderness and regret for those whom he was leaving, he stepped into the carriage which was to take him to the place of his martyrdom. His confessor took the seat by his side, two armed police were on the front seats of the carriage. He was preceded by Santerre, and on each side of him was one of the two municipal officers, Jacques Roux and Claude Bernard.

The gloomy procession set out ; the journey from the Temple to the place de la Révolution lasted an hour : it was disturbed by no serious attempt to release the prisoner. Abbé Edgeworth gave the king the breviary which he was carrying and pointed out the prayers for the dying. The king recited them in a low voice ; not a word passed between Louis XVI and his two warders during the whole of the painful journey. Two o'clock struck. The procession arrived at the end of the rue Royale. The carriage in which Louis XVI was seated turned to the right and went to the scaffold raised between the entrance of the Champs Élysées and the pedestal which, after having served as the base of the statue of Louis XV, was now supporting that of Liberty. Louis XVI was completely absorbed in his reading ; he only perceived that they had arrived when the carriage stopped. He raised his eyes, then went on reading the psalm which he had begun. Sanson's assistants opened the door, and lowered the step ; but the king quietly ended his last prayer ; then he closed the book, gave it back to Abbé Edgeworth, charged the armed police to attend to the safety of the courageous priest, and stepped out of the carriage.

The executioners wished to seize him ; he resisted them, and took off his coat and cravat, knelt down at the feet of God's minister, and received the last blessing. He then rose and walked towards the stairs which led to the scaffold. The assistants stopped him, and tried to seize his hands. "What do you want to do?" asked Louis XVI. "To bind you." "To bind me! I will never allow it! It is not necessary. I am sure of myself." A violent scene might have ensued : "Sire, offer this last sacrifice," said Abbé Edgeworth, "it is another feature of resemblance between your majesty and the God who will be your reward." Louis submitted and held out his hands to the executioners. They tied them with a handkerchief, then they cut his hair ; the preparations were ended. Louis resolutely climbed the few steps which separated him from the platform. Advancing to the edge of the scaffold, his head turned towards the palace of his ancestors, he made an imperious gesture to the drummers who had not ceased beating since the carriage arrived in the square. These men, dominated in spite of themselves by a twofold sentiment of respect and pity, were immediately silent. "Frenchmen," cried Louis, "I am innocent, I forgive the authors of my death : I pray God that France may never suffer for the blood which is about to be shed ; and you, unfortunate people——"

At this moment an officer on horseback, sword in hand, galloped up to the drummers and ordered them to beat. The executioners seized the victim and thrust him under the fatal knife. The head fell, one of Sanson's assistants picked it up and showed it to the people.

Cries of "Long live the Nation! Long live the Republic!" burst forth and swelled in sound to the outer edge of the square ; some rushed toward the scaffold to enjoy at closer range the horrible spectacle. [It is often stated that the abbé Edgeworth exclaimed as the king perished, "Son of St. Louis,

ascend to heaven," but Lord Holland <sup>m</sup>asked the abbé himself, and he denied the poetic outburst, which really belongs to the journalist Charles His.] The crowd, which had been unable to approach beyond the trenches, dispersed silently. The witnesses of the execution went to carry to every quarter of Paris the news that the last king of the French had just died by the sword of the law, and that the republic was founded in France forever.<sup>h</sup>

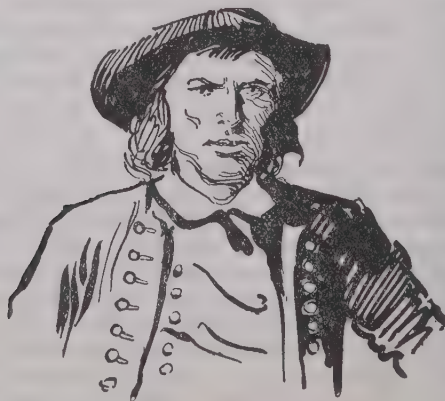
At home this Killing of a King has divided all friends; and abroad it has united all enemies. Fraternity of Peoples, Revolutionary Propagandism; Atheism, Regicide; total destruction of social order in this world! All Kings, and lovers of Kings, and haters of Anarchy, rank in coalition; as in a war for life. England signifies to Citizen Chauvelin, the Ambassador or rather Ambassador's-Cloak, that he must quit the country in eight days. Ambassador's-Cloak and Ambassador, Chauvelin and Talleyrand, depart accordingly. Talleyrand, implicated in that Iron Press of the Tuileries, thinks it safest to make for America.

England has cast out the Embassy: England declares war,—being shocked principally, it would seem, at the condition of the River Schelde. Spain declares war; being shocked principally at some other thing; which doubtless the Manifesto indicates.<sup>2</sup> Nay we find it was not England that declared war first, or Spain first; but that France herself declared war first on both of them;<sup>3</sup>—a point of immense Parliamentary and Journalistic interest in those days, but which has become of no interest whatever in these. They all declare war. The sword is drawn, the scabbard thrown away. It is even as Danton said, in one of his all too gigantic figures: "The coalised Kings threaten us; we hurl at their feet, as gage of battle, the Head of a King."<sup>f</sup>

[<sup>1</sup> On the motion of Danton, the convention had decreed (November 19th, 1792) that France "accorded aid and fraternity to all peoples that wished to seek liberty."<sup>f</sup>]

[<sup>2</sup> March 23rd.]

[<sup>3</sup> February 1st; and March 7th.]







## CHAPTER X

### THE COUNTER-REVOLUTION

[1793 A.D.]

THE French Revolution is apt to present itself to the eye as a hideous spectre. We behold and tremble. We are appalled by its monstrous aspect, and too deeply stricken with horror to regard it fixedly, with scrutiny and patience. Could we but do so, the phantom would lose much of its shadowy character; and although nought can wash away its crimes and blood, it would at least appear but an earthly and human phenomenon, the nature and causes of which we might perceive and store up as the precious materials of wisdom.

Hitherto, however, the Revolution has been treated as the spectre, and considered beyond the pale of humanity. The imagination alone has seized upon its prominent horrors. Even those who have deigned to seek for a cause have found it in some collateral or subordinate circumstance. Philosophy in the opinion of some, the duke of Orleans or Pitt in that of others, prepared and brought about the great catastrophe; whilst others again are satisfied to cast the entire blame on the sickleness and cruelty of man born upon the French soil. Scarcely has a distinction been made betwixt the Revolution and its excesses. Freedom itself has been included in the general stigma, and made answerable for that mass of guilt and folly which its enemies were mainly influential in producing.

The most fatal circumstance of the epoch was foreign interference, fatal alike in the hopes and the fears which it occasioned. Reliance on foreign support caused the emigration of the noblesse, as well as the temporising and at intervals the insincere policy of the unfortunate Louis XVI. Had king and aristocracy been obliged to confine their views to France, they would either have submitted frankly from the first, in which case power could never have descended lower than the ranks and opinions of the constitutionals; or they would have stood forth in open and civil war, an alternative preferable to flight, conspiracy, and massacre. The monarch, obedient to the moderation of his character, pursued an uncertain career, a kind of medium between the extremes by which he excited irritation and popular hatred, and compelled the successive parties, which in the assembly advocated the cause of freedom, to call in the popular force, first to their support, and then to their mastery.

Of the evils which so often attend revolution, the overthrow of all government and annihilation of all law are not the worst; it destroys, likewise, those finer and unseen ligaments which hold society together. Honour, a certain measure of good-will towards our fellows, with confidence in its reciprocity; certain bounds put to the desires of ambition, self-interest and enthusiasm, by that general feeling which can force itself to be respected by censure or ridicule; the general influence of domestic or amicable ties — all these various motives and persuasives, that secure the peace and well-being of society more than codes, are completely lost sight of in the effervescence of a revolution. Man, by that shock, is thrown back into a state of nature. He must go armed in mistrust at least, find no friend except in the ally who fights side by side with him in the mortal combat; he must neither expect mercy, nor be weak enough to show it. The French Revolution in its present advanced state offers this picture exactly; or rather, that of an arena of wild beasts struggling for mastery, knowing no safety but in complete victory, and not even in that victory, unless it be sealed by the blood of the vanquished.

The Girondists had the misfortune of not understanding the position in which they were placed. At first masters, they stood by like lions in the magnanimity of strength, and not unlike the king of the forest in character. A little violence and blood had satisfied their appetites; nor were they prepared, like the Jacobin tigers, to destroy for mere destruction's sake. Their forbearance, however, proved but weakness; and they soon found that, having failed to crush, they must inevitably themselves be crushed.

After the execution of Louis the discord thickened. Such beings as Marat, Robespierre, and Danton could not exist save in the fearful atmosphere of sedition that they had created for themselves. Indeed their personal security demanded this; for a return to order such as the Girondists sought to establish would inevitably bring them to punishment for their crimes. Already the Gironde had succeeded in proving them to be implicated in the horrors of September, and a judgment was about to be passed on several of the inferior leaders, when the Mountain persuaded the convention to quash the proceedings.

In partial exculpation of Robespierre and the Jacobins, however (if the word exculpation can be applied to such men), it must be allowed that at this epoch an insurrectionary spirit broke out in the capital independent of their intrigues. Its cause lay in the general distress, in the dearth of bread and of all necessities, aggravated by the recent declaration of war against England and Holland. A revolution such as the present, which had swept the rich from the face of the land, and converted even the moderately wealthy into trembling misers, necessarily threw all the population hitherto dependent on the expenses of these classes into indigence. Up to this moment the commune had paid them the produce of its plunders as the price of insurrection. This fund was now exhausted. Universal war made such a large demand that the commune could no longer obtain funds from the convention, somewhat jealous of it, whilst the depreciation of assignats or republican paper rendered aid illusory, and left the people utterly without the means of procuring even bread. They were numerous and armed. They crowded to the convention, and demanded that corn should nowhere be sold for more than twenty-five livres the sack, under penalty to the vendor of being sent to the galleys. Marat himself exclaimed in the convention against the maximum, as this measure was called. Robespierre made similar efforts in the Jacobins.

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Danton alone held back, and still kept his club of Cordeliers true to the prevailing spirit of the populace. His brother anarchists soon acknowledged his wisdom, and shuffled round once more to head the popular cry. Marat in some ten days after, having opposed the maximum, recommended the mob in his journal to pillage a few magazines, and hang the monopolisers. He was accused of this by the Gironde, and new tumults arose in the assembly. The Parisian populace adopted the advice of Marat. After the dearth of bread, that of sugar, candles, and such necessities was most felt since the war with England. Crowds of women accordingly proceeded to the grocers' shops, demanded these articles at the old prices, and soon at no price at all. A scene of plunder ensued, which was at length put a stop to by the federals of Brest, and some national guards.

When each difficulty of these dreadful times approached its crisis, evil tidings from the armies were wont to arrive, superadd a panic fear to all the evil passions of the hour, and thus precipitate the catastrophe. Now came the news of reverses in Belgium, the advance of the Austrians, their having defeated the French near Aachen, the utter failure of Dumouriez's invasion of Holland, and dire suspicions at the same time of the fidelity of that general. His conduct gave full scope for this. He openly spoke in contempt of the convention, and insulted its emissaries, who, he observed with truth, had spoiled his conquest by anarchy and spoliation.<sup>b</sup>

#### THE FALL OF THE GIRONDISTS (JUNE, 1793)

In the provinces of the west, where the influence of the two orders whose privileges the Revolution had destroyed reigned without a rival, the agitation had begun very early. By degrees it attained Maine, Anjou, and Brittany where the insurgents were designated under the name of Chouans.<sup>1</sup> As early as October, 1791, it had been found necessary to send troops against them. But the Vendean peasants did not begin the civil war in the name of throne and altar until after the king's death and when the convention had decreed, in March, 1793, a levy of 300,000 men. At the same time that this danger manifested itself in the interior, reverses began abroad. The English had fallen upon the French colonies and had seized Tobago and Pondicherry. Dumouriez, defeated at Neerwinden after an abortive invasion of Holland, evacuated Belgium and declared against the convention. His soldiers refused to follow him and he found himself obliged to flee to the Austrian camp (April 3rd). None the less the republic had lost its best general. He was the second to abandon his troops, La Fayette having preceded him. Already almost all the noble officers had emigrated. The soldiers' first distrust of their leaders returned; the army once more became disorganised and the northern frontier was endangered.

The convention made head in all directions. Against internal enemies a committee of the General Security was created for the purpose of seeking out not only culprits but suspects, and a revolutionary tribunal was erected to punish them. A committee of the Public Safety, a kind of dictatorship of nine persons, exercised the public authority in sovereign fashion, in order to bring the most energetic activity to bear on the question of national defence (April 6th); and, for fear lest the inviolability of the members of the assembly should hamper this new judicial power, the convention

<sup>1</sup> The Chouans were so-called from their leader Jean Cottureau, called the Chouan or Chat-Huant (screech-owl), who had been a smuggler and had adopted the cry of the screech-owl as a rallying-cry.



renounced that privilege. Since Dumouriez's defection suspicion was everywhere: Robespierre firmly believed that the Girondins wished to dismember France and open it to the foreigners; the Girondins, that Marat, Robespierre, and Danton wished to make the duke of Orleans king, then assassinate him and found a triumvirate from which Danton would have hurled his two colleagues that he might reign alone. Each in good faith attributed absurd designs to his adversaries. Hence all this distrust, fear, that terrible counsellor, and the axe suspended and falling on all heads.

The decree which did away with the inviolability of the deputies was soon put in execution. Since the king's trial the Girondins and the Mountainists had been carrying on a fierce contest in the convention: the first desiring to arrest the Revolution, the others to precipitate its course, though it should advance henceforth only through tracks of blood. The most atrocious of the fanatics was Marat, who reasoned thus: the public safety is the supreme law; now 270,000 nobles and priests with their partisans are endangering the state, therefore these 270,000 heads must fall; and every morning he demanded them. Carrying the cynicism of his thought into his costume he came to take his seat in the convention in sabots, the red cap on his head and dressed in the carmagnole. The Girondins, whom he accused of the crime of moderantism, attacked him. They obtained his accusation and succeeded in having him brought before the revolutionary tribunal. That tribunal which judged without appeal, and punished with death for a word, for a regret, for the mere name a man bore, dismissed Marat, acquitted. The populace conducted him back to the convention in triumph.

This ill-managed business was a double imprudence on the part of the Girondins: the check they received showed their weakness, and by destroying the inviolability of the deputies they gave their enemies a weapon against themselves. An attack on Robespierre succeeded no better and alienated Danton, who contended against them on the 31st of May, and in particular on the 2nd of June, 1793. The Mountain, mistress, through the commune and the Jacobins, of the Paris sections, armed them against the convention. Surrounded, terrified, the latter, under pressure of the revolt, signed the order for the arrest of thirty-one Girondins. Some, like Vergniaud and Gensonné, waited to stand their trial; others, like Pétion and Barbaroux, escaping from their persecutors, endeavoured to rouse the departments.<sup>c</sup>

#### REACTION OF THE PROVINCES

Robespierre was an extraordinary personage. He was the very perfection, the type of triumphant mediocrity. Talents he had none — nor ideas, although by dint of exertion he acquired the semblance of the one, and purloined the others notoriously from all around him. His speeches were written for him; and the debates of the Jacobin clubs, at first philosophical and given to the discussion of principles, supplied him with a political vocabulary at least. Thus his friends, his future enemies being included in that class, lent to this hawk the feathers that impeded his wing, and taught him at length to soar. He was totally without passion, unless vanity deserve the name; but his vanity was wise, and wore all the loftiness of pride. Then he had honesty and consistency, two qualities that cannot be denied him, however he might have adopted them in calculation. From his first vote in the constituent assembly he had been the rank democrat that he ever was, professing all those extreme opinions to which others tended. His private morals were

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irreproachable. He held to his condition, lodged to the last with the same humble carpenter's family that at first housed him.

Unlike his colleague Danton, no bribe, no peculation, no expense, no licentiousness, considered as such in that day at least, could be laid to his charge. No petty ambition distracted his views, or blemished his character for disinterestedness. He was never minister, nor even commissary. After the fall of the Gironde, when he was all-powerful, he did not become member of the sovereign committee till it pleased the convention and the Jacobins of their own accord to appoint him. With this there was no affectation in his *sans-culottism*. He neither shaved his head, nor wore tattered garments, nor mounted the red nightcap. Robespierre alone wore powder, and preserved the dress and demeanour of respectability. Political courage he certainly did not want, though physically he was, with Marat, the most arrant of cowards. Ruthless as a tiger, at first reckless, then greedy of blood—such was the tyrant of the day.

The Gironde had now fallen before the party of Robespierre and the Parisians. The dignity of the national assembly had been violated, and its freedom destroyed. It remained for the provinces to fulfil their menaces, support and avenge the Girondists, and resist the tumultuous tyranny of the capital. To this resistance many were previously disposed and partially prepared. The escape of some of the proscribed deputies, and their appearance in the provinces, communicated enthusiasm and gave leaders to the revolt, that now became general. The northern departments, with those immediately around Paris, alone remained true to the convention. The former, menaced by the foreign enemy, and occupied by the republican armies, had neither power nor leisure to rise. But Normandy, whither most of the fugitive Gironde had bent their steps, at once declared against the anarchists. The province summoned a representative assembly to meet at Caen, raised an army, appointed General Wimpfen to the command, and pushed forward its advanced post to Évreux, within a day's journey of the capital. Brittany strove to imitate La Vendée; whilst the victorious insurgents of this region were at this moment marching upon Nantes, in order to procure themselves a stronghold and a seaport. Nantes, though Girondist, prepared to resist the royalists to the last; and, in the middle of June, a gallant and general attack upon the town by the Vendéans was repulsed. Both parties were, however, equally hostile to the convention. Continuing the circuit of France, Bordeaux was naturally indignant at the arrest of its deputies. It instantly despatched a remonstrance to Paris, and began to levy an army to support it. Toulouse followed the example. Marseilles, the hyper-revolutionary Marseilles, had anticipated the crisis. The Jacobins and moderate republicans had come to blows, and the former had succumbed. Lyons presented the same scene, save that the struggle was more fierce. Lyons from its manufacture of silk, gold, and silver embroidery, and other articles of high luxury, had depended on the rich. It therefore contained an aristocratic and royalist party, which naturally generated the other extreme, a Jacobin club; and this club had its Marat in Chalier. The parties fought; the Jacobins were beaten, their club was destroyed; and Chalier, after a time, was tried and executed.

Thus did the exaggerated mutual reproaches of the Mountain and the Gironde realise each other. Robespierre, accused of aspiring to the dictatorship, became marked as fit for this supremacy, and attained it. The moderates, accused of aiming at feudalism, and projecting to organise the provinces separately and independently of the capital, were driven at length to attempt

this in their own defence as well as in that of freedom. Divided and declared as parties now were, it seemed almost inevitable that the Jacobins would be crushed. More than two-thirds of the provinces declared against them, whilst the English and Austrians pressed them from the north and east. The Mountainists were, however, the central power, holding immediately in hand the army, the revenue, the administration. On the standard which they held up were all the old symbols of the Revolution; whilst the provinces, separated widely in space, and as widely in ideas, were under the impossibility of concerting either a plan of campaign, or a principle of resistance.

In many places the resistance gradually threw off the republican mask, and became avowed royalism. This terrified and disgusted others, however ill disposed to the convention, from taking part against it. But the chief cause of the failure of the provincial reaction in favour of the Gironde against Paris was that the Girondists were essentially a bourgeois party, supported by the middle classes only; that is by the townsmen of the provinces. The peasant population could never be made to comprehend a medium betwixt the royalist and the ultra-revolutionist; and thus when they refused to assume the white cockade, they equally refused to take arms against the tricolour. This state of things the convention, however, at first alarmed, in time was able to perceive. On the first rumour of the widespread resistance, proposals were entertained of conciliating the provinces, of sending them hostages from the bosom of the assembly itself. A new constitution was prepared, discussed in preference to measures of defence, which nevertheless appeared more pressing, and the convention seemed ready to deprecate the odium of France by dissolving itself. But with a clearer view courage returned; and Jean Bon Saint-André, in the name of the committee of public safety, pronounced that "the counter-revolution was confined to some few opulent towns," and that "the present was a war of merely some few shopkeepers against the liberty of the country."

In fact La Vendée alone fought, and at this time with ill success. The league of Lower Normandy, formidable by the debates and votes and *procès verbaux* of its representative assembly, conducted its military efforts with all the irresolution and neglect characteristic of the Gironde. The only expedition which it attempted was against the town of Vernon. The first cannon-shot fired by the conventionalist gendarmes routed the hesitating army of the federals. They retreated. The Girondist deputies fled through Brittany to Bordeaux; and Normandy submitted to the sovereign authorities of Paris.

#### CHARLOTTE CORDAY KILLS MARAT (JULY 13TH, 1793)

A young Norman girl showed more heroism than the united party. Well-born, and inheriting competence, she became, like Madame Roland and many talented females of the time, deeply interested in political events. She came to worship with enthusiasm the idea of a republic, such as that which illustrated the ancient world, in which patriotism inspired the mass, in which virtues and genius were the undisputed titles to influence and power. This halcyon political state she saw in the predominance of the Gironde; and she was enamoured of the philosophy, the eloquence, the varied talents of its leaders. Mortified and indignant at their fall, Charlotte Corday made personal acquaintance with her admired statesmen, then fugitives at Caen; and her feelings inspired her with heroic resolve. Imparting her purposes to none she set out alone to Paris, and spent some days in seeking the abodes



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and learning the motions of the sanguinary triumvirate. She determined to immolate one of them.

Marat appeared to her to be the most guilty and most atrocious. But he no longer went abroad to the convention, suffering under a continued fever, which he allayed by frequent baths, and indulged by denunciations and proscriptions, sent forth either in his daily journal or in letters to the convention. He was then clamorous, like a hound for his meal delayed, that Custine and Biron, the two generals in command, were aristocrats worthy of condemnation and the guillotine. Charlotte Corday went to the abode of the monster; a female with whom he lived denied her entrance: she insisted, saying she had matters of importance to communicate, having just arrived from Caen.

Marat, who was extended in his bath in an adjoining chamber, caught the word, cried out that the young girl should be admitted, and eagerly commenced inquiries relating to the Girondist deputies then at Caen. He carefully noted down her replies, muttering, "They shall all go to the guillotine," when Charlotte Corday approached and plunged a knife into his breast. His cry for help brought his mistress; and she, a crowd. The monster had expired, the words of blood still in his mouth. Charlotte Corday stood by unmoved, in the calm serenity of heroism, avowing and glorying in the deed. Such was her countenance at her trial: such did it continue at her execution, which took place in a few days after, amidst the execrations of the mob.<sup>b</sup>



CHARLOTTE CORDAY  
(1768-1793)

#### LAMARTINE ON CHARLOTTE CORDAY'S EXECUTION

The sky cleared up, and the rain, which wetted her to the skin, displayed the exquisite symmetry of her form, like a woman leaving the bath. Her hands bound behind her back obliged her to hold up her head, and this forced rigidity of the muscles gave more fixity to her attitude, and set off the outlines of her figure. The rays of the setting sun fell on her head; and her complexion, heightened by the red chemise, seemed of an unearthly brilliancy. Robespierre, Danton, and Camille Desmoulins had placed themselves on her passage, to gaze on her; for all those who anticipated assassination were curious to study in her features the expression of that fanaticism which might threaten them on the morrow. She resembled celestial vengeance appeased and transfigured, and from time to time she seemed to seek a glance of intelligence on which her eye could rest. Adam Lux, a young German republican, awaited the cart at the entrance of the rue St. Honore,

and followed it to the foot of the scaffold. "He engraved in his heart," to quote his own words, "this unutterable sweetness amidst the barbarous outcries of the crowd; that look so gentle, yet penetrating; these vivid flashes that broke forth like burning ideas from these bright eyes, in which spoke a soul as intrepid as tender — charming eyes, which should have melted a stone."

Thus an enthusiastic and unearthly attachment accompanied her, without her knowledge, to the very scaffold, and prepared to follow her, in hope of an eternal reunion. The cart stopped, and Charlotte, at the sight of the fatal instrument, turned pale, but, soon recovering herself, ascended the scaffold with as light and rapid a step as the long chemise and her pinioned arms permitted. When the executioner, to bare her neck, removed the handkerchief that covered her bosom, this insult to her modesty moved her more than her impending death; then, turning to the guillotine, she placed herself under the axe. The heavy blade fell, and her head rolled on the scaffold. One of the assistants, named Legros, took it in his hand and struck it on the cheek. It is said that a deep crimson suffusion overspread the face, although dignity and modesty had for an instant lasted longer even than life.

Such was the death of Marat; such the death of Charlotte Corday. In the face of murder history dares not praise, and in the face of heroism dares not condemn her. The appreciation of such an act places us in the terrible alternative of blaming virtue or applauding assassination. Like the painter who, despairing of rendering the expression of a mingled sentiment, casts a veil over the face of the figure, we must leave this mystery to be debated in the abysses of the human heart. There are deeds of which men are no judges, and which mount, without appeal, direct to the tribunal of God. There are human actions so strange a mixture of weakness and strength, pure intent and culpable means, error and truth, murder and martyrdom, that we know not whether to term them crime or virtue. The culpable devotion of Charlotte Corday is amongst those acts which admiration and horror would leave eternally in doubt, did not morality reprove them. Had we to find for this sublime liberatrix of her country, and generous murderess of a tyrant, a name which should at once convey the enthusiasm of our feelings towards her and the severity of our judgment on her action, we would coin a phrase combining the extreme of admiration and horror, and term her the Angel of Assassination.<sup>1</sup>

A few days afterwards Adam Lux published the *Apology of Charlotte Corday*, and associated himself with her deed, in order to share her martyrdom. Arrested and sent to the Abbaye, he exclaimed, as he entered the prison. "I shall die, then, for her." He perished soon after, saluting, as the altar of liberty and love, the scaffold which the blood of his model had hallowed. The heroism of Charlotte was sung by the poet André Chénier, who was himself so soon to die for that common fatherland of all great souls — pure liberty. Vergniaud, on learning in his dungeon of the crime, trial, and

[<sup>1</sup> All historians, no matter to what shade of opinion they may belong, have agreed in honouring the courage of Charlotte Corday and in deploring the use she made of it. Political assassination should always be branded, no matter how exalted the object, how despicable the victim, or how pure the motive and intention of the assassin. Nothing can absolve him who on his own authority constitutes himself judge and executioner. Posterity, which pronounces the impartial verdict, does not crown heroes indiscriminately.

At a distance of three centuries, two women roused themselves for the salvation of France. The same love of country inflamed their hearts, the same hatred of tyranny strengthened their arms; both were surrendered to the executioner. But one seized the warrior's sword, the other the assassin's knife. That explains why, through the ages of history, Joan of Arc is exalted to a martyr and a saint, whilst in the memory of Charlotte Corday a bloodstain extinguishes her glory forever.—TERNAUX.<sup>2</sup>]

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death of Charlotte, exclaimed, "She destroys us, but she teaches us how to die."

The purest virtue is deceived in her aim when she borrows the hand and weapons of crime. The blood of Marat intoxicated the people. The Mountain, Robespierre, Danton, happy at being freed from a rival whose influence with the multitude they feared, cast his corpse to them, in order that they might erect it into an idol. The convention ordained the worship of Marat as a diversion to anarchy, and permitted a god to be made of him whom it had blushed to own as a colleague. The night after his death the people hung garlands at his door, and the convention inaugurated his bust in their hall. The sections appeared at the convention, to demand that he should be buried in the Panthéon. Others asked that his body should be embalmed, and carried through the departments to the very limits of the world. Some proposed that an empty tomb should be erected to him beneath every tree of liberty. Robespierre alone strove to moderate this idolatry of the Jacobins. "Doubtless," said he, "the honours of the poniard are reserved for me; priority has been established by chance, and my fall is near at hand."

The convention decreed that it would be present *en masse* at the funeral. The painter David arranged the obsequies, and strove to imitate those of Cæsar. He placed the body of Marat in the church of the Cordeliers, on a catafalque. The poniard, the bath, the block of wood, the inkstand, pens, and papers were displayed by his side, as the arms of the philosopher and the proofs of his stoical indigence. Deputations of the sections succeeded each other with harangues, incense, and flowers, and pronounced terrible vows over the corpse.

In the evening the funeral *cortège* went forth, lighted by the flambeau of the church, and did not reach the place of sepulture until midnight. The place selected for the reception of Marat's remains was the very one where he had so often harangued and agitated the people, the court of the club of Cordeliers, as we enter a warrior on his field of battle. The body was lowered into the grave under the shade of those trees whose leaves, illuminated by thousands of lamps, shed over his tomb the soft and serene light of ancient elysium. The people, under the banners of the sections, the departments, the electors, the commune, the Cordeliers, the Jacobins, and the convention, assisted at this ceremony. Derisive apotheosis! The president of the assembly, Thuriot, addressed the last national adieu to his shade. He announced that the convention would place the statue of Marat by the side of that of Brutus. The club of the Cordeliers claimed his heart. Enclosed in an urn, it was suspended from the roof of the hall of assembly. The society voted him also an altar. "Precious relics of a god!" exclaimed an orator at the foot of this altar, "shall we be perjured in presence of thy manes? Thou demandest vengeance of us, and thy assassins yet breathe!"

Pilgrimages of the people congregated every Sunday at the tomb of Marat, and mingled the heart of this apostle of murder in the same adoration as that of the Christ of peace. The theatres were decorated with his image. Places and streets changed their names for his. The mayor of Nîmes caused himself to be designated the Marat of the south; the mayor of Strasburg, the Marat of the Rhine. The *conventionnel* Carrier called his troops the army of Marat. The widow or mistress of "*l'ami du peuple*" demanded vengeance from the convention for her husband, and a tomb for herself. Young girls, dressed in white, and holding crowns of cypress and oak in



their hands, sang around the funeral car hymns to Marat. All the burden of these chants was sanguinary. The poniard of Charlotte Corday, in lieu of stanching blood, appeared to have opened the veins of France.<sup>d</sup>

#### ESTIMATES OF MARAT

Perhaps even for Marat a word of common justice should be spoken. The deeds he accomplished and the worse deeds he inspired are horrible enough without soiling reproach with slander. It is common to paint him as a monster of hideous filth and degradation, and his life in cellars and sewers when a price was on his head had indeed given him a skin-disease which the science of that day could not prevent from serious aggravation; but to-day's science would call it a harmless eruption, easily cured. It is common to speak of him with contempt as a veterinary surgeon — Carlyle <sup>e</sup> calls him a "horse-leech" — which is not true and would prove nothing if it were.

Marat's early life gave no prophecy of his end. He was born in 1743, in Switzerland, son of a successful physician, who sent him to travel and then to study medicine for two years at Bordeaux. He practised in Paris, later in Holland, and eventually in a fashionable district of London. A philosophical *Essay on Man*, published there in 1773, showed a remarkable command of the history of philosophy. This and other works brought him honorary membership in various learned societies. In 1775 Edinburgh University gave him as an honour the degree of M.D.

He was of such repute that the count of Artois, afterwards King Charles X of France, made him brevet physician to his guards, and he became a very successful physician to the aristocracy of France. Meanwhile he was gaining repute as a scientist, optics and electricity being his special fields. When the Académie des Sciences rejected him as a dissentient from Newton, whose *Optics* he translated into French, Goethe was indignant at the despotism. Marat was large enough for Voltaire to attack and for Franklin to befriend. His *Plan de Législation Criminelle* in 1780 was notably humane.

The rise of revolution found this distinguished man ripe for action. He began to publish his paper, *L'Ami du Peuple*. He seems to have felt an absolutely sincere abhorrence for all forms of autocracy. The woes of the common people had set his heart not aglow, but aflame. One who has read of the torments endured by the poorer classes of the old régime has surely seen that it gave some temptation to fanaticism and that a heart inclined to be revengeful would have impulse enough towards ferocity. Marat always attacked the one in power — municipal council, king, or Gironde. It was the municipal council under Bailly that sought to repress him. He fled to London in January, 1790, and again in December, 1791, returning to live a subterranean life. The manner in which he evaded whole corps of detectives and yet kept publishing his journal, has something of magic in it.

His very invisibleness gave him an uncanny hold on the popular mind, but when it was safe to appear in public he could face the whole convention coolly and answer denunciation with proud confession and counter-denunciation. He was most radical in his measures and believed in turning on the royalists the punishment they would speedily enough wreak on the republicans if they could return. He is accordingly blameworthy in part for the September massacres, though he previously strove to secure a tribunal to try the royalist prisoners legally.

Later Marat saw that the Gironde was interested in federalising France. He thought that this was to sacrifice Paris to the jealousy of other cities, to

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rob the cause of centralisation, and to present dissension to the armies outside. His old associates, Robespierre and Danton, turned against him, and Marat, as we have seen, faced a tumult of abuse such as has rarely been endured. Instead of denying many of the charges, he turned them into boasts.

After this, the convention had declared the French Republic one and indivisible. "And this," says Bougeart,<sup>f</sup> an earnest, perhaps too earnest, defender of Marat, "is how this clashing of shields by the Girondins ended. The assembly understood that unity had saved France, that in unity alone lay her salvation, and by its voting showed faith in it. To whom did the country owe this declaration? To Marat alone."

Of his character, his contemporary, Fabre d'Églantine,<sup>g</sup> wrote: "But in this Marat, gentle-hearted, if we judge him by the spirit he showed, we have seen a strong-headed man, of invincible courage, of unshaken firmness. I have never seen him, even in the most violent storms, without rare presence of mind. In his designs, in their execution, in his opinions, in his patriotic hatred, nothing could make him deviate or bend. It was not obstinacy, for he knew how to recognise reason and how to praise it in another when it exceeded his own. And all this with so simple a manner that the yielding itself was a testimony to his superiority. In danger, in the most personal and spiteful attacks, in most violent persecution, his courage and intrepidity were worthy of admiration. No reverses depressed him, no consideration dominated him. A special proof is given of this in the manner with which he bore at the convention the terrible and combined attacks of all the aristocracy of France in the person of his enemies then present; in the striking victory he carried off alone; in the terror he inspired in their souls as he stood there with disdain on his lips and a pistol in his hand.

"He had more than mere good-heartedness. One of the bases of his character was that great modesty that engenders and nourishes in an honest man simplicity, love of truth, and good and noble sentiments. Nothing annoyed him more than impudence. The sight of effrontery united to dissimulation sometimes made him writhe with wrath, sometimes lent his attitude and discourse a strong dignity, a proud gravity under which his small stature disappeared. 'I would bid you be modest,' was his favourite phrase, and although he often had occasion to use it, yet he said it with such sincerity that it was strongly felt and never seemed hypocritical in his mouth."

A latter-day Englishman, H. Morse Stephens,<sup>h</sup> has also found it possible to say: "Whatever his political ideas, two things shine clearly out of the mass of prejudice which has shrouded the name of Marat—that he was a man of great attainments, and acknowledged position, who sacrificed fortune, health, life itself, to his convictions, and that he was no *bête féroce*, no factious demagogue, but a man, and a humane man too, who could not keep his head cool in stirring times, who was rendered suspicious by constant persecution, and who has been regarded as a personification of murder, because he published every thought in his mind, while others only vented their anger and displayed their suspicions in spoken words."

It must finally be remembered that if Marat was an advocate of ferocity he was also its victim; if the enemies he roused were sincere, they attempted the same weapons as he, and succeeded with a knife. It is almost impossible to abhor Charlotte Corday. She always looks out through the bars in such beauty, that her deed takes on a sanctity. But the mere fact that Marat was unpleasant to the eyes should not blind us to the fact that his deeds were no less honestly misguided than hers, and hers no less ruthlessly cruel than

his. They were both victims of an overwhelming social upheaval, and both used ugly weapons earnestly, as did almost everyone about them — royalist, constitutionist, Vendean, communard, foreigner, native citizen, or peasant. Marat is a tragic figure in history and worthy of abundant abhorrence, if ever man were; but he should not be distinguished in infamy beyond his desert.<sup>a</sup>

#### CONSTITUTION OF THE YEAR III

The discussion of the new constitution promised a return to a system of law and order. The general insurrection of the provinces tempered the zeal, if it did not excite the fears of the leaders in the capital. As the provinces succumbed, however, feelings of irritation and vengeance appeared; the revolutionary monster felt the return of its access of fury, that had for a moment been allayed. The new constitution, one as democratic as could well be formed, was to be proclaimed and inaugurated on the 10th of August, 1793. The departments, which in two months had almost all given in their submission to the convention, were requested to send commissaries to Paris in token of reconciliation. They came; and on the 10th of August Paris enjoyed the spectacle of a third federation, celebrating the birth of the third constitution that had been framed in the short space of four years. The ceremony was arranged by the painter David.<sup>b</sup>

David was inspired by Robespierre. Nature, reason, creed, country — were the only divinities who presided at this regeneration of the social world. The people were there the only majesty. Symbols and allegories were the sole objects of adoration. Soul was wanting there because God was absent. Robespierre dared not yet unveil his image. The place of union and the point of departure of the cortège, as in all the fêtes of the Revolution, was the site of the Bastille, marked as the first step of the republic. Upon the ground of the Bastille a fountain, called the fountain of Regeneration, washed away the traces of former servitude. A colossal statue of Nature, whose breasts poured forth water, presided over this fountain. The cup circulated from hand to hand amongst all the assistants. The cortège defiled, to the sound of cannon, upon the boulevards.

Each society raised its flag, each section its symbol. The members of the convention advanced last, each one holding in the hand a bouquet of flowers, fruit, and fresh ears of corn. The tables on which the Rights of Man were written, and the ark in which the constitution was enclosed, were carried as holy relics into the midst of the convention, by eight of its members. Eighty-six envoys of the primary assemblies, representing eighty-six departments, walked round the members of the convention, and unrolled from one hand to the other, around the national representation, a long tricoloured ribbon, which seemed to enchain the deputies in the bonds of the country. A national *fascis*, crowned with olive branches, exemplified the reconciliation and the unity of the members of the republic. The foundlings in their cradles, the deaf and dumb conversing in the language of signs which science had given them; the ashes of heroes who had died for their country, enclosed in urns, whereon their names were inscribed; a triumphal car, surrounded by the labourer, his wife and his children; and, lastly, tumbrils loaded, as if they were vile spoils, with fragments of tiaras, sceptres, crowns, and broken arms — all these symbols of slavery, superstition, pride, benevolence, labour, glory, innocence, rural life, and warlike virtue marched behind the representatives. Close by a station before Les Invalides, where the multitude saluted its own image in a colossal statue of the people trampling on federalism,



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the crowd dispersed itself over the Champ-de-Mars. The representatives and established corps ranged themselves upon the steps of the altar of the country. A million heads bristled upon the sloping steps of this immense amphitheatre; a million voices swore to defend the principles of the social code, presented by Hérault de Séchelles to the acceptance of the republic. The salvos of cannon seemed themselves to swear extermination to the foes of the country.<sup>d</sup>

#### . CARLYLE ON THE NEW CALENDAR

As to the New Calendar, we may say here rather than elsewhere that speculative men have long been struck with the inequalities and incongruities of the Old Calendar; that a New one has long been as good as determined on. Maréchal the Atheist, almost ten years ago, proposed a New Calendar, free at least from superstition: this the Paris Municipality would now adopt, in defect of a better; at all events, let us have either this of Maréchal's or a better,—the New Era being come. Petitions, more than once, have been sent to that effect; and indeed, for a year past, all Public Bodies, Journalists, and Patriots in general, have dated "First Year of the Republic." It is a subject not without difficulties. But the Convention has taken it up; and Romme, as we say, has been meditating it; not Maréchal's New Calendar, but a better New one of Romme's and our own. Romme, aided by a Monge, a Lagrange and others, furnishes mathematics; Fabre d'Églantine furnishes poetic nomenclature: and so, on the 5th of October, 1793, after trouble enough, they bring forth this New Republican Calendar of theirs, in a complete state; and by Law, get it put in action.

Four equal Seasons, Twelve equal Months of Thirty days each; this makes three hundred and sixty days; and five odd days remain to be disposed of. The five odd days we will make Festivals, and name the five *Sansculottides*, or Days without Breeches. Festival of Genius; Festival of Labour; of Actions; of Rewards; of Opinion: these are the five *Sansculottides*. Whereby the great Circle, or Year, is made complete: solely every fourth year, whilom called Leap-year, we introduce a sixth *Sansculottide*: and name it Festival of the Revolution. Now as to the day of commencement, which offers difficulties, is it not one of the luckiest coincidences that the Republic herself commenced on the 21st of September; close on the Autumnal<sup>1</sup> Equinox? Autumnal Equinox, at midnight for the meridian of Paris, in the year whilom Christian 1792, from that moment shall the New Era reckon itself to begin. *Vendémiaire*, *Brumaire*, *Frimaire*; or as one might say, in mixed English, *Vintagearious*, *Fogarious*, *Frostarious*: these are our three Autumn months. *Nivôse*, *Pluviôse*, *Ventôse*, or say, *Snowous*, *Rainous*, *Windous*, make our Winter season. *Germinal*, *Floréal*, *Prairial*, or *Buddal*, *Floweral*, *Meadowal*, are our Spring season. *Messidor*, *Thermidor*, *Fructidor*, that is to say (*dor* being Greek for gift) *Reapidor*, *Heatidor*, *Fruitidor*, are Republican Summer. These Twelve, in a singular manner, divide the Republican Year. Then as to minuter subdivisions, let us venture at once on a bold stroke: adopt your decimal subdivision; and instead of the world-old Week, or *Se'ennight*, make it a *Tennight*, or *Décade*;—not without results. There are three Decades, then, in each of the months; which is very regular; and the *Décadi*, or Tenth-day, shall always be the "Day of Rest." And the Christian Sabbath, in that case? Shall shift for itself!

This, in brief, is the New Calendar of Romme and the Convention; calculated for the meridian of Paris, and Gospel of Jean Jacques: not one

[<sup>1</sup> Strange to say, Carlyle says "Vernal" Equinox.]

of the least afflicting occurrences for the actual British reader of French History ;—confusing the soul with *Messidors*, *Meadowals* ; till at last, in self-defence, one is forced to construct some ground-scheme, or rule of Commutation from New-style to Old-style, and have it lying by him. Such ground-scheme, almost worn out in our service, but still legible and printable, we shall now, in a Note, present to the reader. For the Romme Calendar, in so many Newspapers, Memoirs, Public Acts, has stamped itself deep into that section of Time : a New Era that lasts some Twelve years and odd is not to be despised.<sup>1</sup> Let the reader, therefore, with such ground-scheme, help himself where needful, out of New-style into Old-style, called also “slave-style” (*stile-esclave*) — whereof we, in these pages, shall as much as possible use the latter only. Thus, with new Feast of Pikes, and New Era or New Calendar, did France accept her New Constitution : the most Democratic Constitution ever committed to paper.<sup>e</sup>

THE LEVY EN MASSE

Public instinct, however, only accepted the constitution as a future matter. Everyone felt that its execution should be adjourned until the pacification of the empire. A petition from the envoys of the departments urged the convention to continue the government alone. Pache reassembled the commune, and caused the *rappel* to be beaten in all the sections. An address drawn up by Robespierre was carried by thousands of citizens to the convention, to conjure them to retain the supreme power. This dialogue of a thousand voices of the people and its representatives was accompanied by sound of drums and the voice of the tocsin. It was evident that the Jacobins exercised the influence of the people over the convention to make it give birth to terror. “Legislators,” said they in the address, “elevate yourselves to the height of the great destiny of France. Half measures are always mortal in extreme danger. It is easier to move a whole nation than a part of it. If you required one hundred thousand men, perhaps you would not find them ; if you demand millions of republicans, you will see them arise to crush the enemies of liberty ! The people no longer desire a war of tactics, where traitorous and perfidious generals sell the blood of the citizens. Let no one

<sup>1</sup> September 22nd of 1792 is Vendémiaire 1st of Year One, and the new months are all of 30 days each ; therefore :

To the number of the day in			We have the number of the day in			DAYS
	Vendémiaire	ADD 21		September	30	
	Brumaire	21		October	31	
	Frimaire	20		November	30	
	Nivôse	20		December	31	
	Pluviôse	19		January	31	
	Ventôse	18		February	28	
	Germinal	20		March	31	
	Floréal	19		April	30	
	Prairial	19		May	31	
	Messidor	18		June	30	
	Thermidor	18		July	31	
	Fructidor	17		August	31	

There are 5 Sansculottides, and in leap-year a sixth, to be added at the end of Fructidor. The New Calendar ceased on the 1st of January, 1806.

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be exempted ; let agriculture alone reserve the arms necessary for the sowing of the earth and the reaping of the harvest ; let the course of things be interrupted ; let the grand and only business of the French be to save the republic."

The convention arose in enthusiasm, as an example of representatives to citizens, and voted the following decree : "From this moment and until the day when the enemy shall have been driven from the territory of the republic, all the French are in permanent requisition for the service of the armies. The young men will go to battle, the married men will forge arms and transport provisions, the women will make tents and clothes, and will serve in the hospitals : the children will make lint to dress the wounded ; the old men will cause themselves to be carried in the public places, to excite the courage of the warriors, the hatred of kings, and the love of the republic. The national buildings will be converted into barracks, the public places into armouries. The soil of the cellars will be lyed to extract saltpetre from it. Arms of calibre will be exclusively confided to those who march against the enemy. Fowling pieces and naked weapons will be bestowed upon the public force in the interior. Saddle-horses will be required to complete corps of cavalry. All draught-horses, which are not required for agriculture, will conduct the artillery and provisions. The committee of public safety is charged to originate everything, to organise everything, to require all throughout the republic, men and material, for the execution of these measures. The representatives of the people, who are sent into their respective circuits, are invested with absolute powers for this object. The levy will be general. Those citizens who are unmarried, or widowers without children, will march first. They will repair to the principal place in their district, and will there be exercised in the use of arms, until their departure for the armies. The banner of each organised battalion shall bear this inscription : '*Le peuple français debout contre les tyrans !*'"

These measures, very far from alarming the generality of France, were received by patriots with the enthusiasm which had inspired them. Battalions were raised with more celerity and regularity than in 1792. On registering the lists of the first officers who were named, all the heroic names of the military empire of France were there to be found. They sprang from the republic. The glory with which despotism armed itself at a later period against liberty belonged entirely to the Revolution.

Those decrees were completed in the space of two months by others impressed with the same defensive energy. It was the organisation of the enthusiasm and the despair of a people who knew how to die, and of a cause which must triumph. France was at the Thermopylæ of the Revolution, but this Thermopylæ was as extended as the frontiers of the republic, and the combatants consisted of twenty-eight millions of men.

The commission of finance, through Cambon, its reporter and its oracle, ruled with an honest and healing hand over the disorder of the bankrupt treasury, and over the chaos into which the mass and the discredit of the assignats had thrown private and public affairs. To increase the quantity of ready money requisite for the small daily transactions of the people, the bells of the churches were cast, and the sacred metal was thrown to the people struck into coin of the republic. The public prosperity of France still at this day rests upon the basis instituted by Cambon.

The unity of weights and measures ; the application of the discovery of balloons to military operations ; the establishment of telegraphic lines to bear the hand of government, as promptly as its thoughts, to the extremities of the



republic ; the formation of national museums to excite by example the taste and cultivation of the arts ; the creation of a uniform civil code for all parts of France, to the end that justice should there be as one with the country ; in short, public education, that second nature of civilised people — were the objects of the many discussions and decrees which attested to the world that the republic had faith in itself, and founded a future, by disputing the morrow with its enemies. Equality of education was proclaimed, as a principle flowing from the rights of man. The convention decreed national establishments of public education, which all the youths of the country should be compelled to frequent ; but it permitted families the right of retaining their children under the paternal roof ; thus bestowing instruction upon the state, education to the fathers, heart to the family, and soul to the country.

From decrees of violence, vengeance, and sacrilege sprang these decrees of power, wisdom, and magnanimity. The menacing movements of the people of Paris, who were beset with the reality of famine and the phantom of monopoly, the ravings of Chaumette and Hébert in the commune, compelled the convention to make deplorable concessions, which resembled zeal, but which were only weakness. The convention decreed a maximum — that is to say, an arbitrary price — below which no bread, meat, fish, salt, wine, coals, wood, soap, oil, sugar, iron, hides, tobacco, and stuffs could be sold. It fixed likewise the maximum of wages. It was making itself master of all the liberty in commercial transactions, in speculation and labour, which exist only in a state of liberty. It was placing the hand of the state amongst all sellers, all purchasers, all labourers, and all proprietors of the republic. Such a law could not but produce the concealment of capital, the cessation of work, the languor of all circulation, and the ruin of all.

The maximum brought forth its fruit by compressing in every direction the circulation of ready money, labour, and provisions. The people laid the blame of these calamities of nature upon the rich, upon the merchants, and upon the counter-revolutionists. They pursued the counter-revolution, even to its most impotent victims, buried in the dungeons of the Temple, and the remains of its kings interred in the tombs of St. Denis. The convention decreed that the process against the queen Marie Antoinette should be acted upon ; that the royalist tombs of St. Denis should be destroyed, and the ashes of the kings swept from the temple which the superstition of royalty had consecrated to them. These concessions were not enough for the people. They demanded loudly a zealous tribunal respecting property or pillage. "If you do not give us justice on the rich," exclaimed an orator in the Jacobins, "we will take it ourselves."

#### ORGANISATION OF THE TERROR

The addresses of the societies of the departments also demanded an institution which should restrain the force of the people, and regulate their violence, in the shape of a perambulating army, charged with the execution of its will. This was the revolutionary army, to wit, a corps of popular pretorians, composed of veterans of the insurrection, hardened against tears, blood, and punishment, and parading throughout the whole republic the instrument of death and terror. Crowds of workmen, of beggars, and women, vociferating death or bread, collected round the Hôtel-de-Ville, and threatened the alarmed convention with a new 31st of May. Robespierre in vain essayed many times to restrain these petitioners, thirsty for pillage and blood. His

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popularity with difficulty survived his resistance to excess. He often entered alone and forsaken into his dwelling.

Barrère ascended the tribune, in the name of the committee of public safety, to demand the origination of terror, and to regulate it when decreed. "For some time past," said he, "the aristocrats of the interior have meditated a movement. Well, they shall have this motion; but it shall be against themselves. They shall have it organised, and regulated by a revolutionary army, which will, in short, execute that great motto which we owe to the commune of Paris. Let us institute terror as the order of the day. The royalists desire blood: well, they will have that of the conspirators, of Brissot, of Marie Antoinette! This is no longer illegal vengeance, it proceeds from extraordinary tribunals, which have wrought it." The decree which these words summed up was carried by acclamation.

A second decree banished all those who had belonged to the military establishment of the king or his brothers to a distance of twenty leagues from Paris. Another re-established nocturnal visits in the dwellings of the citizens. Another ordered the transportation of common women, who corrupted the manners and enervated the republicanism of the young citizens, beyond sea. Another voted a payment of two francs per day to those workmen who left their workshops to assist in the assemblies of their section; and of three francs per day to the men of the people who should be members of the revolutionary committees. It fixed two sittings per week, the Sunday and the Thursday, for these patriotic assemblies. The sittings were to commence at five o'clock and to finish at ten. Lastly, another reorganised the revolutionary tribunal. It was the justice of terror.

This tribunal, instituted by the vengeance of the morrow of the 10th of August, had been until then tempered by the forms and humanity of the Girondists. In two years, it had tried only one hundred accused, and had acquitted the greater number of them. The installation of this tribunal of state recalled by its forms that the people took all power into their own hands, even justice; and that they were to sit themselves, and judge their enemies by means of juries composed of simple citizens chosen from and elected by the crowd. Death, according to them, was necessary in the dawn of the Revolution. They consented to act the part of death. Such men are to be found throughout all history: as wood, iron, and fire are found to construct an instrument of punishment, so are judges found to condemn the vanquished, satellites to pursue the victims, and executioners to immolate them.

Merlin de Douai presented on the 17th of September a project of a decree whose meshes, woven by the hand of an able lawyer, enveloped the whole of France in a legal net, which left no resource to innocence, nothing free from treachery. The secret intentions of Merlin in presenting this decree were, it is said, rather to shield the victims from the people than to surrender the guilty to the revolutionary tribunal. Such was the state of the times that the prison seemed to him the only refuge from assassination. The decree of Merlin, composed of seventy-four incriminations, arising from all the suspicions that lurked in every man's brain, became the most complete arsenal of arbitrary rule that the complaisance of a legislator placed in the hands of power. The first article was, "Immediately after the publication of this present decree, all suspected persons who are found in the territory of the republic, and who are still at liberty, shall be arrested."

The prisons were not sufficient to contain the immense number of prisoners, and the public edifices, the confiscated hotels, the churches and convents

were converted into places of confinement. The punishment of death, multiplied in proportion to this multiplication of crimes, came from hour to hour, and decree to decree, to arm the judges with the right of decimating the suspected. Did anyone refuse to march to the frontier, or surrender his arms to those on the way thither—death. Did anyone shelter an emigrant or fugitive—death. Did anyone transmit money to a son or friend beyond the frontier—death. Was an innocent correspondence maintained with an exile, or a single letter received—death. Did anyone aid prisoners to communicate with their friends—death. Was the value of assignats diminished—death. Were they purchased at a premium—death. Did two witnesses attest that a priest or a noble had taken part in an anti-revolutionary meeting—death. Did a prisoner endeavour to burst his bonds and escape—death pursued the very instinct of life. Death was soon suspended over the heads of even the judges. A decree, dated a few days later, ordered the dismissal, imprisonment, and trial of such revolutionary committees as had left a single suspected person at liberty.

The convention, deliberating and acting,—present everywhere in its emissaries, maintaining an incessant correspondence with them, inspiring, stimulating, punishing, and recalling them,—such was the terrible mechanism of that dictatorship which succeeded the hesitations and commotions of the government after the fall of the Gironde, and which is called the Terror. Irresistible and atrocious as the despair of a revolution which feels its aim frustrated, and of a nation which feels itself perishing, this dictatorship makes us tremble with astonishment, and shudder with horror. This government of an extreme crisis cannot be judged by the rules applicable to ordinary governments. It termed itself revolutionary government; that is, subversion, strife, tyranny. The convention considered itself as the garrison of France, shut up in a nation in a state of siege.<sup>1</sup> Resolved to save the Revolution and the country, or perish in their ruins, it suspended all laws before that of the common danger. It created a revolutionary machine, sprung from, superior to, and stronger than, itself. The Terror was invented by Robespierre and Danton, less against the internal enemies of the republic than against the excesses and anarchies of the Revolution herself.

Moreover, the Terror was not a calm and cruel calculation of a few men, deliberating coldly on a system of government. It sprang by degrees from circumstances and the tension of things and men, placed in difficult positions, from which their genius furnished them no other means of extricating themselves than by destruction and death. It arose chiefly from that fatal and ambitious rivalry, that struggle for proofs of patriotism, for popularity, of which each man and party reproached his or their opponents with not offering sufficient to the Revolution—with which Barnave reproached Mirabeau; Brissot, Barnave; Robespierre, Brissot; Danton, Robespierre; Marat, Danton; Hébert, Marat; everyone the Girondists: so that to prove his patriotism, every man and party was forced to exaggerate his proofs by exaggerating measures, suspicions, excesses, and crimes; until from this pressure, which all men exercised against each other, there should result a general emulation—half feigned, half sincere—which should envelop them in the mutual dread they communicated, and which they cast on their enemies to avert it from themselves.

[<sup>1</sup> “It cannot be too strongly insisted upon that the whole of the system of Terror was due to the perils in the provinces and on the frontiers. Extraordinary were those difficulties, and equally extraordinary means of government were necessary to meet them. Such means were found in the immense powers given to the committees of public safety and of general security, and to the revolutionary tribunal.”—H. MORSE STEPHENS.]



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And in the people themselves the convulsive agitation of a revolution of three years' duration, the dread of losing a conquest they valued the more from its being the more recent and more contested; the incessant fever which the tribunes, the journals, and the clubs disseminated each day amongst the populace; the cessation of labour, the prospects of the agrarian law, and general pillage by those greedy of gain, despairing patriotism, the treason of the generals, the invasion of the frontiers, the Vendéans setting up the standard of royalism and religion, the scarcity of money, the famine panic, the thirst of blood inspired by the days of the 14th of July, 6th of October, 10th of August, and 2nd of September, and that furious rage for extermination, which lurks in the instincts of the multitude, which awakes in time of great commotion, and which demands to gorge itself with blood when it has once tasted it — such were the elements of the Terror. Calculation in some, *entrainement* in others; weakness in these, concession in those; fear and passion in the greater number; a moral epidemic tainting an already vitiated air, and from which predisposed minds no more escape than morbid bodies from a prevailing disease; a contagion to which everyone lends his share of miasma and complicity; the Terror sprang from itself, and died as it was born, when the tension of affairs was relaxed, without being conscious of its death, any more than it was conscious of its birth. Such is the progress of human things, for which our infirmity leads us to seek one cause, when it results from a thousand different and complicated causes; and to which is given the name of one man, when they should bear the name of the period.

The coalition of crowned heads watched every movement of France, and encircled it with 700,000 men. The émigrés were advancing at the head of foreigners, and already fraternised with royalism in Valenciennes and Condé. La Vendée had roused the whole of the west, and with one hand united its religious rising with the insurrection in Normandy, and with the other joined the insurrection in the south. Marseilles had unfurled the flag of federalism, scarcely yet defeated in Paris. Toulon and the fleet were plotting their defection, and opening their roadsteads and arsenals to the English. Lyons, declaring itself a sovereign municipality, cast into prison the representatives of the people, and erected its guillotine for the partisans of the convention.

To make temporary, secure, and impartial laws, and enforce their penalty, is the right of every dictatorship; to proscribe and kill, against all laws and against all justice, to inundate scaffolds with blood, to deliver not the accused to the tribunals but victims to the executioner, to command verdicts instead of awaiting them, to give to citizens their enemies as judges, to encourage informers, to throw to assassins the spoils of the sufferers, to imprison and immolate on mere suspicion, to pervert into crime the feelings of nature, to confound ages, sex, old people, children, wives, mothers, daughters in the crimes of fathers, husbands, brothers — is not dictatorship but proscription. Such was the twofold character of the Terror. By the one the convention will remain as a monument in the breach of a country saved — a Revolution defended; by the other its memory will be stained with blood, which history will perpetually stir without ever being able to efface it from its name.

One of the first great victims of the Terror was General Custine. His crime was having mingled science with war. The Mountainists desired a rapid and cursory campaign; they required plebeian generals to direct the plebeian masses, and ignorant generals to invent modern warfare. Custine, carried away from the midst of his army, by whom he was adored, by the commissary of the convention, Levasseur, had arrived in Paris to render an account of his inactivity. His death caused all thoughts of treason to

re-enter the hearts of the generals, all sorts of insubordination to affect duty; the head of their most popular chief had fallen before the astonished army. It showed them that they had no other chief than the convention.

### THE TRIAL OF THE QUEEN

Ninety-eight executions had in sixty days imbued the scaffold with blood. The axe of terror once placed in the hands of the people could no longer be withdrawn. Implacable and cowardly vengeance incessantly demanded the head of Marie Antoinette. The blind unpopularity of this unfortunate princess had outlived even her fall and disappearance. She was, in the words of the hardened people, the counter-revolution chained, but still the counter-

revolution existing. In slaying Louis XVI the people well knew that they had but immolated the hand. The soul of the court was, with the enemies of royalty, in Marie Antoinette. In their eyes, Louis XVI was the personification of royalty; in his wife was lodged its crime. There was no member of the committee who thought her dangerous to the Revolution; some blushed at the necessity of delivering up this victim. Robespierre himself, so incensed against the king, would have preserved the queen. "If my head were not necessary to the Revolution," he said, "there are moments when I would offer that head to the people in exchange for one of those which they demand of us."

We left the royal family in the Temple, at the moment when the king tore himself from their last embraces to walk to the scaffold. Some relaxation of rigour in the interior captivity of the princesses followed the death of the king.

At first the commissioners of the



MARIE ANTOINETTE

(1755-1793)

Temple hoped that the contented republic would not delay setting at liberty the women and the children. After a debate of the 26th of March, the council of the commune ordered that spaces of the battlements of the tower should be filled up by shutters, which, permitting the air to penetrate, yet intercepted the view. The queen's captivity became closer. The sensibility, however, which rules even opinion, had introduced devoted men through the wickets of the Temple. Hue, *valet-de-chambre* to the king, who had remained free and forgotten in Paris, thus transmitted to the princesses the facts, the reports, the hopes, and the plots outside, which affected their situation. These communications, verbal or written, could not reach the captives without precautions and devices, which blinded the eyes of the other commissioners. The events within and without, the disposition of men's minds, the progress

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of La Vendée, the success of foreign armies, the glare of false hopes, which enlightened chimerical conspiracies for their deliverance, and, lastly, some letters, bathed in tears of real friendship, entered thus into the prison of Marie Antoinette. But hope entered not into her soul. The horror of her situation was precisely that of having nothing more to fear, and nothing more to hope.

After the 31st of May, the terror which reigned in Paris had penetrated even to the dungeon, and gave to men, to purposes, and to measures a character of rigour and persecution still more odious. Each municipal proved his patriotism by exceeding his predecessor in insults. The convention, after having decreed that the queen should be judged, ordered her to be separated from her son. They desired this order to be read to the royal family. The child threw himself into his mother's arms, beseeching her not to abandon him to his executioners. The queen placed him upon her bed, and, interposing herself between him and the municipals, declared to them that they should kill her on the spot sooner than approach him. Menaced in vain by violence if she continued to resist the decree, she contended for two hours against the injunctions, the threats, the abuse, and the gestures of the commissioners, until her strength was totally exhausted. At length, having fallen through lassitude at the foot of the bed, and persuaded by Madame Elizabeth and by her daughter, she dressed the dauphin, and transferred him, bathed with her tears, to the jailers.

The shoemaker Simon, selected, from the brutality of his manners, to replace the heart of a mother, carried the dauphin into the chamber where that young king was doomed to die. The child remained two days lying on the floor without accepting any nourishment. No supplication of the queen could obtain from the commune the favour of a single interview with her son. Fanaticism had murdered nature. The doors of the apartment of the princesses were kept bolted night and day. The municipals themselves no longer appeared there. The turnkeys alone ascended three times a day to bring them provisions and inspect the bars of the windows. No waiting-woman had replaced the wife of Tison, who was confined in a lunatic asylum. Madame Elizabeth and the young princess made the beds, swept the chamber, and waited upon the queen. The only consolation of the princesses was to ascend each day the platform of their tower, at the hour when the young dauphin walked on that on his side, and to watch for an opportunity of exchanging a look with him. The queen passed all the time of these promenades, her eyes bent upon a fissure in the skylight, between the battlements, endeavouring to catch a glimpse of the shadow of her child, and to hear his voice.

The obscenity and brutality of Simon depraved at once the body and soul of his pupil. He called him the young wolf of the Temple. He treated him as the young of wild animals are treated, when taken from the mother and reduced to captivity; at once intimidated by blows, and enervated by the taming of their keepers. He punished him for sensibility; he rewarded meanness; he encouraged vice; he taught the child to insult the memory of his father, the tears of his mother, the piety of his aunt, the innocence of his sister, and the fidelity of his partisans. He made him sing obscene songs in honour of the republic, of the *lanterne*, and of the scaffold. Often intoxicated, Simon amused himself with this derision of fortune which delighted his base mind. He made the child wait upon him at table, himself seated, the former standing. One day, in cruel sport, he nearly tore an eye from the dauphin's head, by striking him on the face with a knotted towel. Another time he



seized a poker from the hearth, raised it over the child's head, and threatened to knock him down. More frequently he was lenient with him, and feigned to compassionate his age and misfortune, in order to gain his confidence, and report his conversation to Hébert and Chaumette. "Capet," said he to him one day, at the moment when the Vendean army passed the Loire, "if the Vendéans should deliver you, what would you do?" "I would forgive you," replied the child. Simon himself was affected by this answer, and recognised therein the blood of Louis XVI. But this man, led astray by pride at his importance, by fanaticism, and by wine, was neither susceptible of constant brutality nor of lasting kindness. It was drunkenness and ferocity charged by fate with the debasement and denaturalising of the last germ of royalty.

On the 2nd of August, at two o'clock in the morning, the queen was awakened, that the decree might be read which ordained her removal to the Conciergerie, whilst her trial was proceeding. She heard the order read without betraying either astonishment or grief. It was one step nearer the end which she saw was inevitable, and which she wished nearer. A carriage, into which two municipals ascended with her, and which was escorted by *gendarmes*, conducted her to the Conciergerie.

These gigantic substructures served as a foundation to the high quadrangular tower, from which once all the fiefs of the kingdom were raised. This tower was the centre of monarchy. Thus, it was under this palace of feudalism itself that the vengeance or the derision of fate confined the agony of monarchy and the punishment of feudalism. Who would have told the kings of the first races that in this palace they erected the prison and the tomb of their successors? Time is the grand expiator of human affairs. But, alas! it avenged itself blindly, and it washed out, with the tears and the blood of a female victim of the throne, the wrongs and oppression of twenty kings!

At the bottom of a little cellar, a miserable pallet, without canopy or curtains, with covering of coarse cloth, such as that which passes from one bed to the other in hospitals and barracks, a small deal table, a wooden box, and two straw chairs, formed all the furniture. It was there that in the middle of the night, and by the light of a tallow candle, the queen of France was thrown, fallen from grade to grade, from misfortune to misfortune, from Versailles and from Trianon, even into this dungeon. Two *gendarmes*, with naked swords in hand, were placed on duty in the first chamber, with the door open, and their eyes fixed on the interior of the queen's cell, being charged not to lose sight of her even in her sleep.

During the last days of her confinement, the jailer had obtained permission, under the pretext of better guaranteeing his responsibility, that the *gendarmes* should be withdrawn from the interior, and placed outside the door in the corridor. The queen had no longer to submit to the stare, the conversation, and the continual insults of her inspectors. She had no longer any society but her thoughts. She passed the hours in reading, meditation, and prayer.

On the 13th of October, Fouquier-Tinville came to notify her of his act of accusation. She listened to it as a form of death, which was not worth the honour of discussion. Her crime was being a queen, the consort and mother of a king, and the having abhorred a revolution which deprived her of a crown, of her husband, her children, and her life. To love the Revolution, she must have hated nature, and destroyed all human feeling. Between her and the republic there was no legal form—it was hatred even to death. The stronger of the two inflicted it on the other. It was not

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justice, it was vengeance ; the queen knew it ; the woman received it : she could not repent ; and she would not supplicate. She chose, as a matter of form, two defenders — Chauveau-Lagarde and Tronson du Coudray. These advocates, young, generous, and of high repute, had secretly solicited this honour. They sought, in the solemn trial of the revolutionary tribunal, not a despicable salary for their eloquence, but the applause of posterity.

The following day, the 14th of October, at noon, she dressed herself, and arranged her hair, with all the decorum which the simplicity and poverty of her garments permitted. She did not dream of moving the regards of the people to pity. Her dignity as a woman and a queen forbade her to make any display of her misery. She ascended the stairs of the judgment-hall, surrounded by a strong escort of *gendarmes*, crossed through the multitude, which so solemn a vengeance had drawn into the passages, and seated herself upon the bench of the accused. Her forehead, seathed by the Revolution, and faded by grief, was neither humbled nor cast down. Her eyes, surrounded by that black circle which want of rest and tears had graved like a bed of sorrow beneath the eyelids, still darted some rays of their former brilliancy upon the faces of her enemies. The beauty which had intoxicated the court and dazzled Europe was no longer discernible ; but its traces could still be distinguished. Her mouth sorrowfully preserved the folds of royal pride, but ill effaced by the lines of long suffering. Her hair, whitened by anguish, contrasted with this youth of countenance and figure, and flowed down upon her neck as in bitter derision of the fate of youth and beauty. Her countenance was natural — not that of an irritated queen, insulting in the depth of her contempt the people who triumphed over her, nor that of a suppliant who intercedes by her humility, and who seeks forbearance in compassion, but that of a victim whom long misfortune had habituated to her lot, who had forgotten that she was a queen, who remembered only that she was a woman, who claimed nothing of her vanished rank ; who resigned nothing of the dignity of her sex and her deep distress.

The crowd, silent through curiosity rather than emotion, contemplated her with eager looks. The populace seemed to rejoice at having this haughty woman at their feet, and measured their greatness and their strength by the fall of their most formidable enemy. The crowd was composed principally of women, who had undertaken to accompany the condemned to the scaffold with every possible insult. “What is your name?” demanded Hermann of the accused. “I am called Marie Antoinette of Lorraine, and Austria,” answered the queen. Her low and agitated voice seemed to ask pardon of the audience for the greatness of these names. “Your condition?” “Widow of Louis, formerly king of the French.” “Your age?” “Thirty-seven.”

Fouquier-Tinville read the act of accusation to the tribunal. It was the summing up of all the supposed crimes of birth, rank, and situation of a young queen ; a stranger, adored in her court, omnipotent over the heart of a weak king, prejudiced against ideas which she did not comprehend, and against institutions which dethroned her. This part of the accusation was but the act of accusation of fate. These crimes were true, but they were the faults of her rank. The queen could no more absolve herself from them than the people from accusing her of them. The remainder of the act of accusation was only an odious echo of all the reports and murmurs which had crept during ten years into public belief, of prodigality, supposed licentiousness, and pretended treason of the queen. It was her unpopularity converted into crimination. She heard all this without betraying any sign of emotion or astonishment, as a woman accustomed to hatred, and with whom calumny

had lost its bitterness, and insult its poignancy. Her fingers wandered heedlessly over the bar of the chair, like those of a woman who recalls remembrances upon the keys of a harpsichord. She endured the voice of Fouquier-Tinville, but she heard him not. The witnesses were called and interrogated. After each evidence Hermann addressed the accused. She answered with presence of mind, and briefly discussed the evidence as she refuted it. The only error in this defence was the defence itself.

The answers of Marie Antoinette compromised no one. She offered herself alone to the hatred of her enemies; and generously shielded all her friends. She evinced her determination not to abandon her sentiments before death, and that if she delivered her head up to the people, she would not yield them her heart to profane. The ignominy of certain accusations sought to dishonour her, even in her maternal feelings. The cynic Hébert, who was heard as a witness upon what had passed at the Temple, imputed acts of depravity and debauchery to the queen, extending even to the corruption of her own son, "with the intention," said he, "of enervating the soul and body of that child, and reigning in his name over the ruin of his understanding."

The pious Madame Elizabeth was named as witness and accomplice in these crimes. The indignation of the audience broke out at these words, not against the accused, but against the accuser. Outraged nature aroused itself. The queen made a sign of horror, not knowing how to answer without soiling her lips.

A juryman took up the testimony of Hébert, and asked the accused why she had not replied to this accusation? "I have not answered it," said she, rising with the majesty of innocence, and the indignation of modesty, "because there are accusations to which nature refuses to reply." Afterwards, turning towards the women of the audience, the most enraged against her, and summoning them by the testimony of their hearts and their community of sex, "I appeal against it to all mothers here present," cried she. A shudder of horror against Hébert ran through the crowd. The queen answered with no less dignity to the imputations which were alleged against her of having abused her ascendancy over the weakness of her husband. "I never knew that character of him," said she; "I was but his wife, and my duty, as well as my pleasure, was to conform to his will." She did not sacrifice by a single word the memory and honour of the king for the purpose of her own justification, or to the pride of having reigned in his name.

After the closing of these long debates, Hermann summed up the accusation, and declared that the entire French people deposed against Marie Antoinette. He invoked punishment in the name of equality in crime and equality in punishment—and put the question of guilty to the jury. Chauveau-Lagarde and Tronson du Coudray, in their defence, excited posterity without being able to affect the audience or the judges. The jury deliberated for form's sake, and returned to the hall after an hour's interval. The queen was called to hear her sentence. She had already heard it in the stamping and joy of the crowd, which filled the palace. She listened to it without uttering a single word, or making any motion. Hermann asked her if she had anything to say upon the pain of death being pronounced upon her. She shook her head, and arose as if to walk to her execution. She disdained to reproach the people with the rigour of her destiny and with their cruelty. She wrapped herself in that silence which was her last protection. Ferocious applause followed her even to the staircase which descends from the tribunal to the prison.



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## THE LAST HOURS OF MARIE ANTOINETTE

The first light of day began to struggle under these vaults with the flambeaux with which the *gendarmes* lighted their steps. It was four in the morning. Her last day had commenced. She was placed, while awaiting the hour of punishment, in the dark hall wherein the condemned await the executioner. She asked the jailer for ink, paper, and a pen, and wrote the following letter to her sister, which was found afterwards amongst the papers of Couthon, to whom Fouquier-Tinville rendered homage, by these curiosities of death and relics of royalty.

This 15th October, at half-past four in the morning.

I write you, my sister, for the last time. I have been condemned, not to an ignominious death, that only awaits criminals, but to go and rejoin your brother. Innocent as he, I hope to show the same firmness as he did in these last moments. I grieve bitterly at leaving my poor children; you know that I existed but for them and you—you who have by your friendship sacrificed all to be with us. Let my son never forget the last words of his father. I repeat them to him expressly: "Let him never attempt to avenge our death!"

I die in the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman religion; in that of my fathers; in that in which I have been bred, and which I have always professed, having no spiritual consolation to expect, not knowing if priests of this religion still exist here—and even the place in which I am would expose them too much, were they once to enter it. I sincerely ask pardon of God for all the errors I may have committed during my life. I hope that, in his kindness, he will accept my last vows, as well as those I have long since made, that he may vouchsafe to receive my soul in his mercy and goodness. I ask pardon of all those with whom I am acquainted, and of you, my sister, in particular, for all the trouble which, without desiring it, I may have caused you. I forgive all my enemies the evil they have done me. I say here adieu to my aunts, and to all my brothers and sisters. I had friends, and the idea of being separated forever from them and their sorrows causes me the greatest regret I experience in dying. Let them, at least, know that in my last moments I have thought of them. Adieu, my good and kind sister! May this letter reach you! Think of me always! I embrace you with all my heart, as well as those poor and dear children. My God, how heartrending it is to quit them forever! Adieu! Adieu! I ought no longer to occupy myself, but with my spiritual duties. As I am not mistress of my actions, they may bring me perhaps a priest. But I here protest that I will not tell him one word, and that I will treat him absolutely as a stranger.

This letter being finished, she kissed each page repeatedly, as if they could transmit the warmth of her lips and the moisture of her tears to her children. She folded it without sealing it, and gave it to the concierge Bault. He remitted it to Fouquier-Tinville.

There were constitutional priests. Three amongst them presented themselves during the night at the Conciergerie, and timidly offered their ministry to the queen. One was the constitutional curate of St. Landry, named Girard; another, one of the vicars of the bishop of Paris; the third, an Alsatian priest, named Lothringer. The schism with which they were infected was, in her eyes, one of the stains of the republic. The seemliness of their manners and conversation, however, touched the queen. She coloured her refusal with an expression of gratitude and regret. But the abbé Lothringer persisted in his charity, which more resembled an obligation than a holy work.

Marie Antoinette was only resolved to die as a Christian, as her husband had died, and as her angelic sister, whom she had left as a mother to her children, lived. This sister had procured for her, in secret, a consolation which her piety deemed a necessity of salvation. It was the number and the floor of a house in the rue St. Honoré, before which the condemned passed, and in which a Catholic priest would be on the day of punishment, at the hour of execution, to bestow upon her, from above, and unknown to the people, the absolution and benediction of God. The queen relied on this invisible sacrament, to die in the faith of her race and in reconciliation with heaven.

The queen, after having written and prayed, slept soundly for some hours. On her awakening, the daughter of Madame Bault dressed and adjusted her hair with more neatness and respect for exterior appearance than on other days. Marie Antoinette cast off the black robe she had worn since her husband's death, and dressed herself in a white gown. A white handkerchief covered her shoulders, a white cap her hair. A black ribbon which bound this cap around her temples alone recalled to the world her mourning, to herself her widowhood, and to the people her immolation.

The windows and the parapets, the roofs and the trees were loaded with spectators. A crowd of women enraged against "the Austrian" pressed round the gratings, and even into the courts. A pale cold autumn fog hung over the Seine, and permitted, here and there, some rays of the sun to glitter upon the roofs of the Louvre and upon the tower of the palace. At eleven o'clock the *gendarmes* and the executioners entered the hall of the condemned. The queen embraced the daughter of the concierge, cut her hair off herself, allowed herself to be bound without a murmur, and issued with a firm step from the Conciergerie. No feminine weakness, no faintness of heart, no trembling of the body, nor paleness of features were apparent. Nature obeyed her will, and lent her all its power to die as a queen.

On entering from the staircase to the court, she perceived the cart of the condemned, towards which the *gendarmes* directed her steps. She stopped, as if to retrace her road, and made a motion of astonishment and horror. She had thought that the people would have clothed their hatred somewhat decently, and that she would be conducted to the scaffold, as the king was, in a close carriage. Having compressed this emotion, she bowed her head in token of assent, and ascended the cart. The abbé Lothringer placed himself behind her, notwithstanding her refusal.

The *cortège* left the Conciergerie amidst cries of "*Vive la République!*" "*Place à l'Autrichienne!*" "*Place à la veuve Capet!*" "*A bas la tyrannie!*" The comedian Grammont, aide-de-camp of Ronsin, gave the example and the signal to the people, brandishing his naked sword, and parting the crowd by the breast of his horse. The hands of the queen being bound, deprived her of support against the jolting of the cart upon the pavement. She endeavoured by every means to preserve her equilibrium, and the dignity of her attitude. "These are not your cushions of Trianon," shouted some wretches to her. The cries, the looks, the laughter, and gestures of the people overwhelmed her with humiliation. Her cheeks changed continually from purple to paleness, and revealed the agitation and reflex of her blood. Notwithstanding the care she had taken of her toilette, the tattered appearance of her dress, the coarse linen, the common stuff and the crumpled plaits dishonoured her rank. The curls of her hair escaped from her cap and flapped with the breeze upon her forehead. Her red and swollen eyes, though dry, revealed the long inundation of care augmented by tears. She bit her under lip for some moments with her teeth, as a person who suppressed the utterance of acute suffering.

When she had crossed the Pont-au-Change, and the tumultuous quarters of Paris, the silence and serious aspect of the crowd bespoke another region of the people. If it was not pity, it was at least dismay. Her countenance regained the calm and uniformity of expression which the outrages of the multitude had at first disturbed. She thus traversed slowly the whole length of the rue St. Honoré. The priest placed on the long seat by her side endeavoured in vain to call her attention, by words which she seemed to repel from her ears. Her looks wandered, with all their intelligence, over

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the façades of the houses, over the republican inscriptions, and over the costumes and physiognomy of this capital, so changed to her since sixteen months of captivity. She regarded above all the windows of the upper stories, from which floated the tricoloured banner, the ensign of patriotism.

The people thought, and witnesses have written, that her light and puerile attention was attracted to this exterior decoration of republicanism. Her thoughts were different. Her eyes sought a sign of safety amongst these signs of her loss. She approached the house which had been pointed out to her in her dungeon. She examined with a glance the window whence was to descend upon her head the absolution of a disguised priest. A gesture, inexplicable to the multitude, made him known to her. She closed her eyes, lowered her forehead, collected herself under the invisible hand which blessed her; and, being unable to use her bound hands, she made the sign of the cross upon her breast, by three movements of her head. The spectators thought that she prayed alone, and respected her fervency. An inward joy and secret consolation shone from this moment upon her countenance.

On entering upon the place de la Revolution, the leaders of the *cortège* caused the car to approach as near as possible to the Pont Tournant, and stopped it for a short time before the entrance of the gardens of the Tuileries. Marie Antoinette turned her head on the side of her ancient palace, and regarded for some moments that odious and yet dear theatre of her greatness and of her fall. Some tears fell upon her knees. All her past life appeared before her in the hour of death. Some few more turns of the wheels, and she was at the foot of the guillotine. The priest and the executioner assisted her to descend, sustaining her by the elbows. She mounted the steps of the ladder. On reaching the scaffold, she inadvertently trod upon the executioner's foot. This man uttered a cry of pain. "Pardon me," she said to him, in a tone of voice as if she had spoken to one of her courtiers. She knelt down for an instant and murmured a half-audible prayer; afterwards rising, "Adieu once again, my children," said she, regarding the towers of the Temple, "I go to rejoin your father." She did not attempt, like Louis XVI, to justify herself before the people, nor to move them by an appeal to his memory. Her features did not wear, like those of her husband, the impression of the anticipated bliss of the just and the martyr, but that of disdain for mankind and a proper impatience to depart from life.

The executioner, trembling more than she, was seized with a tremor which checked his hand when disengaging the axe. The head of the queen fell. The assistant of the guillotine took it up by the hair and made the round of the scaffold, raising it in his right hand and showing it to the people. A long cry of "*Vive la République!*" saluted the decapitated member and already senseless features.

The Revolution believed itself avenged; it was only disgraced. This blood of a woman recoiled upon its glory, without cementing its liberty. Paris, however, felt less emotion at this murder than at that of the king. Public opinion affected an indifference to one of the most odious executions that disgraced the republic. This sacrifice of a queen and a foreigner, amongst a people who had adopted her, had not even the compensation of tragical events — the remorse and grief of a nation.

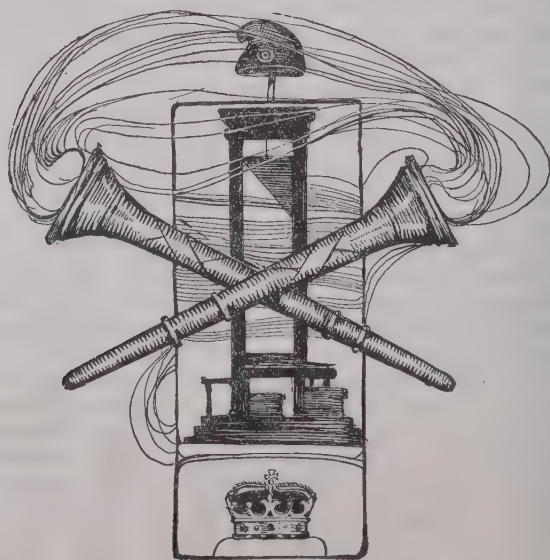
Thus died this queen, frivolous in prosperity, sublime in misfortune, intrepid upon the scaffold, the idol of a court, mutilated by the people, long the love, and afterwards the blind counsellor, of royalty, and latterly the personal enemy of the Revolution. This Revolution the queen knew neither



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how to foresee, to comprehend, nor to accept; she knew only how to irritate and to fear it. She took refuge in the court, in place of throwing herself into the bosom of the people. The people cast on her unjustly all the hatred with which they persecuted the ancient régime. They attached all the scandal and treason of the court to her name. Omnipotent, by her beauty and by her wit, over her husband, she invested him with her unpopularity, and dragged him, by her love, to his destruction. Her vacillating policy, following the impressions of the moment, by turns timid in defeat, and rash in success, neither knew how to recede nor to advance at the proper moment; and ended by converting itself into intrigues with the emigration party and with foreign powers. The charming and dangerous favourite of an antiquated, rather than the queen of a new, monarchy, she had neither the prestige of ancient royalty—respect; nor the prestige of a new reign—popularity; she knew only how to fascinate, to mislead, and to die. Called by a people to occupy a throne, that people did not even grant her a tomb. For we read upon the register of the general interments, in La Madeleine, “For the coffin of the widow Capet, seven francs.”

Behold the total of the life of a queen, and of the enormous sums expended during a prodigal reign for the splendour, the pleasures, and bounties of a woman who had possessed Versailles, St. Cloud, and Trianon. When providence desires to address men with the rude eloquence of royal vicissitudes, it speaks with a sign more powerful than the eloquent discourses of Seneca and Bossuet, and inscribes a vile cipher upon the register of a grave-digger! <sup>d</sup>





## CHAPTER XI

### THE REIGN OF TERROR

[1793-1794 A.D.]

We do well to speak with horror of the Reign of Terror and of the Revolutionary Tribunal, which sent about three thousand persons to death. Yet even here we may remind ourselves that this terribly large number shrinks into insignificance when compared with the innocent persons hurried to more needless wars by the ambition of rulers whom the world delights to honour. Let us clear our minds of cant, and neither extenuate nor exaggerate the horrors; and take what comfort we can from the knowledge that the chief actors honestly believed they were promoting the good of France and of humanity; that the victims almost all met their death with courage and dignity; that the dim millions of Frenchmen gained greatly by the Revolution as a whole, and suffered little from the Reign of Terror. — J. E. SYMES.<sup>b</sup>

To read the history of the Revolution is like going with Dante into the Inferno: at every step one thinks to have reached the outermost limits of horror, but each fresh move in advance reveals a new circle with new crimes, all of which are, with inflexible logic, linked into one continuous chain. For it is a truth that when a people is once started on the downward slope of an abyss, unless a vigorous effort is made to save it, it is bound to continue rolling until it reaches the very bottom.

The audience had listened respectfully during the trial of Marie Antoinette, had been awed into silence by the contrast they were obliged to draw between the splendour that had formerly surrounded the most brilliant of queens, and the misery of a prisoner brought from her cell to be delivered up to the mercy of judges who were no better than public accusers. Respect gradually gave way to emotion, and Robespierre, seeing the change, trembled. He had been quick to seize the truth that it was not safe to leave one hour of liberty to the convention; now he saw clearly that his downfall was assured if he allowed one moment of pity to the people.<sup>c</sup>

## EXECUTION OF THE GIRONDISTS

For several days in October, 1793, there had been seen walking the streets, and especially in the market-place, women wearing red caps and calling themselves revolutionists. They tried to force this bizarre and extravagant costume on the market-women, but were not successful and were driven out with indignation. But there was some deep purport in this apparent folly, which had been planned in a secret council held at St. Eustache; it was in fact a scheme for a vast assassination. The convention, however, did not want matters to go on so quickly. They decided that women's clubs and societies, whatever they might style themselves, should be forbidden, and more — that all club meetings of the people should be open ones. At a sitting held on the 31st, a deputation, declaring itself representative of all the popular clubs of Paris, asked that henceforth, when individuals were spoken to, they should be addressed as “thee” and “thou” (*tutoyés*.) This petition was vigorously applauded. The most wretched beggar now presumed to “thee” and “thou” those whom he once had hardly dared to look in the face. Valets even spoke thus to their masters, and the latter had to put up with it for fear of being denounced.<sup>d</sup>

Now came the turn of the Girondists to appear before the fatal tribunal. Twenty-one of their members had remained in prison since the 2nd of June; of these the chiefs were Vergniaud, Brissot, Valazé, Gensonné, Lasource, Fonfrède. Their trial was, of course, but the mockery of justice. Chabot and Fabre d'Églantine appeared as witnesses, and uttered, without fear of contradiction, whatever circumstances of conspiracy or crime their imaginations could suggest. The eloquence of Vergniaud, although he had been too careless to prepare a defence, here exerted for the last time, shook the judges and melted the auditors. A decree of the convention instantly stopped the pleadings, and ordered the court to proceed to pass sentence: it was death. The victims hailed the fate, which they had foreseen, with a verse of the Marseillaise hymn, originally applied to the enemies of freedom, now but too applicable to its friends. Valazé, at the moment, pierced himself with a poniard, and fell dead; Vergniaud, more heroic, flung away a box of poison, in order to die with his friends. They were executed on the morrow, showing in death that firmness<sup>1</sup> which, had it been displayed in the acts of their political life, would at least have saved their memory from reprobation, and most probably insured them a glorious and successful career. Those who think that the stern law of retaliation is or should be applied to human fortunes, will say they merited their fate; will argue that those who stirred the mob to the insurrection of the 20th of June, 1792, and who looked on at that of the 10th of August, deserved to be overthrown by the same force in June, 1793; and that those who in timidity voted the death of Louis XVI might expect to find in their judges a similar justice and mercy.

<sup>1</sup> They passed the night before their death drinking punch, while the prison echoed with their songs. They went to death at ten o'clock in the morning, all showing great courage, particularly the deputies from Bordeaux. Ducos, who was naturally light-hearted and witty, joked even when putting his head in the guillotine. “It is about time,” he said to those around him, “that the convention should decree the inviolability of heads,” and just at that moment the axe fell on his. The body of Valazé was put in one of the carts which had brought his unhappy companions to the place of execution, and thrown with them into the same ditch. All the men bore themselves characteristically to the end. The author of these memoirs knew many of them in prison. Carra was fond of diplomatic arguing; the violent Duperret cursed Paris; Brissot always talked of his systems; Ducos wrote songs; Gensonné was very silent; Garlien, who had a beautiful voice, often sang; the abbé Fauchet alone became devout, and continually recited his breviary. — DAUBAN.<sup>d</sup>



[1793 A.D.]

Soon after her political friends, the wife of Roland perished on the same scaffold. "O Liberty!" said she, addressing in her dying breath the statue so called, and placed with melancholy irony to preside over the place of execution—"O Liberty, what crimes are committed in thy name!" Her husband, on learning of her death, stabbed himself. Others of the Gironde were taken at Bordeaux, by this time reduced. Tallien, the proconsul, caused several to be executed amidst the wide proscription and slaughter of their partisans. But space is wanting to enumerate the victims of even this early epoch, when heads fell as yet singly, or but a score at a time, beneath the guillotine. Bailly, however, must not be forgotten—Bailly, the idolised mayor of Paris, whom, by a refinement of cruelty, the mob employed, on the day of his execution, in displacing and dragging his gibbet from one place to another. The old man, as he awaited the executioner, was seen to tremble under his many years and the winter's day. "You tremble, Bailly," sneered one of his guards. "'Tis from cold," replied the aged man.<sup>e</sup>

Robespierre lamented Bailly! "It is thus," exclaimed he at supper with Duplay, "that they will martyrise ourselves." A courtesan died by the side of a sage. The people applauded equally. It had lost all discernment of vice or virtue. Madame du Barry, mistress of Louis XV, died at a short interval from Bailly. Still young at the death of Louis XV, Madame du Barry had been sequestered for some months in a convent, for the sake of decency—a characteristic of the new reign. Soon freed from this confinement, she had lived in a splendid retreat near Paris—the Pavillon de Luciennes—on the borders of the forest of St. Germain. Immense riches, the gifts of Louis XV, rendered her exile almost as brilliant as her reign. Judged and condemned without discussion, shown to the people as one of the stains of the throne, she went to death amidst the yells of the populace. She did not cease to invoke pity, in the most humiliating terms. Tears flowed incessantly from her eyes upon her bosom. Her piercing cries prevailed over the noise of the wheels and the clamour of the multitude. It seemed as if the knife struck this woman beforehand, and deprived her a thousand times of life. "Life! Life!" she cried: "life for my repentance!—Life for all my devotion to the republic!—Life for all my riches to the nation!" The passage of the courtesan to the scaffold was but one lamentation. Under the knife she still wept. She alone, amongst all the women executed, died a coward, because she died neither for opinion, for virtue, nor for love, but for vice. She dishonoured the scaffold as she had dishonoured the throne.<sup>g</sup>

The duke of Orleans, Philippe Egalité, perished also at this epoch. Death-blows were dealt around so thickly that those subject to them gathered courage, like soldiers exposed to the fire of battle. Innocent and guilty braved alike the guillotine with carelessness; some even courted it. Distant spectators, however, shuddered. Terror penetrated into every domicile, and came as a moral medicine to neutralise and arrest that thirst of liberty, the excess of which had produced all these ills.

If the pen shrinks from describing, except by a few strokes, the wholesale murders of the capital, how shall it attempt to portray the massacres in the provinces? If in Paris some discrimination was used, some form observed, in the departments the proconsuls of the convention dispensed with all. Nor could reaction, vengeance, nor security be given as the pretexts; for in the department of the north, where neither resistance nor federation had been manifested, the proscriptions were no less sweeping and severe.<sup>e</sup>

## CARLYLE ON THE TERROR

We are now, therefore, got to that black precipitous Abyss; whither all things have long been tending; where, having now arrived on the giddy verge, they hurl down, in confused ruin; headlong, pellmell, down, down; —till Sansculottism have consummated itself; and in this wondrous French Revolution, as in a Doomsday, a World have been rapidly, if not born again, yet destroyed and engulfed. Terror has long been terrible: but to the actors themselves it has now become manifest that their appointed course is one of Terror; and they say, Be it so. "*Que la Terreur soit à l'ordre du jour.*"

So many centuries, say only from Hugh Capet downwards, had been adding together, century transmitting it with increase to century, the sum of Wickedness, of Falsehood, Oppression of man by man. Kings were sinners, and Priests were, and People. Open-Scoundrels rode triumphant, bediademed, becoronnetted, bemitred; or the still fataller species of Secret-Scoundrels, in their fair-sounding formulas, speciosities, respectabilities, hollow within: the race of Quacks was grown many as the sands of the sea. Till at length such a sum of Quackery had accumulated itself as, in brief, the Earth and the Heavens were weary of. Slow seemed the Day of Settlement; coming on, all imperceptible, across the bluster and fanfaronade of Courtierisms, Conquering-Heroisms, Most Christian *Grand Monarque*-isms, Well-beloved Pompadourisms: yet behold it was always coming; behold it has come, suddenly, unlooked for by any man! The harvest of long centuries was ripening and whitening so rapidly of late; and now it has grown white, and is reaped rapidly, as it were, in one day. Reaped, in this Reign of Terror; and carried home, to Hades and the Pit! —Unhappy Sons of Adam: it is ever so; and never do they know it, nor will they know it.

Barnave's appearance at the Revolutionary Tribunal was of the bravest; but it could not stead him. And Pétion, once also of the Extreme Left, and named "Pétion Virtue," where is he? Civilly dead; in the Caves of St. Émilien; to be devoured of dogs. And Robespierre, who rode along with him on the shoulders of the people, is in Committee of *Salut*; civilly alive: not to live always. National Deputies not a few! And Generals: the memory of General Custine cannot be defended by his Son; his Son is already guillotined. Custine the Ex-Noble was replaced by Houchard the Plebeian: he too could not prosper in the North; for him too there was no mercy; he has perished in the Place de la Révolution, after attempting suicide in Prison. And Generals Biron, Beauharnais, Brunet, whatsoever General prospers not; tough old Lückner, with his eyes grown rheumy; Alsatian Westermann, valiant and diligent in La Vendée: "none of them can," as the Psalmist sings, "his soul from death deliver."

How busy are the Revolutionary Committees; Sections with their Forty Halfpence a-day! Arrestment on arrestment falls quick, continual; followed by death. Ex-Minister Clavière has killed himself in Prison. Ex-Minister Lebrun, seized in a hayloft, under the disguise of a working man, is instantly conducted to death. Nay, withal, is it not what Barrère calls "coining money on the Place de la Révolution?" For always the "property of the guilty, if property he have," is confiscated. To avoid accidents, we even make a Law that suicide shall not defraud us; that a criminal who kills himself does not the less incur forfeiture of goods. Let the guilty tremble, therefore, and the suspect, and the rich, and in a word all manner of Culottic men! Luxembourg Palace, once Monsieur's, has become a huge loathsome Prison; Chantilly Palace too, once Condé's:—And their Landlords are at Blankenburg,



MME. ROLAND AT SAINT PÉLAGIE





[1793-1794 A.D.]

on the wrong side of the Rhine. In Paris are now some Twelve Prisons; in France some Forty-four Thousand; thitherward, thick as brown leaves in Autumn, rustle and travel the suspect; shaken down by Revolutionary Committees, they are swept thitherward, as into their storehouse,—to be consumed by Samson and Tinville. “The Guillotine goes not ill, *La Guillotine ne va pas mal.*”

The suspect may well tremble; but how much more the open rebels;—the Girondin Cities of the South! Revolutionary Army is gone forth, under Ronsin the Playwright; six thousand strong: and has portable guillotines. Representative Carrier has got to Nantes, by the edge of blazing La Vendée, which Rossignol has literally set on fire: Carrier will try what captives you make; his guillotine goes always. Little children are guillotined, and aged men. Swift as the machine is, it will not serve; the Headsman and all his valets sink, worn down with work; declare that the human muscles can no more. Whereupon you must try fusillading; to which perhaps still frightfuller methods may succeed.

In Brest, to like purpose, rules Jean-Bon Saint-André; with an Army of Red Nightcaps. In Bordeaux rules Tallien, with his Isabeau and henchmen; Guadets, Cussys, Salleses, many fall; the bloody Pike and Nightcap bearing supreme sway; the Guillotine coining money. Bristly fox-haired Tallien, once Able Editor, still young in years, is now become most gloomy, potent; a Pluto on Earth, and has the keys of Tartarus.

Maignet, at Orange in the South; Lebon at Arras in the North, become world's wonders. Fouchés, Maignets, Barrases, Frérons scour the Southern Departments; like reapers, with their guillotine-sickle. Many are the labourers, great is the harvest. By the hundred and the thousand, men's lives are cropt; cast like brands into the burning.

Marseilles is taken, and put under martial law. Low now is Jourdan the Headsman's own head. The other Hundreds are not named. Alas, they, like confused faggots, lie massed together for us; counted by the cart-load: and yet not an individual faggot-twigg of them but had a Life and History; and was cut, not without pangs as when a Kaiser dies! Least of all cities can Lyons escape.<sup>1</sup> Lyons in fact is a Town to be abolished; not Lyons henceforth, but *Commune Affranchie*, “Township Freed”: the very name of it shall perish.

Two-hundred and nine men are marched forth over the River, to be shot in mass, by musket and cannon, in the Promenade of the Brotteaux. It is the second of such scenes; the first was of some Seventy. The corpses of the first were flung into the Rhone, but the Rhone stranded some; so these now, of the second lot, are to be buried on land. Their one long grave is dug; they stand ranked, by the loose mould-ridge; the younger of them singing the Marseillaise. Jacobin National Guards give fire; but have again to give fire, and again, and to take the bayonet and the spade, for though the doomed all fall, they do not all die;—and it becomes a butchery too horrible for speech. So that the very Nationals, as they fire, turn away their faces.

And so, over France universally, there is Civic Feast and hightide: and Toulon sees fusillading, grapeshotting in mass, as Lyons saw; and “death is poured out in great floods, *vomie à grands flots.*” Nantes Town is sunk in sleep; but *Représentant* Carrier is not sleeping, the wool-capped Company of Marat is not sleeping. Why unmoors that flat-bottomed craft, that

[<sup>1</sup> For a fuller account of the insurrection and fate of Lyons, see the next chapter.]

*gabarre*; about eleven at night; with Ninety Priests under hatches? They are going to Belle Île? In the middle of the Loire stream, on signal given, the *gabarre* is scuttled;<sup>1</sup> she sinks with all her cargo. "Sentence of Deportation," writes Carrier, "was executed vertically." The Ninety Priests, with their *gabarre-coffin*, lie deep! It is the first of the *Noyades*, what we may call "Drownages," of Carrier; which have become famous forever.

Guillotining there was at Nantes, till the Headsman sank worn out: then fusillading "in the Plain of Saint-Mauve"; little children fusilladed, and women with children at the breast; children and women, by the hundred and twenty; and by the five hundred, so hot is La Vendée: till the very Jacobins grew sick, and all but the Company of Marat cried, Hold! Wherefore now we have got Noyading; and on the 24th night of "*Frostarious*," year 2, which is 14th of December 1793, we have a second Noyade: consisting of "a Hundred and Thirty-eight persons."

Or why waste a *gabarre*, sinking it with them? Fling them out; fling them out, with their hands tied: pour a continual hail of lead over all the space, till the last struggler of them be sunk! And women were in that *gabarre*; whom the Red Nightcaps were stripping naked; who begged, in their agony, that their smocks might not be stript from them. And young children were thrown in, their mothers vainly pleading: "Wolfings," answered the Company of Marat, "who would grow to be wolves."

By degrees, daylight itself witnesses Noyades: women and men are tied together, feet and feet, hands and hands; and flung in: this they call *Mariage Républicain*, Republican Marriage. Cruel is the panther of the woods, the she-bear bereaved of her whelps: but there is in man a hatred crueller than that. Dumb, out of suffering now, as pale swoln corpses, the victims tumble confusedly seaward along the Loire stream; the tide rolling them back: clouds of ravens darken the River; wolves prowl on the shoal-places.

Carrier writes, "*Quel torrent révolutionnaire*" (What a torrent of Revolution!) For the man is rabid; and the Time is rabid. These are the Noyades of Carrier; twenty-five by the tale, for what is done in darkness comes to be investigated in sunlight:<sup>2</sup> not to be forgotten for centuries. — We will turn to another aspect of the Consummation of Sansculottism; leaving this as the blackest.

But indeed men are all rabid; as the Time is. Representative Lebon, at Arras, dashes his sword into the blood flowing from the Guillotine; exclaims, "How I like it!" Mothers, they say, by his order, have to stand by while the Guillotine devours their children: a band of music is stationed near; and, at the fall of every head, strikes up its *Ça ira*. In the Burgh of Bedouin, in the Orange region, the Liberty-tree has been cut down over night. Representative Maignet, at Orange, hears of it; burns Bedouin Burgh to the last dog-hutch,<sup>3</sup> guillotines the inhabitants, or drives them into the caves and hills. Republic One and Indivisible!

[<sup>1</sup> This first *noyade* may be charitably ascribed to accident; but the same excuse cannot be made for those that succeeded.°]

[<sup>2</sup> The victims of Carrier at Nantes have been set variously between 418 and 8,000; at his trial the majority of witnesses agreed on about 1,800, which may be accepted as the most probable. As to his "republican marriages," when naked couples bound together were thrown into the river, the whole story has been denied; but evidence to that effect was brought against him, when he was recalled and tried for his inhumanity and replaced by mild deputies. Stephens° estimates Carrier's total destruction of Nantes people by fusillade and *noyade* at 5,000 between October, 1793, and February, 1794, — "more than suffered death throughout the whole reign of Terror at Paris."]

[<sup>3</sup> According to some writers, though not all, only ten houses were burned at Bedouin.]



[1793-1794 A.D.]

## THE WORSHIP OF REASON

Of the three institutions which the Revolution desired to modify or destroy—the throne, the nobility, and the religion of the state—there remained standing only the religion of the state, because, taking refuge in conscience, and amalgamating itself with the very idea, it was impossible for its persecutors to follow it so far. The civil constitution of the clergy; the oath imposed upon the priests; that oath declared schism by the court of Rome; the retractations which the mass of the priests had made of this oath to remain attached to the Catholic centre; the expulsion of these refractory priests from their presbyteries and their churches; the installation of a national and republican clergy in the place of these faithful ministers to Rome; the persecution against these rebel ecclesiastics to the law, for remaining obedient to the faith, their imprisonment, their proscription, *en masse*, on board the vessels of the republic at Rochefort—all these quarrels, all this violence, all these exiles, all these executions, and all these martyrdoms of Catholic priests, had swept away in appearance the ancient worship from the face of the republic. The constitutional worship—a palpable inconsequence of sworn priests, who exercised a pretended Catholicism in spite of the spiritual chief of Catholicism, was nothing more than a sacred toy which the convention had left to the country people in order not to destroy their customs too suddenly. But the impatient philosophers of the convention, of the Jacobins, and of the commune, felt indignant at this resemblance to religion, which survived, in the eyes of the people, religion itself. The greater number openly proclaimed atheism as the only doctrine worthy of intrepid spirits in the material logic of the period.

The leaders of the commune, and above all Chaumette and Hébert, encouraged in the people these seditious against all worship. They demanded brilliant apostacies from the priests, and often obtained them. Some ecclesiastics, many under the empire of fear, others from real incredulity, ascended the chair to declare that they had been until then impostors. Acclamations awaited these renegades from the altar. The once sacred ceremonies were derisively parodied. They dressed an ox or an ass in pontifical ornaments; they paraded these through the streets; they drank wine from the chalice, and shut the church. They wrote upon the gate of the place of the sepulchre, *sommeil éternel* (eternal rest). In a few months the immense *matériel* of Catholic worship—cathedrals, churches, monasteries, presbyteries, towers, belfries, ministers, and ceremonies—had disappeared. They desired to possess themselves of the temples, to offer them a new worship, a kind of renewed paganism, whose dogmas were but images, whose adoration was but a ceremonial, and whose divinity supreme was but Reason become in its own person its own God, and adoring itself in its attributes. The laws of the convention, which continued to salary the national Catholic worship, opposed themselves to this violent invasion of this philosophical religion of Chaumette in the cathedral and in the churches of Paris. It was incumbent to cause these ancient buildings to be evacuated by a voluntary renunciation of the constitutional bishop and his clergy. An equivalent salary was assured to the principals amongst them, or more lucrative functions in the civil and military administrations of the republic. Hope and threats wrung from them their resignation.

Chaumette exclaimed that the day when Reason resumed her empire merited a place to itself in the epochs of the Revolution. He demanded that the committee of Public Instruction should bestow in the new calendar a

place to the "Day of Reason." This abdication of exterior Catholicism by the priests of a nation surrounded for so many ages by the power of this worship, is one of the most characteristic acts of the spirit of the Revolution. The bells, those sonorous voices of Christian temples, were cast into money or cannon. The directors of the departments forbade the institutors to pronounce the name of God in their tuition to the children of the people. The commune desired to replace the ceremonies of religion by other spectacles, to which the people flocked as they do to all novel sights. But religions do not spring up in the market-place at the voice of legislators or demagogues. The religion of Chaumette and the commune was merely a popular opera transferred from the theatre to the tabernacle.

The 20th of December, the day fixed for the installation of the new worship, the commune, the convention, and the authorities of Paris, went in a body to the cathedral. Chaumette, seconded by Laïs, an actor at the opera, had arranged the plan of the *fête*. Mademoiselle Maillard, an actress, in the full bloom of youth and talent, formerly a favourite of the queen, and high in popular admiration, had been compelled by Chaumette's threats to play the part of the divinity of the people. She entered borne on a palanquin, the seat of which was formed of oak branches. Women dressed in white, and wearing tri-coloured girdles, preceded her. Popular societies, fraternal female societies, revolutionary committees, sections, groups of choristers, singers, and opera dancers encircled the throne. With the theatrical cothurni on her feet, a Phrygian cap on her head, her frame scarcely covered with a white tunic, over which a flowing cloak of sky-blue was thrown, the priestess was borne, at the sound of instruments, to the foot of the altar, and placed on the spot where the adoration of the faithful so lately sought the mystic bread transformed into a divinity. Behind her was a vast torch, emblematical of the light of philosophy, destined henceforward to be the sole flame of the interior of these temples. The actress lighted this flambeau. Chaumette, receiving the *encensoir*, in which the perfume was burning, from the hands of the two acolytes, knelt, and waved it in the air. A mutilated statue of the Virgin was lying at his feet. Chaumette apostrophised the marble, and defied it to resume its place in the respect of the people. Dances and hymns attracted the eyes and ears of the spectators. No profanation was wanting in the old temple whose foundations were confounded with the foundations of religion and the monarchy. Forced by terror to be present at this *fête*, Bishop Gobel was there, in a tribune, at this parody of the mysteries which three days before he had celebrated at the same altar. Motionless from fear, tears of shame rolled down the bishop's cheeks.

A similar worship was imitated in all the churches throughout the departments. The light surface of France bent before every wind from Paris. Only instead of divinities borrowed from the theatres, the representatives in mission compelled modest wives and innocent young maidens to display themselves to the adoration of the public in these spectacles. The devastation of sanctuaries, and the dispersion of relics, followed the inauguration of the allegorical worship of Chaumette.<sup>9</sup>

#### FALL OF THE HÉBERTISTS (1794 A.D.)

In the meantime, the victorious Jacobins were about to split into two contending parties. But first let us regard a picture of the convention at present, drawn by one of its members, Thibaudeau :<sup>h</sup> "The national convention itself was no longer aught than a nominal representation, than a passive

[1793-1794 A.D.]

instrument of terror. On the ruins of its independence was raised that monstrous dictatorship, called the committee of Public Safety. Terror isolated and struck with stupor the deputies as much as the mass of citizens. On entering the assembly, each member, full of mistrust, governed his words and demeanour, lest either should be construed into a crime. Nothing was indifferent — the place one sat on, a gesture, a look, a murmur, a smile. The highest bench of the Mountain marking the highest degree of republicanism, all pressed towards it; the right side remaining deserted since the fall of the Gironde. Those who had voted with that party, and had too much conscience to become Jacobins, took refuge in the Plain, ever ready to receive those who sought safety in inaction. Other members, more pusillanimous, still assumed no fixed place, but changed continually, seeking thus to deceive and baffle suspicion. Some, still more cunning, in the fear of being compromised, never sat down at all, but remained standing at the foot of the tribune. On trying occasions, when there was repugnance to vote for a violent measure, and danger to oppose it, they escaped by stealth from the assembly."

The trying moment for a revolutionary party is when it has conquered, and essays to govern. The followers and the weapons, which have hitherto aided it in crushing and overthrowing, prove most unmanageable instruments of administration. When the Girondists had conquered royalty, and found themselves possessed of the ministry and the majority of the convention, they sought to stop the revolutionary current by the force of reason, of eloquence, and of law. All had proved unavailing. Still the never-failing rule held good, that a party more extreme than the government exists of necessity, however popular and extreme that government.

The anarchical party now formed itself in what had ever been the most violent furnace of the Revolution, the Cordelier club, of the men whom even Marat had denounced, but who had nevertheless been the most violent agitators of the 31st of May. When the all-levelling constitution of 1793 was proposed, the anarchists found it not democratical enough, and petitioned accordingly. When it was set aside, and the committee of Public Safety installed with dictatorial power in its place, the anarchists demanded the constitution. Whilst Robespierre defended the government of the day against the violent opposition, he was at the same time menaced by another, the moderates, who thought that blood enough had been shed, and that measures of vengeance or rigour were no longer necessary. This party, which already began to lean to the side of humanity, was unfortunately brought thither by no honourable path. It was formed of successful plunderers — of those who had enriched themselves in the Revolution, who loved pleasure and tranquillity, and who thought the time was come for enjoyment. These were necessarily few. The great and famishing mass of the undistinguished and uninvited pressed on their rear, demanded the continuance of the revolutionary times and habits, and exclaimed against moderatism as their ruin. This was the sentiment of the Jacobin club, and of the talking majority of the public.

Robespierre could not but adopt and lead this opinion, the Jacobins being his true support, the chief source of his popularity as a demagogue. But then, as a member of the government, he had to repress the anarchists; and the difficulty was to refute them, and repulse, without incurring the suspicion of moderatism. This position was dangerous, betwixt the two parties. If the anarchists succeeded in proving him moderate to the Jacobins, he was lost; and he was wise enough to see that the moderates had no force or class on whom they could rely, and that to rely on them would be to lean on a broken



reed. The subtle tyrant, therefore, whilst obliged to denounce and menace the anarchists, cleansed himself from the crime of moderation by enforcing measures of blood and keeping the guillotine in action; and at the same time he prepared the means, and watched the opportunity, of delivering himself from the dilemma by the ruin of both parties.

Danton wanted his colleague's acuteness and his perseverance. He was one of those sated revolutionists who wished to stop the effusion of blood. He knew his eloquence or influence was as yet unequal to the task: he therefore, rather than imitate Robespierre in indulging the sanguinary feeling of the time, thought it best to retire to the country, and wait till the revolutionary fury had ebbed, and humanity began to flow — a feeling fatal to him, and most advantageous to Robespierre; thus ridding the latter of a formidable rival.

Previous to the secession of Danton, the anarchists had recourse to the singular manœuvre of the Feast of Reason. Robespierre, Danton, the convention itself, had blushed at such a scene: shame made even them recoil.

Soon after broke out the quarrel between the moderates and the anarchists, which enabled Robespierre and his committee, placed between them, to crush both in succession. The moderate party has been represented as composed principally of successful plunderers, of wealthy fortunate men, desirous of enjoying their spoils. There were others, however, moderate from honest indignation. One of these, Philippeau, in the blindness of zeal, began the attack upon those moderate from corruption, by proposing an inquest into the fortunes and dilapidations of the deputies. Philippeau here lifted the axe that was to fall upon his own head. Bazire and Chabot, the Jacobins who had grown tender-hearted because gorged with plunder, defended themselves, and exclaimed against denunciations, "Let us not decimate and devour each other. Already the royalists exult in our destruction; they see us sending each other to the scaffold. 'To-day,' say they, 'tis Danton's turn, then Billaud's, last Robespierre's. Let us pass a law that no deputy shall be arrested, at least until heard.'" This decree passed. The anarchists exclaimed against it; the Jacobins joined them; and a complete outcry was raised against the moderates. The rabble were in want of victims. The royalists, constitutionalists, Girondists, had all perished. The source that supplied the guillotine was running dry, when the moderates were presented as the victims of popular vengeance.

Robespierre had here the wit to perceive that the current was setting in the wrong direction, and moreover the courage to resist and turn it right. The Revolution, in his idea, had descended far enough; he wished that it should continue indeed, but on a level, not a downward course. He therefore set his face against the anarchists, thundered against Hébert, and boldly attacked the commune, which he accused of setting up a new and aristocratic religion. "Atheism," said Robespierre, "is aristocratic; it is the natural religion of the lazy and the rich. On the contrary, the belief in a deity is a popular, a universal belief, moreover a necessary one. If God did not exist, we should invent him."

Hébert, Chaumette, and the commune, intimidated by the apostrophes of Robespierre, drew back, recanted their atheism, and abolished their worship of Reason. But at the same time they vented their spleen by redoubled attacks upon the moderates, with whom they implicated Danton. Whilst the anarchists in the municipality thus quailed, the original and more active agitators in the Cordelier club showed more stubbornness. Ronsin and Rossignol, generals of the party, who had commanded with all brutality

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in La Vendée, were accused by Philippeau and put in arrest. To show its impartiality, the government at the same time arrested those of the moderates who were accused of embezzlement and corruption. The parties now became declared. The anarchists exclaimed against the counter-revolutionists, as they called the moderates, and, through the medium of Hébert's Journal, the *Père Duchesne*, cast upon them all every kind of calumny and abuse. They accused Danton as a rank moderate; nor did that personage deny, though he avoided to admit the truth of the accusation. Camille Desmoulins, the friend of Danton, the very man who began the Revolution by grasping his pistols on the news of Necker's dismissal, and mounting on a table in the Palais Royal to proclaim the necessity of immediate and open resistance—he too was a moderate, and now commenced a journal, which he called the *Vieux Cordelier*, in opposition to Hébert.

Nought is more surprising in the Revolution than the talents which it actually gave, rather than excited in men who, even in its stirring commencement, might be and were universally classed with the dull. We have seen Robespierre become even eloquent by dint of habit, by position, by the times, and the opinions which he represented; and now we find in the vulgar ringleader of riot, in Desmoulins, a suavity and refinement blended with force, a power of writing, in short, that the most cultivated age cannot exceed. The pretended translation of Tacitus, in which he depicts the tyranny of the convention, is a *chef d'œuvre* of its kind. His apostrophes against Hébert unite to Vergniaud's warmth a contemptuous irony unsurpassed in the warfare of the pen.

Both parties were summoned to the Jacobins, as to the bar of public opinion. Both pleaded their cause; and Robespierre, contented at first with the injuries inflicted by their mutual accusation on the characters of each, silenced the quarrel for the time. He let loose the anarchists: they instantly fell to vapouring and plotting. The members of the committee of Public Safety appeared to them imbecile sovereigns, and the whole system perplexed and complicated. They imagined a simple form of government, consisting of a general and a judge, both with dictatorial power. A revolutionist at that time saw but two administrative functions and necessities, of fighting foreign enemies and beheading domestic foes, the latter to be designated by interest or humour. With these ideas the anarchists tried every means of raising an insurrection. They accused the convention of the public scarcity, of all existing ills. They already had acquired the majority in one section; and the commune, or its magistrates, Hébert and Chaumette, supported them, though with hesitation. They proceeded, by the dissemination of small pamphlets and placards in the markets and other populous quarters, to stir up the people against the convention. But it was no longer an irresolute party, a feeble ministry, and the name of law which reigned. A committee in the assembly was appointed to take their writings into consideration; and on the morrow all the leading anarchists were arrested. With Ronsin and Vincent, vapourers and soldiers, were taken Chaumette, the apostle of Reason, Hébert, the infamous insulter of the dying queen—how they were welcomed by the population of the prisons!—the apostate archbishop Gobel, and Anacharsis Clootz.<sup>e</sup>

The manner in which they were arrested forced them into the ranks of ordinary thieves, from whence only a revolution could extricate them. They appeared before that revolutionary tribunal from whence they had once condemned hundreds to die. The crime of which they were accused was

counter-revolution. They were represented as foreign agents. The perusal of this extraordinary trial gives no proof whatever of this last imputation.

On the 1st Germinal (March 24th), Hébert was sent to his death, and with him perished many of his accomplices. Among these were Ronsin, general in the revolutionary army, Anacharsis Clootz, deputy to the national convention (an atrocious maniac, who claimed the title of Orator of Mankind, and who constantly spoke of making known to all nations liberty, atheism, and *Septembrisation*, a terrible word of his own coining), Vincent, general of the War department, Proly, Pereyra, and Dubuisson (the three commissioners who had denounced Dumouriez). The rest were more obscure, but no less guilty. The people, crowding to witness their punishment, overwhelmed them with insults, and particularly delighted in tormenting Hébert by applying to him those odious jests by which he designated the guillotine.

#### THE FALL OF DANTON

This victory alarmed those who had obtained it. The joy expressed by the people was a terrible presage of the intoxication with which their own punishment would one day be contemplated. Danton and Camille Desmoulins were not allowed to congratulate themselves for long upon having accomplished the downfall of these dangerous anarchists. On the night of the 10th–11th Germinal they were arrested, and with them, their colleagues Lacroix, Philippeau, Hérault de Séchelles, and General Westermann. The following day the convention was much agitated. Legendre, a friend of Danton and Camille, tried to rally their trembling friends. He showed them a similar fate awaiting them — the merited consequence of their cowardly silence; at first his protestation received marked approval from the Mountain. Then the members of the committee of Public Safety appeared, with lagging footsteps, composed bearing, brave but treacherous glances. Legendre seemed affected and stopped. “Have done,” said Robespierre to him coldly, “it is well for us to know all the accomplices of the traitors and conspirators we have arrested.” After this remark there was not one man who dared support Legendre. Saint-Just ascended the tribune; the revolutionists never gave vent to more reckless absurdities than when engaged in what they termed acts of accusation.<sup>1</sup> Saint-Just surpassed all that had ever been heard hitherto in this respect. It was a picture of all the factions the Revolution had given birth to; the secret ties that united them were herein so depicted that Saint-Just portrayed perfect harmony between Danton, directing the massacres of September 2nd, and the victims of those fatal days; between Danton and the Girondists, of whose condemnation he had been the cause; between Danton and the Hébertists whom he had defied. Comparisons as ridiculous as these weakened anything the speaker had to say of the liaisons of Danton and the Orleanist party.

Robespierre then spoke to show that from henceforth he reigned without

[<sup>1</sup> Dizziness begins when the Jacobins lay hands on Danton. To what blindness absolute power has condemned them, when they refuse to see that they themselves are beginning to totter! All that hatred and gullibility can heap together forms the basis of Saint-Just's charges. He reiterates what he has so many times said, and always to the end of encompassing the death of his revolutionary accomplices. His deliberate fury unites itself with literary research. In denouncing Danton he calls to mind Cicero's philippics against Antony. This rhetoric, which never deserts the chief Jacobins, contributes, no less than do their passions, to blind them. The tenacity in destroying those who shield them is as tragic as anything in history. Saint-Just does not utter a single word that does not react upon himself; the accuser condemns himself. In hustling Danton on to the scaffold he mounts its first steps. Gloom accumulates. In this cloud the ruin of all is to be consummated. Saint-Just's discourse is a long, blind suicide. — QUINET.]



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a rival. His triumph was tinged with a sullen uneasiness. Of all the enemies he had overthrown, Danton was the only one who could leave implacable avengers. Robespierre saw consternation reigning over all the Mountain. He foresaw that he would be forced again to decimate his former soldiery. Would it again stand slaughter without seeking to defend itself? The Revolution, Robespierre and Saint-Just announced, would henceforth assume a different aspect. "That our friends, that our enemies may learn," they said, "that terror and virtue are the order of the day." Thereby they emphasised their intention that austerity, temperance, and disinterestedness should from that time be exacted from the assassins. By this declaration they further intimidated and subjugated their agents; Robespierre must be imitated in all things, most particularly in his hypocrisy—and Robespierre was adored.

The trial of Danton and his colleagues was conducted by the revolutionary tribunal with the same forms they themselves had created to hasten the condemnation of the Girondists. Danton began his defence, and his introduction indicated the hope of at least involving the treacherous Robespierre in his downfall. The president of the tribunal closed his lips by repeatedly telling him that he had strayed from the point. Then began a stormy scene, the president's bell, the cries of his lictors, the voice of Danton, and the murmurs of the people made a horrible tumult.<sup>1</sup> The accused insulted their judges. Fouquier-Tinville wrote to the convention that they were in a state of open rebellion; the convention issued a decree to immediately terminate the disputes. The accused were all condemned and not one of them had been heard. Little more than their names and their dwelling-places had been asked them. Danton answered, "My dwelling-place will soon be nothingness, my name is written in the Pantheon of history." Camille Desmoulins, questioned as to his age, replied, "I am the same age as the sansculotte Jesus, thirty-three years at the time of his death." Hérault de Séchelles said, "I will sit in that same room wherein I was cursed by the parliamentarians."

The people witnessed their punishment without joy, even with some indications of sorrow. Danton maintained his terrible language to the end; it is said that he repeated several times, "I will drag Robespierre with me, he will follow me." Desmoulins testified regret at having called upon vengeance too often, and upon humanity too late.<sup>2</sup>

Danton and Desmoulins! the one who began the Revolution, the other who accomplished it on the 10th of August! Well might it be said that the Revolution, like Saturn, produced its children but to devour them. Desmoulins had called himself the *procureur général de la lanterne*. He died almost

[<sup>1</sup> Danton spoke with the windows open; his last roars were to resound in public places, even on the quays beyond the Seine, a thing incredible if so much testimony did not forbid one to doubt it. In moments of crisis, we know of what startling silences a town like Paris is capable; the whole town held its breath to hear the last words of the tribune. His sentences, sometimes entire, sometimes mutilated, were secretly expounded by that multitude afraid of itself. Nobody dared deny or approve, not knowing but that the accused might in a little while become the accuser. For half a day, Danton's railing was to find its way to the people assembled in the neighbouring places; the judges did not feel equal to maintaining themselves against such an assault on the succeeding days. Fouquier-Tinville, at bay, demanded of the convention to protect him against the virulence of the Dantonists. To this Saint-Just replied—he never showed himself so cruel—"Let the accused be excluded from debate." He obtained acquiescence even from the friends of Danton, glad and willing to give this hostage to the menace of the exterminator. Camille Desmoulins had prepared a defence which he was forbidden to read; he tore it to pieces with a frenzied laugh and hurled it in the faces of the judges and jury; thus it was preserved. Taken back to prison, we hear of no enthusiastic speeches such as those attributed to the last night of the Girondins. Indignity, fury, mistrust, insulting laughter, occupied their last moments:—QUINET.<sup>2</sup>]

unmanned by the thoughts of a young and loving wife, who underwent a similar fate. Danton, at the foot of the scaffold, was prevented by the executioner from embracing his friend Hérault. "Go, churl! you can't at least prevent our heads from embracing in yon sack. One thing consoles me; 'tis that Robespierre follows us. Why should I regret to die? I have enjoyed the Revolution, have spent, have drunk, have debauched. Let us go to slumber." Such were amongst the last, and with his life but too consistent words of Danton.<sup>1</sup> What an epoch, when such men of blood were doomed to endanger themselves in invoking clemency, and perish in the cause of humanity!

Now that the leaders of the Revolution were punished with death for lack of honesty or zeal, it seemed unjust and inconsistent to allow any holding by the least tie to aristocracy and the ancient government to live. All the relics of noble families were now sacrificed. The duke de Chastellet, the marshals de Noailles and de Mailly, men of eighty years, too aged to emigrate; the dukes de Béthune and de Villeroy; many of the members of the old magistracy; Malesherbes, the defender of Louis, all his family, his children and grandchildren, perished together. Men were wanting, and the rage of the Terrorists vented itself upon women, who perished at this epoch in greater numbers than the other sex. The duchess de Grammont, who recalls the memory of Louis XV, survived to die on the scaffold of the Revolution. The wives of the condemned were always included in the sentence. One day saw a troop of girls proceed to die for having made a cockade or carolled an imprudent air; the next, an establishment of nuns, or a crowd of poor peasant women from La Vendée, tied and heaped in carts, like calves, and ignorant of their guilt and their fate, stupefied with fear, as they went to slaughter. The princess Elizabeth, sister of Louis, made at this time one of a devoted batch, and perished almost unnoticed. The inhabitants of the streets through which these daily processions passed became at length disgusted, and dared to show it by shutting their shops. The scaffold was, in consequence, removed to the opposite extremity of Paris; not, however, relaxing its activity.

#### ROBESPIERRE RECOGNISES A SUPREME BEING (JUNE 8TH, 1794)

Robespierre and the Jacobins forming the sovereign committee had again triumphed. They had anticipated both anarchists and moderates, and stricken each party ere it had gathered strength. But, without enemies, how was this knot of rulers to remain united? Robespierre could alone pretend to govern. In him popularity was concentrated. The Jacobins were at his command; and he now got possession of the municipal power, by appointing a new mayor and a commander of the armed force, Henriot, who was devoted to him. Couthon, and Saint-Just, his colleagues in the committee, were personally attached to Robespierre: Barrère feared him. Carnot, Prieur, and Lindet affected to occupy themselves with merely the details of government, leaving the high influence to their brethren. Collot d'Herbois and Billaud-Varennes were jealous of Robespierre: they looked upon him as a moderate in heart, as a man who wished to stop the Revolu-

[<sup>1</sup> So passes, like a gigantic mass of valour, ostentation, fury, affection and wild revolutionary force and manhood, this Danton to his unknown home. He had many sins; but one worst sin he had not, that of cant; with all his dross he was a Man; fiery-real, from the great fire-bosom of Nature herself, he walked straight his own wild road, whither it led him. — CARLYLE.*f*]

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tion, not to continue it, like them. They were right. Robespierre saw plainly that the power of the committee could not endure. Popularity with the mere mob was too uncertain a support ; and terror, though a powerful chain, might soon be strained to cracking. He looked around, he thought, he studied, and to excite some new fanaticism seemed to him the only measure of consolidating power, and concentrating it in his proper person. He meditated the life of Mohammed, and that of Cromwell. To found a new sect became his policy and his ambition. Nor was the aim an ill-judged one, save that the character and genius of the man were most unfit for the task.

He commenced by making the convention decree the existence of a supreme being. Some time after [May 7th, 1794] the same authority ordained a *fête* in honour of the Deity. Robespierre caused himself to be chosen president of the convention for the day, and by consequence high priest of the ceremonial. David, as usual, was intrusted with the arrangement of worship and procession. An amphitheatre was erected in the gardens of the Tuileries ; opposite to which divers wooden figures were erected, representing Atheism, Discord, etc. A statue of Wisdom, in marble, was concealed by three figures. After having then made the convention and the votaries of the new worship wait for him, Robespierre appeared, magnificently dressed, plumed, and robed, bearing flowers and ears of corn in his hand. After music and a speech he came forward, set fire to Atheism and Discord, the flames and smoke of which, however, so besmudged poor Wisdom that the congregation could not refrain from a laugh, whilst the more devout called the circumstance an evil omen. The day was beautiful, being the 8th of June, 1794. Robespierre himself was elated. He even smiled, and wore a radiant countenance. In the procession from the Tuileries to the Champ-de-Mars, inebriated with triumph, he forgot himself so far as to walk alone far in advance of the convention ; many of whose members forgot their customary prudence likewise, and in lieu of incense, saluted the high priest with imprecations. "The Capitol is near the Tarpeian rock," said they. He was called Pisistratus, and bade beware a tyrant's fate.

#### A COALITION AGAINST ROBESPIERRE

The odium and jealousies excited against Robespierre by this betrayal of ambition, were counterbalanced at this time by attempts made to assassinate him and Collot d'Herbois. Scenes of enthusiastic sympathy and favour towards him took place at the Jacobins', and emboldened him to follow up his aim of supremacy. Inferior to the committee of Public Safety was the committee of General Surety, charged chiefly with the administration of police. From hence went forth all accusations and arrests tantamount to condemnation, which heretofore the commune had issued, but which authority had been transferred to the convention. The members of this inferior committee were ruffians. One of their freaks was to send to the scaffold the poor keeper of a tavern where they dined, in order to astonish him, and observe how he would look mounting the scaffold in his white apron.

Either these acts disgusted Robespierre, or their encroachments gave him umbrage. He accordingly opened a bureau, or office of police, in the committee of Public Safety itself, where he himself sat, thus superseding the inferior committee in their functions. They became his enemies in consequence, and leagued with Collot d'Herbois, and Billaud-Varennes, to thwart and overthrow him. Robespierre's mania for becoming prophet soon afforded



them the opportunity they sought. There was in Paris, at that time, a woman either persuaded or pretending that she was to give birth to a Saviour. Her name was Catherine Théot, and she called herself the mother of God. A certain Don Gerle, who had been a monk, was her prophet; only her second prophet, however — Robespierre was the first. The extent of the arch-Jacobin's connection with this woman is not known. Perhaps he was merely flattered by the divine honours reserved for him; perhaps he hoped to turn his prophethood to political advantage. Certain it is that he gave to Don Gerle a certificate of civism, then a passport of protection, signed with his own hand; and letters were found from Catherine Théot addressed to him. The committee of public safety caused the arrest of the pretended mother of God and her congregation. Robespierre in vain

interfered to release them and stop their trial. Vadier was employed to draw up a report, in which he adroitly accused Robespierre, though not by name, of having been a convert to such absurd and dangerous superstitions.

Already, since the day of the *fête* to the Supreme Being, there had been skirmishes in the convention between Robespierre and some of the old Mountainists, who showed an inclination to form an opposition. Amongst them were Bourdon, Tallien, Fouché, Barras. With these now united the malcontents of the two committees. The report of Vadier was publicly read, despite the efforts of Robespierre. He retired indignant from the convention and the committee; thus imitating the false step of Danton, and leaving his friends, Couthon and Saint-Just, to strive alone against Collot, Billaud-Varennes, and Barrère. In the Jacobins, however, Robespierre continued still paramount. Possessed of them, the organ of popularity, and the



JEAN LAMBERT TALLIEN  
(1769-1820)

municipal force under Henriot, he thought he might defy the convention. He retired from it, meaning thereby to convey a warning and a menace. But convention and committee continued their labour, the party in opposition gathering numbers, consistency, and force for the struggle that was approaching. The Jacobin tyrant was reported to demand the heads of half the assembly, and much more than half were terrified in consequence, and alarmed into resistance. He took counsel with his immediate friends. The more furious pressed him to seize his antagonists on his own individual authority. But this appeared to him too bold a step; it would alienate the armies. An insurrection in form, another 31st of May, appeared the preferable mode. But it was his hope to obviate even the necessity of this insurrection by intimidation.

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The Jacobins were accordingly worked up to a proper pitch of excitement, and on the 25th of July, the 7th Thermidor, a menacing petition — a similar one had preceded the 31st of May — was presented to the convention. It was received in silence. The members feared alike to reprobate or applaud. On the following day, Robespierre appeared, ascended the tribune, and developed in a speech of many hours the conduct of his whole political life, his aims, his wrongs, his forbearance towards the convention, but at the same time his determination to uphold the Revolution. In plain language, what he meant to utter was this: I am in a minority, both in the legislature, and the government, and the convention, and the committees. Restore to me my influence, or —

There ensued a considerable tumult in the assembly. Billaud-Varenes and Vadier each defended himself. Panis accused Robespierre of preparing lists of proscriptions in the Jacobin club, more especially against Fouché. Bourdon at length proposed, instead of ordering the speech to be printed, to refer it to the committees. "That is, to my enemies," exclaimed the dictator. "Name them whom you accuse," was the reply; in other words, "Tell us how many heads you demand." Had Robespierre had the courage at this moment to designate a dozen of his enemies, and prove at the same time his cordiality with the rest, the twelve would most probably have been sacrificed, and the tyrant still upheld in his reign. He refused to name his victims; and as each believed himself on the fatal list, the only safety was in resistance.

#### THE 9TH THERMIDOR AND ROBESPIERRE'S FALL

The morrow, 9th Thermidor, proved decisive. The night was spent by both parties in making preparations for the struggle. When the sitting opened, Saint-Just got possession of the tribune, and, under pretence of reading a report, commenced a denunciation. He had already uttered the name of Tallien, when that deputy rose to order, asserting that Saint-Just, having not consulted with the committee, had no right to read the report. "Let us at once tear asunder the veil," said Tallien, commencing his attack. But Billaud-Varenes, as member of the committee, and more entitled than Tallien to denounce, interrupted Tallien, and assumed the lead against Robespierre. He told the assembly that the Jacobins had sworn yesterday to slaughter the convention, and that their only hope consisted in firmness. He then launched out into a ferocious philippic against Robespierre, who rushed to the tribune to answer. But universal cries of "Down with the tyrant!" drowned his voice, and prevented him from being heard. Tallien succeeded Billaud-Varenes already triumphant. The refusal to hear Robespierre presaged his fall. "Yesterday," said Tallien, "I was present at the meeting of the Jacobins, and I shuddered for my country. There I saw forming the army of the new Cromwell, and I armed myself with a poniard to pierce his breast [Tallien showed the weapon] in case that the convention had not the courage to pass the decree of accusation." Tallien then proposed the arrest of Henriot, and that the assembly should sit in permanence until the menaced insurrection was put down, and the guilty seized. This passed with acclamation.

Robespierre, at the foot of the tribune all this time, tried to gain possession of it, begged to be heard, and foamed at the mouth in the frenzy of exertion and despair. But the assembly would not hear him. Barrère at length got up. It is said that he had in his pocket two speeches, one for, one against Robespierre. Seeing the state of feeling, he produced and spoke

the latter. It defended the committees, and accused the tyrant. Tallien again followed.

It is remarkable that, in all this rage, this ample theme of denunciation against so manifest a tyrant, there was no eloquence, no overwhelming force of accusation. As guilty themselves as Robespierre, Billaud-Varennés and Tallien dared not tax him with his crimes. The fears of the convention, however, gave it energy. They dreaded even to listen to Robespierre, lest they should be more awed by his voice than by his vengeance. In vain he asked to be heard. He turned to all sides of the assembly; clamours answered him. "President of assassins," cried he, "for the last time I ask liberty to speak." His voice and strength here failed him. "The blood of Danton stifles thee," observed a member. "Ha! 'tis Danton you would avenge," replied he, snatching at the least advantage. His arrest was now unanimously decreed. Robespierre the younger started up, and demanded to be

included in the decree; Couthon, Saint-Just, and Lebas were also added. They were ordered to the bar, and descended with imprecations; but not a huissier, or officer of the house, could be found bold enough to take the dreaded men into arrest. At length some gendarmerie were procured to take charge of them.

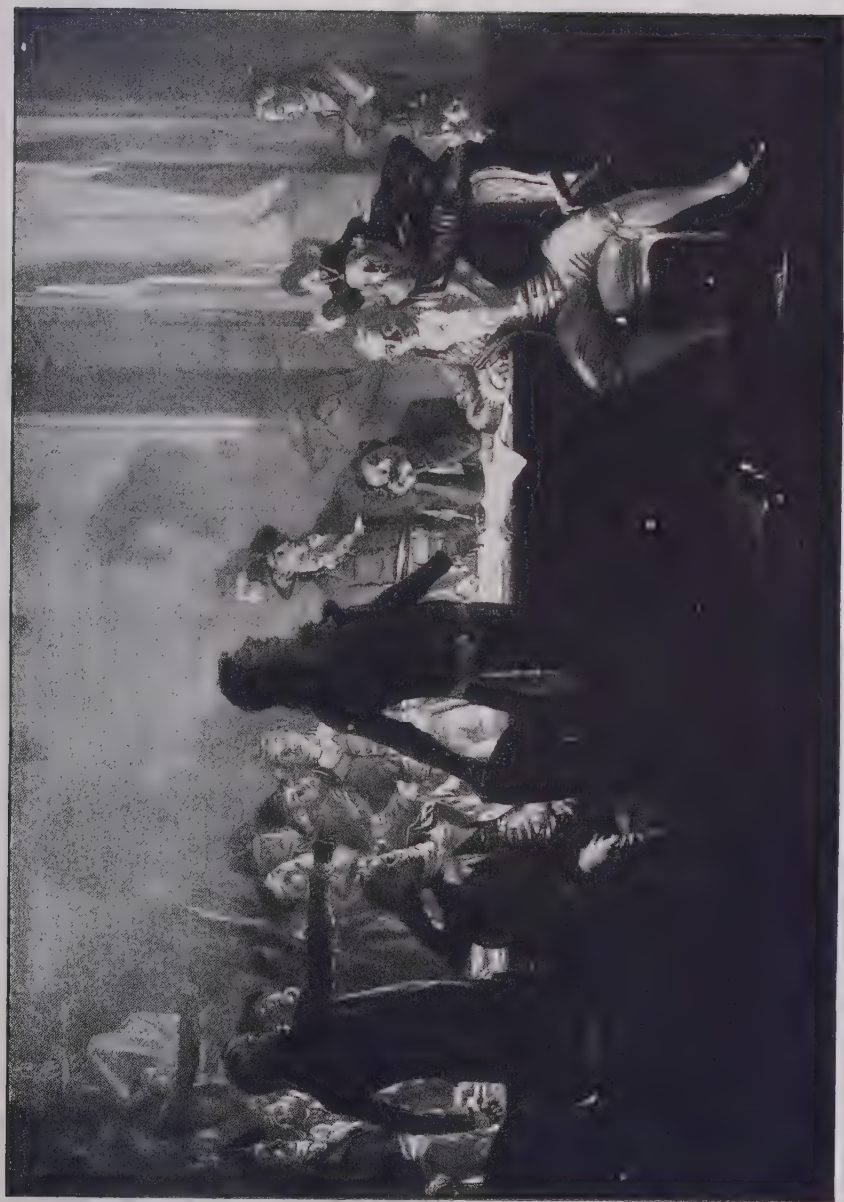
The debate had lasted all day, and the arrest was not pronounced till evening. The mayor and commune remained in suspense, but Henriot collected his gendarmerie, and refused to obey the order of the convention depriving him of the command. The keepers of the several prisons were in the same interest; they refused to receive the arrested members, who were rescued and conveyed to the Hôtel-de-Ville. Thus were the two rival powers each in its headquarters — the convention at the Tuileries, Robespierre and his friends at the commune. Each was in possession of a certain part of the



PAUL JEAN FRANÇOIS NICOLAS, COMTE DE  
BARRAS  
(1755-1825)

armed force; but so feeble, that it seemed impossible to strike a decisive blow on that night. Robespierre was grievously disappointed in finding that the rabble had not flocked to his standard. Henriot tried in vain to raise the faubourgs; but this could only be done by a certain low class of agitators, such as the anarchists and the Cordelier club united and held in pay. In crushing these, Robespierre had destroyed the instruments, and the officers in fact, of insurrection, and no aid was hence to be obtained. Here then was his blunder. In ruining the mob party he had cut away his own support. The commune, however, had some reliance on the sections, and the national guard attached to them. But the convention, despatching two of its members to each section, proved more active than the commune, or than Robespierre, who was stupefied rather than excited to exertion by this his final peril. Henriot, too, was an unfit, a drunken commander. He had been seized in the evening at the palace of the convention, and afterwards liber-





ROBESPIERRE FACING HIS CAPTORS



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ated by his friends. His approach had thrown the assembly into a panic, and they had voted to die at their posts. On recovering from their fears they appointed Barras general, and other deputies to act under his command. The sections answered the appeal of the convention. None but the cannoniers adhered to the commune; and these were shaken in their firmness by emissaries who penetrated amongst them, and acquainted them with the decree outlawing the Robespierres and their party. The apathy of the populace, the want of spirit in the leaders, who scarcely showed themselves, but remained in secret and irresolute council, contributed to the defection of the cannoniers, the greater part of whom drew off at length, and abandoned the Hôtel-de-Ville. Thus, about midnight, when the force under the orders of the convention surrounded the hôtel and occupied the place, there was scarcely a sign of resistance. Even within the doors, in the mansion and stronghold of the commune, there was as little opposition. A few gendarmes were able to make their way up the staircases, and to surprise the conspirators.<sup>e</sup>

At the sound of approaching footsteps, Lebas, armed with a brace of pistols, had presented one to Robespierre, conjuring him to put a period to his existence; but Robespierre, in conjunction with Saint-Just and Couthon, refused to commit suicide, preferring to die by the hand of their enemies. Sitting mute and motionless around a table in the Salle de l'Égalité, they listened to the sound of persons ascending to their apartment, kept their eyes fixed on the door, and awaited their fate.

As the jingling noise proceeding from the arms carried by the advancing men became too distinct to be misunderstood, Lebas discharged a pistol through his heart, and fell dead in the arms of Robespierre the younger, who, although equally certain of his innocence and of being acquitted, did not choose to survive his brother or his friend. Opening a window, he leaped out into the court, and broke his leg. Coffinhal, making the chambers and lobbies resound with his imprecations and hurried tread, chanced to encounter Henriot, stupefied with terror and wine; bitterly reproaching him for his gross and cowardly conduct, he seized him in his arms, carried him towards an open window, and threw him from the second floor on to a heap of ordure. "Lie there, wretched drunkard," cried Coffinhal as he flung him down. "You are not worthy to die on a scaffold!" Meanwhile Dulac apprised Bourdon of the free access to the Hôtel-de-Ville.

Léonard Bourdon ascended, accompanied by five gendarmes and a detachment of soldiers. Dulac having joined him, the whole party rushed eagerly towards the Salle de l'Égalité. The door soon yielded to the blows given by the soldiers with the butt-ends of their muskets, amid the cries of "Down with the tyrant!" "Which is he?" inquired the soldiers; but Léonard Bourdon durst not meet the look of his fallen enemy. Standing a little behind the men, and hidden by the body of a gendarme, named Méda, with his right hand he seized the arm of the gendarme, who held a pistol, and pointing with his left hand to the person to be aimed at, he directed the muzzle of the weapon towards Robespierre, exclaiming, "That is the man." The man fired, and the head of Robespierre dropped on the table, deluging with blood the proclamation he had not finished signing. The ball had entered the left side of his face, and carried away several of his teeth. Couthon, endeavouring to rise upon his withered limbs, staggered and fell under the table. Saint-Just remained sitting immovable at the table, now gazing mournfully on Robespierre, now casting proud looks of defiance at his enemies.



Barras, followed by his long file of prisoners, conducted his men back to the convention. Day was just beginning to dawn, and discovered Robespierre carried on a litter by four gendarmes, his face covered with a handkerchief steeped in blood: the persons who bore Couthon had let him fall and roll in the mud at the corner of the place de Grève; when they thought proper to take him up, his clothes were soiled and torn, so as to leave a portion of his throat and breast quite uncovered. Robespierre the younger was conveyed in a state of utter insensibility in the arms of two men of the people. Next followed the corpse of Lebas, over which had hastily been flung a table-cover spotted with blood. Then came Saint-Just, bare-headed, and with downcast looks; his hands were tied behind him, and his countenance bespoke rather submission to his fate, than shame for having provoked it. At five o'clock the head of the column of soldiers entered the Tuileries, where the convention was awaiting the termination of the affair, without fear or apprehension as to its results.

Robespierre was laid upon a table in the adjoining ante-room, his head supported by the back of a chair: a crowd of persons were continually flocking in to obtain, by means of clambering on stools and benches, a view of the fallen creature, once the idol and ruler of the republic. Some even among those who had favoured and cringed before him only the day previously, came to assure themselves he would never rise again. The wretched man was overwhelmed with expressions of contempt, invectives, and abuse. Nothing was spared him; the officers of the convention pointed him out to the spectators in the same manner as a ferocious beast is exposed in a menagerie. The unhappy being feigned death to escape the insults and ignominy heaped upon him. A man in the employ of the committee of public safety, who, while he rejoiced in the downfall of a tyrant, pitied the unfortunate creature thus at the mercy of his enemies, approached Robespierre, unfastened his garter, and, drawing down his stocking, placed his finger on the artery in his leg, whose full and regular pulsations announced the vital strength he still possessed. "Let him be searched!" exclaimed the crowd; and upon so doing, a brace of pistols, with the arms of France engraved on the case that contained them, was found in his pocket. "What a scoundrel!" cried the bystanders; "a proof of his aspiring to the throne may be found in his using the proscribed symbols of royalty." These pistols, shut up in their cases, still loaded, abundantly testify that Robespierre did not shoot himself.<sup>1</sup>

Although lying motionless, and apparently unconscious, he both heard and saw all that was passing around him. The blood that flowed from his wounds coagulated in his mouth; regaining a little strength, he stanchd this blood with the fur that covered the case of his pistols; his dim but still observing eye wandered among the crowd as though seeking some friendly countenance from whom he might hope to obtain either justice or compassion; but vain was the search: horror alone was imprinted on every face, and the wretched man shuddered, and closed his eyes. The heat of the chamber was most oppressive: a burning fever glowed on the cheeks of Robespierre, while perspiration streamed from his brow: no hand was extended to assist him. They had placed beside him, on the table, a cup of vinegar, and a sponge. From time to time he moistened the sponge, and applied it to his lips.

After this long exposure at the entrance of the Salle, from whence the

[<sup>1</sup> Some historians assert, however, that Robespierre's wound was from his own revolver. Of these are Thiers, <sup>j</sup> Mignet, <sup>k</sup> and Daresté. <sup>c</sup>]

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fallen man could hear the vehement language employed against himself by all who spoke from the tribune, he was removed to the committee of general safety, where Billaud-Varennes, Collot d'Herbois, and Vadier, his most implacable enemies, awaited to go through the form of his examination; but he replied only by looks. His interrogators shortened his misery.

At three o'clock the whole party was led or carried, as necessity required, before the revolutionary tribunal. The judges and juries were composed of the same men who only a few hours previously were ready to consign to death all who were inimical to the very individuals they were now assembled to sacrifice. Fouquier-Tinville read the extraordinary decrees with his accustomed tone and manner.

As the clock struck six, the carts appointed to convey the condemned to the scaffold drew up at the foot of the grand staircase. Robespierre, his brother, Couthon, Henriot, and Lebas were merely the mangled remains of men; they were tied by the arms, legs, or trunk, to the bottom of the first vehicle. The jolting of the clumsy machine, as it rumbled over the stones, drew from the agonised creatures within shrieks of pain and dreadful groans; they were taken through the longest and most populous streets of Paris. Every window, door, and balcony—even the roofs of the houses were crowded with spectators, of whom the principal part were women dressed as for a *fête*; these clapped their hands joyfully as the procession passed, and seemed to fancy they were expiating the enormities of the reign of terror by execrating him who had bestowed his own name on it. The cart was beset by the children and friends of former victims shouting, "Kill him! Kill him! Let the guillotine do its work on him!" While the people, preserving a gloomy silence, looked on without any demonstration of either satisfaction or regret, groups of children, who had been deprived of their fathers—women, whose husbands had been torn from them, alone broke through the file of gendarmes, and clinging to the wheels and axles of the carts, loaded Robespierre with bitter imprecations, as though fearing that death would cheat them of their revenge and exultation. The head of Robespierre was bound with a blood-stained handkerchief, that supported his chin, and was tied over his hair, leaving only one of his cheeks, his forehead, and eyes visible. The gendarmes who escorted him pointed him out to the people by a contemptuous motion of the point of their sabres. The unfortunate object of these humiliations turned away his head and shrugged up his shoulders, as though commiserating the error of those who attributed to him alone all the crimes committed in his name. The whole of his intellect seemed centred in his eyes, while his attitude indicated resignation and not fear: the mystery that had veiled his life shrouded his thoughts, and he died without one last word.

Having reached the base of the statue of Liberty, the executioners carried the wounded men to the platform of the guillotine. Not one of them addressed a word or a reproach to the people; they read their doom too clearly in the unmoved countenances of the spectators. Robespierre mounted the ladder with a firm step. Before the knife was loosened, the executioners pulled off the bandage which enveloped his face, in order to prevent the linen from deadening the blow of the axe. The agony occasioned by this drew from the wretched sufferer a cry of anguish that was heard to the opposite side of the place de la Révolution; then followed a silence like that of the grave, interrupted, at intervals, by a dull, sullen noise; the guillotine fell, and the head of Robespierre rolled into the basket. The crowd held their breath for some seconds, then burst into a loud and unanimous cheering.

LAMARTINE ON ROBESPIERRE<sup>1</sup>

Such was the end of Robespierre and his party, surprised and immolated by the very manœuvre which he had planned to bring back the Terror to the law, the Revolution to order, and the republic to unity. Overthrown by men some better and some worse than himself, he had the unutterable misfortune of dying the same day on which the Terror ended, and thus of accumulating on his name the blood of punishments he would fain have spared, and the curses of victims he would willingly have saved. His death was the date and not the cause of the cessation of terror. Deaths would have ceased by his triumphs, as they did by his death. Thus did divine justice dishonour his repentance, and cast misfortune on his good intentions, making of his tomb a gulf filled up. It has made of his memory an enigma of which history trembles to pronounce the solution, fearing to do him an injustice if she brand it as a crime, or to create horror if she should term it virtue! To be just and instructive, we must unhesitatingly associate these two words, which have a repugnancy to unite, and compose a complex word, or rather it is impossible to designate what we must despair to define. This man was, and must ever remain, shadowy — undefined.

There is a design in his life, and this design is vast — the reign of reason, by the medium of democracy. There is a momentum, and that momentum is divine — it was a thirst after the truth and justice in the laws. There is an action, and that action is meritorious — it is the struggle for life and death against vice, lying, and despotism. There is a devotion, and this devotion is as constant, absolute, as an antique immolation — it was the sacrifice of himself, of his youth, his repose, his happiness, his ambition, his life, his memory, and his work. Finally, there is a means, and that means is, in turns, execrable or legitimate — it is popularity. He caressed the people by its ignoble tendencies, he exaggerated suspicion, excited envy, sharpened anger, envenomed vengeance. He opened the veins of the social body to cure the disease; but he allowed life to flow out, pure or impure, with indifference, without casting himself between the victims and the executioners. He did not desire evil, and yet accepted it. He surrendered, to what he believed the pressure of situation, the heads of the king, the queen, their innocent sister. He yielded to pretended necessity the head of Vergniaud; to fear and domination the head of Danton. He allowed his name to serve, for eighteen months, as the standard of the scaffold, and the justification of death.

He hoped subsequently to redeem that which is never redeemed — present crime, through the purity, the holiness of future institutions. He was intoxicated with the perspective of public felicity, whilst France was palpitating on the block. He desired to extirpate, with the iron blade, all the ill-growing roots of the social soil. He believed himself to be the right hand of providence — the instrument of the designs of destiny. He put himself in the place of God. He desired to be the exterminating and creative genius of the Revolution. He forgot that if every man thus made a deity of himself, there could only remain one man on the globe at the end of the world, and that this last man would be the assassin of all the others! He besmeared with blood the purest doctrines of philosophy. He inspired the future with a dread of the people's reign, repugnance to the institution of the republic, a doubt of liberty. He fell at last in his first

[<sup>1</sup> With these words Lamartine ends his *History of the Girondists*.]



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struggle with the Terror, because he did not acquire, by resisting it at first, the right of power to quell it. His principles were sterile and fatal, like his proscriptions, and he died exclaiming (with the despondency of Brutus), "The republic perishes with me!" He was in effect, at that moment, the soul of the republic, and it vanished with his last sigh. If Robespierre had maintained himself pure, and made no concessions to the wild schemes of demagogues up to this crisis of weariness and remorse, the republic would have survived, grown young again, and triumphed in him. It sought a ruler, whilst he only appeared as its accomplice, and was preparing to become its Cromwell.

A cause is frequently but the name of an individual. The cause of the democracy should not be condemned to veil or justify that of Robespierre. The type of democracy should be magnanimous, generous, clement, and indisputable as truth. The great epoch of the Revolution ended with Robespierre and Saint-Just. The second race of revolutionists began. The republic fell from tragedy into intrigue, from spiritualism into ambition, from fanaticism into cupidity. At this moment, when everything grows small, let us learn to contemplate what was so vast.

The Revolution had lasted only five years. These five years are five centuries for France. Never perhaps on this earth, at any period since the commencement of the Christian era, did any country produce, in so short a space of time, such an eruption of ideas, men, natures, characters, geniuses, talents, catastrophes, crimes, and virtues, as during these convulsive throes of the social and political future which is called by the name of France—neither the age of Cæsar and Octavius at Rome, nor the age of Charlemagne amongst the Gauls and in Germany, nor the age of Pericles in Athens, nor of Leo X in Italy, nor of Louis XIV in France, nor of Cromwell in England. It was as if the earth were in labour to produce a progressive order of societies, and made an effort of fecundity comparable to the energetic work of regeneration which providence desired to accomplish. Men were born like the instantaneous personifications of things which should think, speak, or act: Voltaire, good sense; Jean Jacques Rousseau, the ideal; Condorcet, calculation; Mirabeau, impetuosity; Vergniaud, impulse; Danton, audacity; Marat, fury; Madame Roland, enthusiasm; Charlotte Corday, vengeance; Robespierre, Utopia; Saint-Just, the fanaticism of the Revolution.

Behind these came the secondary men of each of these groups, forming a body which the Revolution detached after having united it, and the members of which she brake, one by one, as useless implements. Light shone from every point of the horizon at once; darkness fell back; prejudices were cast off; consciences were freed; tyrannies trembled, and the people rose. Thrones crumbled: intimidated Europe ceased to strike, and, stricken herself, receded in order to gaze on this grand spectacle at a greater distance. This deadly struggle for the cause of human reason is a thousand times more glorious than the victories of the armies which succeeded to it. It acquired for the world inalienable truths, instead of acquiring for a nation the precarious increase of provinces. It enlarged the domain of mind, instead of expanding the limits of the people. The heads of these men fall one by one; some justly, others unjustly; but they fall in consummation of the work. We accuse or absolve, weep over or curse them. Individuals are innocent or guilty, loved or hateful, victims or executioners. The working out is vast, and the idea soars above the instruments, as the ever pure cause soars over the horrors of the field of battle. After five years, the Revolution is nothing but a vast cemetery. Over the tomb of each of these

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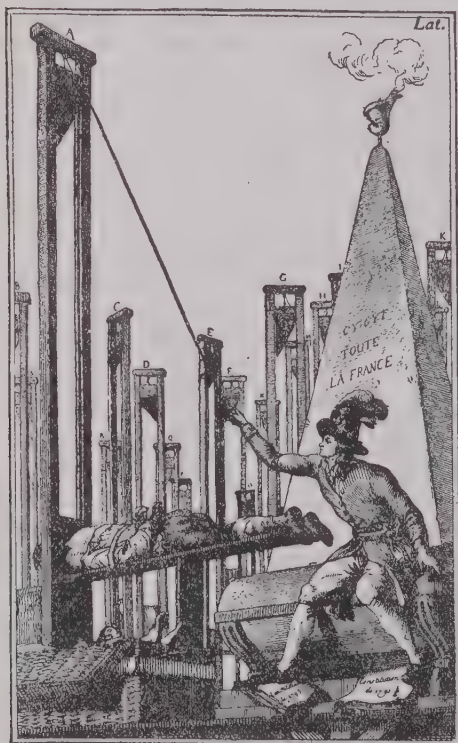
victims is inscribed a word which characterises it. Over one, Philosophy ; another, Eloquence ; another, Genius ; another, Courage : here Crime, there Virtue : but over one and all is written, "Died for posterity," and, "Workman in the cause of humanity."

A nation should unquestionably bewail its dead, and not console itself for one head unjustly and hatefully sacrificed ; but it should not regret its blood when it has flowed to bring forth everlasting truths. Ideas vegetate from human blood. Revelations descend from scaffolds. The history of the Revolution is glorious and sad as the morrow of a victory, and the eve of a battle. But if this history be full of mourning, it is also full of faith.

It resembles the antique drama, in which, whilst the narrator gives the recital, the chorus of the people sings the glory, bewails the victims, and raises a hymn of consolation and hope to God !

#### DARESTE'S ESTIMATE OF ROBESPIERRE

Robespierre personified the reign of terror. No one had contributed more than he towards establishing and executing it. It was he who had invented the theory of it. He, with Saint-Just, was the doctrinaire of the revolutionary government. It was he who had killed Louis XVI, Marie Antoinette, Custine and the other generals, the Girondins, Danton and Camille Desmoulins, Hébert and his acolytes. By means of the guillotine he had decimated all parties, or rather all resistance without distinction of party. Although he sometimes exclaimed against the shedding of so much blood, he had not stopped it, because he had always met with dissatisfied persons,



THE GUILLOTINE  
(From an old French print)

had always held them to be conspirators, and had at once sent them to the scaffold. He would never have established order in France, because for a year he had been master and disorder increased continually. Neither would he have made peace, as it was imagined abroad he would do, if he consolidated his dictatorship ; that would have been impossible for him. His system had no issue. In vain he wrapped himself in his virtue ; in vain he tried to distinguish himself from vulgar throat-cutters by the nicety of his attire and by his manners : he ruled through blood. With him no one could foresee when the reign of blood would cease ; that day would come only when he was dead. That was what France understood on the 9th Thermidor.

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His more or less confessed panegyrists have claimed that he would have reconstituted a regular government and that he had declared the necessity for it. If he had wished it even, he would not have done it; he could not have done it. A month before his death he still issued an order for a billion more assignats and a new forced loan on the rich. Wholly devoted to the prosecution of conspirators, his enemies, he declared a truce only once, the day on which he organised the festival of the Supreme Being. To-day ignorance and blindness alone can defend him.

Nevertheless the remembrance attached to his name has something of grandeur as well as of terror. The reason is that for nearly a year he was master of France and he was master because he had power, which always finds admirers, and which people had long sought elsewhere without finding it. But the use he made of it proved, as the revolutionist Mercier<sup>p</sup> justly said, that great talents are not necessary to commit great crimes.<sup>c</sup>

## THIERS ON ROBESPIERRE

It may be asked what would have resulted had Robespierre been victorious? The state of abandonment in which he found himself proves that it was impossible. But, supposing him successful, he must have either yielded to the general feeling or succumbed somewhat later. Like all usurpers, he would have been impelled to substitute a mild and tranquil government for the horrors of incessant strife. But, in truth, the part of a usurper was for him impracticable. The French Revolution was on too vast a scale to permit the same man, a deputy in the constituent assembly of 1789, to be proclaimed emperor or protector in the cathedral of Notre Dame in 1804. In a country less advanced and of smaller confines, such as England was, where the same individual might be both delegate and general, and actually unite those two characters, a Cromwell was able to enact the parts of a factionist at the commencement, and of an usurping soldier at the end. But in a revolution extending over so wide a surface as the French, where war was so terrible and predominant, and where the same individual could not occupy both the tribune and the camp, the factionists first destroyed each other; and after them came soldiers, one of whom remained the ultimate master.

It was not reserved for Robespierre, therefore, to act the usurper in France. Still, how came it to pass that he survived all those famous revolutionists, who were so superior in genius and might to himself — Danton, for example? Robespierre possessed undeniable integrity; and to captivate the masses an unsullied reputation is essential. He was devoid of pity — a quality which, in revolutions, ruins those who hearken to its impulses. He had, moreover, in a supreme degree, that stubborn and indomitable self-sufficiency and assumption which weighs so influentially with mankind. These qualifications were sufficient to insure his survival beyond all his contemporary rivals. But he was of the worst order of men. A zealot without passions, lacking the vices, doubtless, to which they expose, but equally so the courage, the magnanimity, and the sensibility which usually accompany them, exclusively wrapped up in his pride and dogma, hiding in the hour of danger, and reappearing to gather homage after the victory was secured by others, he presents himself to our contemplation as one of the most odious beings who have ever domineered over men, and we should say also one of the most vile, did we not acknowledge his strong conviction and his undeviating rectitude.<sup>d</sup>



## A SANE VIEW OF THE TERROR

The most stupendous phenomenon, and yet the most inexplicable enigma of the whole French Revolution, is the revolutionary tribunal. With a distant and general view of its wholesale atrocities, the public memory is but too familiar; but the real motives of its creation—the interior springs by which it was worked—the object, the interest which any man or party could have had, or fancied it had, in such a protracted and diurnal system of indiscriminate murder, and, above all, the wanton, the impudent, the insane absurdity of thousands of its individual judgments, are mysteries which, the more closely they are examined, seem to us only the more difficult to be explained or even guessed at.

We begin by observing that its very name and date have been generally misunderstood. We hear and read of the revolutionary tribunal; but, in fact, there were four of them usually comprised under that generic name, and characterised by the same spirit of injustice and cruelty, but established at different periods, by different factions, for different purposes, and with different powers. The first was instituted on the 17th of August, 1792, which, after having condemned and executed twenty-eight persons (of whom but half a dozen were on political charges), was suddenly and contemptuously dismissed on the 30th of November. The second was that damned to everlasting fame as the revolutionary tribunal, which has extended its terrible name to the others. This tribunal was created on the 10th of March, 1793, and after executing 2,730 persons, was abolished, and the majority of its members were sent to the scaffold, on the fall of Robespierre. The third may be considered as a renewal of the last, but with restricted powers and different persons; it was reorganised on the 9th of August, 1794, but, after an existence of about four months, was abrogated on the 24th of December, 1794, on which day it was replaced by the fourth of these tribunals, which, after trying and condemning Fouquier-Tinville, the *accusateur-public* of the second tribunal, and those of his colleagues who still survived, was finally dissolved on the 2nd of June, 1795.

The name, too, has been generally misunderstood. To the first two tribunals the name “revolutionary” was at their creation formally and purposely denied, because that title was proposed with the intention of relieving them from the ordinary principles or restraints of law, customs, or constitution, with license to pursue by every kind of means—*per fas et nefas*—the ultimate object of assuring what the rulers of the hour should be pleased to denominate the *salut public*. It was in this sense of the word that the convention suspended the constitution it had itself just created (October 10th, 1793), and declared itself a revolutionary power, and its government a revolutionary government, and that Fouquier-Tinville complained that his prosecutors confounded the justice of an ordinary with that of a revolutionary tribunal.<sup>r</sup>

In the preceding pages, we have given the most eloquent accounts obtainable of the Terror and its cruelties. But, in remembering it, it is needful to avoid a breach of the laws of perspective. The period stands out in the average mind as one of unequalled, unheard-of atrocity. Yet the total number put to death at Paris<sup>1</sup> by the revolutionary tribunal in the course of several months is not placed above 4,000 by the extremest

[<sup>1</sup> The destructions of the Terror in the provinces were very large, Carrier at Nantes having executed at least 5,000; but the provincial Terror was largely a merciless treatment of rebellious districts, while Paris suffered in spite of her fidelity to the cause.]

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calculation of Montgaillard; <sup>1</sup> 3,000 being a more probable number and 1,862 being the official statement. This, indeed, is bad enough, but it must not be taken as a proof that the populace is more savage at heart than the upper classes, for it was only five years later, and in a shorter period, at Naples, that the royalists put to death more than 4,000 who had shown republican sympathies during the brief period when Naples was known as the Parthenopean Republic. This too at a time when the royalists had returned, and when the English fleet was riding in the harbour to protect the king, Ferdinand. Indeed, Lord Nelson's noble fame is blotched indelibly by the fact that he dishonoured the terms of capitulation and allowed a garrison that had surrendered, trusting in the ordinary laws of war, to be put to death. If France had her *noyades* of Carrier, so royalist Naples saw her citizens walking the plank in droves into the waters of the bay. As Weber <sup>m</sup> says:

"The republicans of Naples were now visited by a frightful punishment. Supported by Admiral Nelson, who lay with his fleet before the city, and who, seduced by the charms of Lady Hamilton, allowed himself to be made the instrument of an ignominious vengeance, the priesthood and the royal government practised deeds before which the atrocities of the French reign of terror retreat into obscurity. After the undertakings and the plunderings of the *lazzaroni* were over, the business of the judge, the jailer, and the executioner commenced. Every partisan, adherent, or favourer of the republican institutions was prosecuted. Upwards of four thousand of the most respectable and refined men and women died upon the scaffold or in frightful dungeons; for it was precisely the noblest portion of the nation who wished to redeem the people from their degradation and ignorance, and had joined themselves with patriotic enthusiasm to the new system."

Look backward and consider the thousands who perished in the fires of the Inquisition—a royal and churchly institution. If so noble and gentle a woman as Queen Isabella of Spain could permit so virtuous and godly a churchman as Torquemada to burn 8,800 men and women at the stake in his one administration and to visit torture, exile, and other penalties on a total of 105,294 fellow-creatures, for a mere difference in religious dogma, how shall we call the revolutionary tribunal inhuman, surrounded as it was with foreign armies and threatened as it was everywhere with insurrectionary bands of equal ruthlessness?

The volumes of this history are too full of the atrocities of despots before and after the proverbial Nero, to need more than an allusion. On their side of the ledger of human misery must go the great wars in which monarchs fell out about the alleged rights of their sons, their brothers, their wives, their mistresses, their cousins, their bastards, and fought out their petty desires with great armies, herding together the peasants and the bourgeoisie in droves and driving them pell-mell into battles where stupidity or treachery sacrificed them by the thousand. These unnumbered victims of monarchical greed or spite must be remembered when we would place the reign of terror in its place upon the scale of horror.

The wretched Persians whom Xerxes lashed into Greece had neither knowledge nor hatred of the Greeks; yet 6,400 of them fell in a few hours at Marathon, and at Salamis the slaughter was wholesale. Of the hundreds of thousands—perhaps a million or more—that Xerxes led into Europe, only a small part ever returned to their homes. In later years an almost equal host was assailed at Arbela by Alexander dragging his homesick Greeks upon an inexcusable raid; the estimates of Persians killed in that one

assault range from 40,000 to 300,000. In one day Alexander put to the sword 17,000 Hindus at Sangala. Men of his own army who begged him to turn back were put to death. In the desert of Gedrosia his people, women and children as well as soldiers, perished by the hundred. To make a funeral offering to his friend Hephæstion, he slew the entire male population of the Cossæi. Yet the name of Marat provokes horror; that of Alexander, admiration. Hannibal leading a vast horde of conscripts over the Alps, where they died like flies, practically annihilated an army of 88,000 Romans at Cannæ, and lost 6,000 of his own. Yet we think of Hannibal with pity for his final failure.

William the Conqueror, out of pure land-greed and personal disgust at Harold, practically annihilated in one day, at Hastings, Harold's army of at least 25,000 and lost 12,000 of his own men. The Crusades were undertaken for various reasons, the one most loudly proclaimed being a passion for the reclaiming of Christ's sepulchre. Every abomination known to history resulted from the two centuries of plundering expeditions, and the direct loss of life on both sides would be put low at a million.

In the so-called Wars of the Roses between the rival houses of Lancaster and York it is estimated that, while only twelve princes of the blood and two hundred nobles lost their lives, there perished a hundred thousand of the common people. The Hundred Years' War in which the French expelled the English from France cost myriads of lives and kept the French territory for a century a wilderness of starvation and barbarism. The War of the Spanish Succession was purely a matter of Louis XIV's greed and intrigue. In the battle of Blenheim Marlborough killed 10,000 French and Bavarians at Ramillies the slain on both sides were 17,000; at Malplaquet 32,000 fell. These are only three battles out of a war lasting eleven years. The War of the Austrian Succession was again a mere family quarrel over inheritances, yet it included Fontenoy with a loss of 25,000, and a side issue was Culloden with 2,500 Scotchmen killed—more than the whole loss in the Terror. The Seven Years' War was a glorious means of personal aggrandisement to Frederick who gained by it the epithet of Great; yet it cost, according to his own reckoning, 180,000 lives among his own partisans, a general diminution of Prussia's population by 500,000, and a grand total of 853,000 soldiers killed on all sides.

The Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871 was again a case where a meddlesome court and a ruthless monarch hurled a people unwilling and unprepared into an incalculable disaster which has covered French military fame with an undeserved accusation of cowardice; though at the battle of Wörth 5,000 French were killed, at Metz the loss was far greater; and at Sedan 3,000 were killed on each side. In the siege of Paris, though there were only 396 deaths due to bombardment, the death-rate averaged 3,600 a week; and in one week 2,500 infants died, while smallpox carried off altogether 64,000 lives. In one typical sortie, a thousand French lost their lives in a few hours. The country suffered infinitely more than under the Terror, and the Germans showed at times an inexcusable contempt for the laws of war and humanity. The cost of this war to France was over £360,000,000, or nearly two billion dollars. In a diplomatic circular to Prussia, Favre said that 200,000 had fallen by September, 1870. This appalling disaster must all be charged to monarchic ambition. Before this the less than two thousand executions of the Terror grow almost petty, seem almost merciful.

On this point Gamaliel Bradford says: "The last word has by no means as yet been said as to the French Revolution of 1789 and its results.



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The horror which it inspired has been softened by the lapse of years, and men are more disposed to study its real meaning in a philosophical spirit. A notable instance of this is the work of H. Moise Stephens,<sup>o</sup> which marks a great change in the English point of view. Setting apart the previous wars of the old French monarchy, it may be doubted whether the amount of human suffering caused in France in the years 1789 to 1795 by the direct and conscious action of man, apart from the consequences of political mistakes, was at all to be compared with that caused, even to Germany, by the German invasion of France in 1870-1871, especially if we include the fate of the thousands of widows and orphans thereby created. Yet this event is hailed by all Germany as a glorious triumph, and the rest of the world is rather disposed to admit the claim. That a king or emperor should send half a million of men to slaughter and destruction is regarded as quite in the natural course of history. It is only when a convention of nameless men orders the beheading of a king and queen, and a peasantry pillages and burns the castles of a few thousands of lords and gentlemen, that the vials of wrath are poured out."

It is unnecessary to continue the list of royal reigns of terror. Enough has been shown even from this mere indication of the endless holocausts offered to monarchical greed and vanity to indicate that the execution of some 1,862 persons in the fourteen months of Terror at Paris, between March, 1793, and July 27th, 1794, hardly deserves its magnificent fame. It must always be remembered that the Terror was a hysteria due to the fear of the great armies of foreign kings and the uncertain sympathies of malcontents within the walls; it should not be forgotten that the revolutionary tribunal was composed, not of illiterate anarchists but of men of family and education; that the vast majority of the people, even the nobility, escaped death; that the Terror accomplished its purpose of keeping down treachery in the face of the enemy, and that when the reaction set in, the French people themselves showed as much horror of the nightmare as foreigners have ever shown. Even Carlyle, who cannot be accused of minimising the fiendishness displayed by the revolutionary tribunal, thus sums it up: "<sup>a</sup>

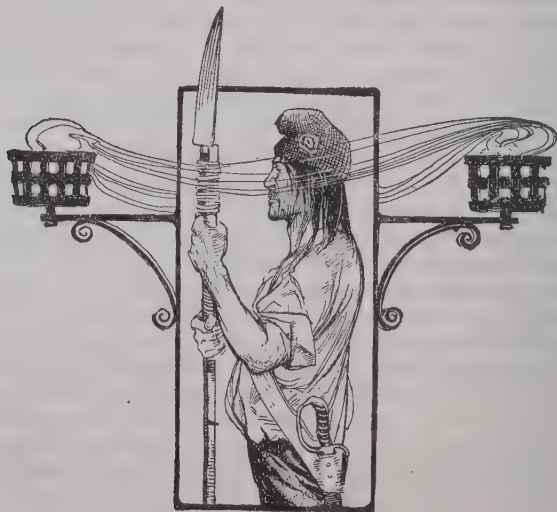
It was the frightfullest thing ever borne of Time? One of the frightfullest. This Convention, now grown Antijacobin, did, with an eye to justify and fortify itself, publish Lists of what the Reign of Terror had perpetrated: Lists of Persons Guillotined. The Lists, cries splenetic Abbé Montgaillard,<sup>l</sup> were not complete. They contain the names of, How many persons thinks the Reader?—Two-thousand all but a few. There were above Four-thousand, cries Montgaillard: so many were guillotined, fusilladed, noyaded, done to dire death; of whom Nine-hundred were women. It is a horrible sum of human lives, M. l'Abbé:—some ten times as many shot rightly on a field of battle, and one might have had his Glorious-Victory with *Te-Deum*. It is not far from the two-hundredth part of what perished in the entire Seven-Years' War. By which Seven-Years' War, did not the great Fritz wrench Silesia from the great Theresa; and a Pompadour, stung by epigrams, satisfy herself that she could not be an Agnes Sorel?

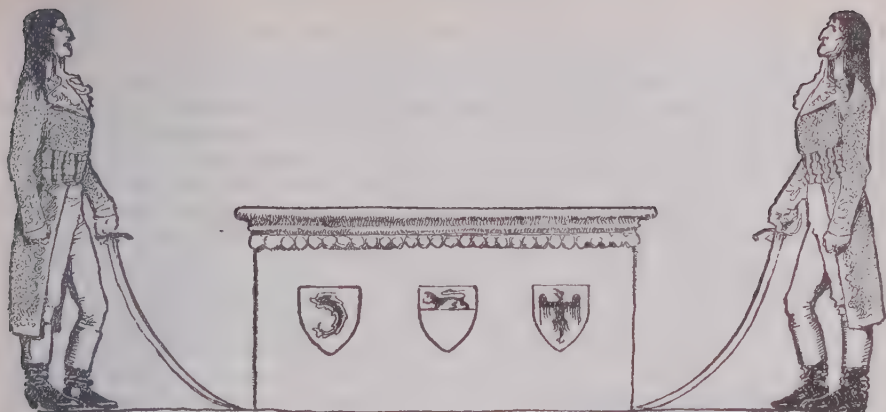
But what if History somewhere on this Planet were to hear of a Nation, the third soul of whom had not, for thirty weeks each year, as many third-rate potatoes as would sustain him?<sup>1</sup> History, in that case, feels bound to consider that starvation is starvation; that starvation from age to age presupposes much; History ventures to assert that the French Sansculotte of

<sup>1</sup> Report of the Irish Poor-Law Commission, 1836.

Ninety-three, who, roused from long death-sleep, could rush at once to the frontiers, and die fighting for an immortal Hope and Faith of Deliverance for him and his, was but the *second*-miserablest of men ! The Irish Sans-potato, had he not senses then, nay a soul ! In his frozen darkness, it was bitter for him to die famishing ; bitter to see his children famish. It was bitter for him to be a beggar, a liar, and a knave. Nay, if that dreary Greenland-wind of benighted Want, perennial from sire to son, had frozen him into a kind of torpor and numb callosity, so that he saw not, felt not, -- was this, for a creature with a soul in it, some assuagement ; or the cruellest wretchedness of all ?

Such things were ; such things are ; and they go on in silence peaceably : — and Sansculottisms follow them. History, looking back over this France through long times, back to Turgot's time for instance, when dumb Drudgery staggered up to its King's Palace, and in wide expanse of sallow faces, squalor and winged raggedness, presented hieroglyphically its Petition of Grievances ; and for answer got hanged on a "new gallows forty feet high," — confesses mournfully that there is no period to be met with, in which the general Twenty-five Millions of France suffered less than in this period which they name Reign of Terror ! But it was not the Dumb Millions that suffered here ; it was the Speaking Thousands, and Hundreds and Units ; who shrieked and published, and made the world ring with their wail, as they could and should : that is the grand peculiarity. The frightfullest Births of Time are never the loud-speaking ones, for these soon die ; they are the silent ones, which can live from century to century !





## CHAPTER XII

### THE WAR WITH ALL EUROPE

[1793-1795 A.D.]

WITH the exception of casual allusions, little has been said heretofore of the girdle of war that surrounded France and kept the frontiers as busy as the interior was seething. It has seemed clearer to set apart for separate chronicle the great deeds of war which the risen French people accomplished in the face of all the nations and in the midst of their astounding political industry. The soldiers of France stood in hollow square fighting four ways at once while within the square the people argued their fierce debates to the death. But debate and destruction were not all. There was a marvellous rise of manufacturing not only of war materials but of war-minds. The peasants, who had grown weary of starving in contempt, found a wild rapture in battle, and since the old officers had chiefly gone over to the aristocratic sympathies of the foreign enemies of France, new officers sprang into existence, like poets born and not made, and they managed huge bodies of men in great battles, defeated learned old masters of war and won imperishable names, many of them before they had reached the age of thirty. A more wonderful triumph of spirit has never been seen in all history, and it is a pity that, owing to the blind incompetence of a later Napoleon in 1870-1871, France should have lost the great name she earned when the first Napoleon was only one boyish genius among others almost equally brilliant.

The first conflicts republican France had with the outer world were, we remember, unfortunate: the raw troops fled like sheep, and the skilful general Dumouriez went over to the enemy. Revolutionary France had her cowardly militia and her Benedict Arnold even as revolutionary America had had a few years before. Then France responded to the first gloating contempt of the outside world with two measures, one eternally odious, the other glorious forever. The first was the wholesale butchery of the Terror; the second was, as we have seen, the "levy in mass," of August 23rd, 1793, when all France took up the arms or the tools of war. Carlyle catches the very fire of the occasion: "



## CARLYLE ON THE WAR-SPIRIT

Cut off from Sweden and the world, the Republic must learn to make steel for itself; and, by aid of Chemists, she has learnt it. Towns that knew only iron, now know steel: from their new dungeons at Chantilly, Aristocrats may hear the rustle of our new steel furnace there. Do not bells transmute themselves into cannon; iron stanchions into the white-weapon (*arme blanche*), by sword-cutlery? The wheels of Langres scream, amid their sputtering fire-halo; grinding mere swords. The stithies of Charleville ring with gun-making. What say we, Charleville? Two-hundred and fifty-eight Forges stand in the open spaces of Paris itself; a hundred and forty of them in the Esplanade of the Invalides, fifty-four in the Luxembourg Garden: so many Forges stand; grim Smiths beating and forging at lock and barrel there. The Clockmakers have come, requisitioned, to do the touch-holes, the hard-solder and file-work. Five great Barges swing at anchor on the Seine Stream, loud with boring; the great press-drills grating harsh thunder to the general ear and heart. And deft Stock-makers do gouge and rasp; and all men bestir themselves, according to their cunning: — in the language of hope, it is reckoned that “a thousand finished muskets can be delivered daily.” Chemists of the Republic have taught us miracles of swift tanning: the cordwainer bores and stitches; — not of “wood and pasteboard,” or he shall answer it to Tinville! The women sew tents and coats, the children scrape surgeons’-lint, old men sit in the market-places; able men are on march; all men in requisition: from Town to Town flutters, on the Heaven’s winds, this Banner: The French People risen against Tyrants.

All which is well. But now arises the question: What is to be done for saltpetre? Interrupted Commerce and the English Navy shut us out from saltpetre; and without saltpetre there is no gunpowder. Republican Science again sits meditative; discovers that saltpetre exists here and there, though in attenuated quantity; that old plaster of walls holds a sprinkling of it; — that the earth of the Paris Cellars holds a sprinkling of it, diffused through the common rubbish; that were these dug up and washed, saltpetre might be had. Whereupon, swiftly, see! the Citoyens, with upshoved *bonnet rouge*, or with doffed bonnet, and hair toil-wetted; digging fiercely, each in his own cellar, for saltpetre. The Earth-heap rises at every door: the Citoyennes with hod and bucket carrying it up; the Citoyens, pith in every muscle, shovelling and digging: for life and saltpetre. Dig, my braves; and right well speed ye! What of saltpetre is essential the Republic shall not want.

Consummation of Sansculottism has many aspects and tints: but the brightest tint, really of a solar or stellar brightness, is this which the Armies give it. That same fervour of Jacobinism, which internally fills France with hatreds, suspicions, scaffolds and Reason-worship, does, on the Frontiers, shew itself as a glorious *Pro patria mori*. Ever since Dumouriez’s defection, three Convention Representatives attend every General. Committee of *Salut* has sent them; often with this Laconic order only: “Do thy duty” (*Fais ton devoir*). It is strange, under what impediments the fire of Jacobinism, like other such fires, will burn. These Soldiers have shoes of wood and pasteboard, or go booted in hay-ropes, in dead of winter; they skewer a bast mat round their shoulders, and are destitute of most things. What then? It is for Rights of Frenchhood, of Manhood, that they fight: the unquenchable spirit, here as elsewhere, works miracles. “With steel and bread,” says the Convention Representative, “one may get to China.” The

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Generals go fast to the guillotine ; justly and unjustly. From which what inference ? This, among others : That ill-success is death ; that in victory alone is life ! To conquer or die is no theatrical palabra, in these circumstances, but a practical truth and necessity. All Girondism, Halfness, Compromise is swept away. Forward, ye Soldiers of the Republic, captain and man ! Dash, with your Gaelic impetuosity, on Austria, England, Prussia, Spain, Sardinia ; Pitt, Coburg, York, and the Devil and the World ! Behind us is but the Guillotine ; before us is Victory, Apotheosis, and Millennium without end !

See, accordingly, on all Frontiers, how the Sons of Night, astonished after short triumph, do recoil ; — the Sons of the Republic flying at them, with wild *Ca ira* or Marseillaise *Aux armes*, with the temper of cat-o'-mountain, or démon incarnate ; which no Son of Night can stand ! Spain, which came bursting through the Pyrenees, rustling with Bourbon banners, and went conquering here and there for a season, falters at such cat-o'-mountain welcome ; draws itself in again ; too happy now were the Pyrenees impassable. Not only does Dugommier, conqueror of Toulon, drive Spain back ; he invades Spain. General Dugommier invades it by the Eastern Pyrenees ; General Müller shall invade it by the Western. Shall, that is the word : Committee of *Salut Public* has said it ; Representative Cavaignac, on mission there, must see it done. Impossible ! cries Müller. — Infallible ! answers Cavaignac. Difficulty, impossibility, is to no purpose. "The Committee is deaf on that side of its head," answers Cavaignac (*n'entend pas de cette oreille là*). "How many wantest thou, of men, of horses, cannons ? Thou shalt have them. Conquerors, conquered or hanged, forward we must." Which things also, even as the Representative spake them, were done. The Spring of the new Year sees Spain invaded : and redoubts are carried, and Passes and Heights of the most scarped description ; Spanish Field-officerism struck mute at such cat-o'-mountain spirit, the cannon forgetting to fire. Swept are the Pyrenees ; Town after Town flies open, burst by terror or the petard. In the course of another year, Spain will crave Peace ; acknowledge its sins and the Republic ; nay, in Madrid, there will be joy as for a victory, that even Peace is got.

Few things, we repeat, can be notabler than these Convention Representatives, with their power more than kinglly. Nay at bottom are they not Kings, Able-men, of a sort ; chosen from the Seven-hundred and Forty-nine French Kings ; with this order, Do thy duty ? Representative Levasseur, of small



GENERAL LAZARE HOCHÉ  
(1768-1797)

stature, by trade a mere pacific Surgeon-Accoucheur, has mutinies to quell ; mad hosts (mad at the Doom of Custine) bellowing far and wide ; he alone amid them, the one small Representative, — small, but as hard as flint, which also carries fire in it ! So too, at Hondschoote, far in the afternoon, he declares that the Battle is not lost ; that it must be gained ; and fights, himself, with his own obstetric hand ; — horse shot under him, or say on foot, “up to the haunches in tide-water” ; cutting stoccado and passado there, in defiance of Water, Earth, Air, and Fire, the choleric little Representative that he was ! Whereby, as natural, Royal Highness of York had to withdraw, — occasionally at full gallop ; like to be swallowed by the tide :

and his Siege of Dunkirk became a dream, realising only much loss of beautiful siege-artillery and of brave lives.

General Houchard, it would appear, stood behind a hedge on this Hondschoote occasion ; wherefore they have since guillotined him. A new General Jourdan, late Sergeant Jourdan, commands in his stead : he, in long-winded Battles of Wattignies, “murderous artillery-fire mingling itself with sound of Revolutionary battle-hymns,” forces Austria behind the Sambre again ; has hopes of purging the soil of Liberty. With hard wrestling, with artillerying and *ça-ira-ing*, it shall be done. In the course of a new Summer, Valenciennes will see itself beleaguered ; Condé beleaguered ; whatsoever is yet in the hands of Austria beleaguered and bombarded : nay, by Convention Decree, we even summon them all “either to surrender in twenty-four hours, or else be put to the sword” ; — a high saying, which, though it



COMTE JEAN BAPTISTE JOURDAN  
(1762-1833)

remains unfulfilled, may shew what spirit one is of.

Representative Drouet, as an Old-dragoon, could fight by a kind of second nature. Or see Saint-Just, in the Lines of Weissenburg, though physically of a timid apprehensive nature, how he charges with his “Alsatian Peasants armed hastily” for the nonce ; the solemn face of him blazing into flame ; his black hair and tricolour hat-taffeta flowing in the breeze ! These our Lines of Weissenburg were indeed forced, and Prussia and the Emigrants rolled through : but we re-force the Lines of Weissenburg ; and Prussia and the Emigrants roll back again still faster, — hurled with bayonet charges and fiery *ça-ira-ing*.

*Ci-devant* Sergeant Pichegru, *ci-devant* Sergeant Hoche, risen now to be Generals, have done wonders here. Tall Pichegru was meant for the Church ; was Teacher of Mathematics once, in Brienne School, — his remarkablest Pupil there was the Boy Napoleon Bonaparte. He then, not



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in the sweetest humour, enlisted, exchanging ferula for musket; and had got the length of the halberd, beyond which nothing could be hoped; when the Bastille barriers falling made passage for him, and he is here. Hoche bore a hand at the literal overturn of the Bastille; he was a Sergeant of the *Gardes Françaises*, spending his pay in rushlights and cheap editions of books. How the Mountains are burst, and many an Enceladus is dis-emprisoned; and Captains founding on Four parchments of Nobility are blown with their parchments across the Rhine, into Lunar Limbo!

What high feats of arms, therefore, were done in these Fourteen Armies; and how, for love of Liberty and hope of Promotion, lowborn valour cut its desperate way to Generalship; and, from the central Carnot in *Salut Public* to the outmost drummer on the Frontiers, men strove for their Republic, let Readers fancy. The snows of Winter, the flowers of Summer continue to be stained with warlike blood. Gaelic impetuosity mounts ever higher with victory; spirit of Jacobinism weds itself to national vanity: the Soldiers of the Republic are becoming, as we prophesied, very Sons of Fire. Bare-footed, barebacked: but with bread and iron you can get to China! It is one Nation against the whole world; but the nation has that within her which the whole world will not conquer. Cimmeria, astonished, recoils faster or slower; all round the Republic there rises fiery, as it were, a magic ring of musket-volleying and *ça-ira-ing*. Majesty of Prussia, as Majesty of Spain, will by and by acknowledge his sins and the Republic; and make a Peace of Bâle.

The Republic, abhorrent of her Guillotine, loves her Army. And with cause. For, surely, if good fighting be a kind of honour, as it is in its season; and be with the vulgar of men, even the chief kind of honour; then here is good fighting, in good season, if there ever was. These Sons of the Republic, they rose, in mad wrath, to deliver her from Slavery and Cimmeria. And have they not done it? Through Maritime Alps, through gorges of Pyrenees, through Low Countries, Northward along the Rhine-valley, far is Cimmeria hurled back from the sacred Motherland. Fierce as fire, they have carried her Tricolour over the faces of all her enemies; — over scarped heights, over cannon-batteries, it has flown victorious, winged with rage. She has “Eleven hundred thousand fighters on foot,” this Republic: “at one particular moment she had,” or supposed she had, “Seventeen-hundred thousand.” Like a ring of lightning, they, volleying and *ça-ira-ing*, begirdle her from shore to shore. Cimmerian Coalition of Despots recoils, smitten with astonishment and strange pangs.

Such a fire is in these Gaelic Republican men; high-blazing; which no Coalition can withstand! Not scutcheons, with four degrees of nobility; but *ci-devant* Sergeants, who have had to clutch Generalship out of the cannon's throat, a Pichegru, a Jourdan, a Hoche, lead them on. They have bread, they have iron; “with bread and iron you can get to China.” — See Pichegru's soldiers, this hard winter, in their looped and windowed destitution, in their “straw-rope shoes and cloaks of bast-mat,” how they overrun Holland, like a demon-host, the ice having bridged all waters; and rush shouting from victory to victory! Ships in the Texel are taken by hussars on horseback: fled is York; fled is the Stadholder, glad to escape to England, and leave Holland to fraternise. Such a Gaelic fire, we say, blazes in this People, like the conflagration of grass and dry-jungle; which no mortal can withstand — for the moment.

And even so it will blaze and run, scorching all things; and, from Cadiz to Archangel, mad Sansculottism, drilled now into Soldiership, led on by

some "armed Soldier of Democracy" (say, that monosyllabic Artillery-Officer), will set its foot cruelly on the necks of its enemies; and its shouting and their shrieking shall fill the world!—Rash Coalised Kings, such a fire have ye kindled; yourselves fireless, your fighters animated only by drill-sergeants, messroom moralities, and the drummer's cat! However, it is begun, and will not end: not for a matter of twenty years. So long, this Gaelic fire, through its successive changes of colour and character, will blaze over the face of Europe, and afflict and scorch all men:—till it provoke all men; till it kindle another kind of fire, the Teutonic kind, namely; and be swallowed up, so to speak, in a day! For there is a fire comparable to the burning of dry-jungle and grass; most sudden, high-blazing: and another fire which we liken to the burning of coal, or even of anthracite coal; difficult to kindle, but then which no known thing will put out. The ready Gaelic fire, we can remark further,—and remark not in Pichegrus only, but in innumerable Voltaires, Racines, Laplaces, no less; for a man, whether he fight, or sing, or think, will remain the same unity of a man,—is admirable for roasting eggs, in every conceivable sense. The Teutonic anthracite again, as we see in Luthers, Leibnitizes, Shakespeares, is preferable for smelting metals. How happy is our Europe that has both kinds! But be this as it may, the Republic is clearly triumphing.<sup>b</sup>

#### THE GREAT WORK OF CARNOT

Carlyle has given us the scene in lyric or epic vein. The cold reality is hardly less stirring.<sup>a</sup>

In February, 1793, France had an effective force of only 228,000 men (204,000 under arms); before the month of May, thanks to the activity displayed, she counted 471,000 soldiers (present 397,000); upon the 15th of July, 479,000 according to a note Saint-Just kept for his own instruction, of which we possess the autograph. The official table gives figures a little higher—483,000 (enrolled 599,000).

In December, the effective force of the army rose to 628,000 men (present under the flag, 554,000). This number reached 1,026,000 (732,000 upon the battle-fields in September, 1794). There is no reason to contest these statements, published at an epoch when exaggeration would profit no one. Nevertheless some say that the republican phalanxes never reached a higher number than 600,000 men; one writer reduces them to 500,000, another to 400,000, adding that they were neither armed, nor fed, nor clothed. Do they hope, by such assertions, to lower the merit of the revolutionary dictators? On the contrary, they raise it. The fewer the resources they had in hand, the more admirable appears the result they obtained; the vanquished powers owe no thanks to the authors of these new calculations. Nothing can do away with this historical truth, that the convention found the enemy within thirty leagues of Paris, and they were able, after prodigious efforts, to conclude peace within thirty leagues of Vienna!

"These immense forces and the means employed to put them in motion," writes Fantin-des-Odoarts,<sup>c</sup> a historian, decidedly a monarchist, "is one of the boldest and most astonishing conceptions that the history of nations has transmitted to us."

The phalanxes, coming in haste from all parts of France, and marching to the common defence, under the eyes of the representatives of the nation, recall the great movement which took place amongst the Gauls when menaced by Cæsar. The convention ordered a general levy, each canton furnished

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its contingent; they were placed under the command of four generals, and assisted by a council of deputies from each state. It was not enough to have the men, they must be fed and equipped. They did it very modestly, they did it even very badly, in the beginning; but their patriotism and their devotion only shines out the greater. France was not only to be a camp, she was to be an immense workshop. At Paris there arose, by order of the committee, 248 forges; 140 upon the esplanade des Invalides, 54 in the garden of the Luxembourg, 64 upon the place de l'Indivisibilité; together they ought to produce more than a thousand musket barrels a day. Carnot, giving an account to the convention of this great display of activities, said:

"France, formerly dependent on her own enemies for the primary necessities relative to her defence, now not only made in her midst sufficient guns to arm all republicans; but she would soon be in a position to sell them to strangers. She would become the great magazine, where the people who wished to make good their rights, would be able to find the means of exterminating their tyrants; and Paris, formerly the abode of effeminacy and frivolity, would be able to glorify herself with the immortal title of the arsenal of the free citizens." It is in the same account one should read by what incredible zeal they arrived at this result in two months. In distributing the forges in great masses upon the public squares and in the promenades, the committee of public safety had for its object to inspire the people with confidence in their own resources, and to render them watchful.

Carnot did not content himself with presiding over their enthusiastic activity. He considered that for these new soldiers it was necessary to employ a new method of warfare. "Every great nation has made experiments," Saint-Just said in one of his accounts: "the Greeks conquered by the phalanx, the Romans by the legion." The idea of concentrating superior forces at one point, to insure a complete triumph there, and render useless through that the partial advantages obtained elsewhere by his adversary, certainly is not new in the history of

wars: all great captains have practised it upon occasions. To the French Revolution belongs the glory of having carried this idea into an immense circle. It was not an arena of several leagues that the opera-glass could sweep over: France was a vast battle-field, over which the eye of thought alone could travel. Invaded throughout, her resistance must not be weak in any one part. But whilst the armies of the powers obeyed separate wills and diverse views of strategy, hers, united as so many regiments under one command, recognised only one generalissimo — the committee of public safety, having for aides-de-camp the delegates of the assembly. From its bureaux, the committee combined their evolutions, and concentrated the superiority at the point where it deemed it most necessary.<sup>d</sup>



LAZARE NICOLAS MARGUERITE CARNOT

(1753-1823)



## THE COALITION AGAINST FRANCE

Never was the futility of coalitions more conspicuous than in the campaigns following that of 1792. We have seen how slowly Austria, Prussia, and the empire had formed their armed contingents in 1791, and with what hesitation—nearer akin to treason than prudence—the duke of Brunswick had invaded the French territory, and attacked the army of Dumouriez. Instead of surprising France whilst divided and disarmed,—of marching in columns of one or two hundred thousand men on Paris, by one of those numerous openings which nature has left in the frontiers, in the valleys of the Rhine, or by the plains of the north,—the duke of Brunswick, and after him the prince of Coburg, had wasted eighteen months in councils of war; in empty armaments, and timid manœuvres, always opposing to French battalions forces inferior, or at most, of equal strength, and only advancing to retreat.

The rivalry that existed in the cabinets contributed no less than the inefficiency of the generals, to afford France time for preparation. No real concert existed between them, and they contented themselves with preserving the decorum of war; with defending their own territories; threatening fortresses here and there, and combating in isolated bodies; suffering Dumouriez to hasten with his best troops from the deliverance of Champagne to the conquest of Belgium; beholding the fall of the throne, the trial of the king, the birth of the republic, the immolation of the queen, and the outbreaks at Paris that convulsed their very thrones, without any attempt to rally against the common danger. Whence arose this difference between the coalition and France? Because France was aroused by enthusiasm, and egotism fettered the limbs of the coalition. France arose, fought, and fell for that liberty, whose sanctity she felt, and of which she wished to be the apostle and martyr.

Poland, weakened by its last dissensions, was fast approaching the period of its dismemberment. Russia, Prussia, and Austria, more attentive to Poland than France, constantly watched each other, lest any one of the three powers should seizé on the prey whilst the others were engaged with France. Russia, under pretext of observing the Turks, and stifling the revolution in southern Poland, sent no troops to join the coalition, but contented herself with despatching a fleet to the Baltic, to prevent neutral vessels from bringing provisions or iron into the French ports.

Since the victory of Neerwinden, the cabinet of Vienna and the prince of Coburg had been too much occupied in strengthening the Austrian power in Belgium, to follow up their success against France. Dampierre had succeeded Dumouriez. Having received orders from the convention to attack the Austrian army, posted between Maubeuge and St. Amand, Dampierre obeyed, though hopeless of success, and marched on an enemy protected by woods, barricades, and trenches. Five times did the attacking columns recoil before the troops of Clerfayt, the most energetic of Coburg's generals. At the sixth attack, Dampierre, at the head of a picked detachment, charged a redoubt. "Where are you going, father?" exclaimed his son, who acted as his aide-de-camp; "you are exposing yourself to certain death." "I know it, my child," replied his father; "but I prefer to fall on the field of honour than beneath the axe of the guillotine." Hardly had he uttered these words, when a cannon-ball carried away his thigh, and left him dead on the ground.

The prince of Coburg, stimulated in vain by Clerfayt and the duke of York, who commanded the Anglo-Hanoverian army, did not pursue

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the French army, but suffered it again to take up the strong position of the camp of Cæsar. In twelve days the troops of the coalition might have encamped on the heights of Montmartre. But the cabinet of Berlin, occupied in humbling the Austrian influence in Germany, in sapping the empire, and appropriating Poland to itself, pursued the same vacillating policy which had timidly led its armies in Champagne. The duke of Brunswick, still at the head of the Prussian forces, contented himself with retaking Mainz; and his army, imposing, numerous, but almost stationary, resembled an army of observation rather than one in actual campaign. The king of Prussia, his eyes fixed on Poland, was in his camp. Lord Beauchamp came from London, to blame the indecision of this prince, and to obtain his signature to a treaty with England, by which the two powers secured their frontiers from France.

Suddenly the king of Prussia left his camp for Poland, and England alone persisted in maintaining the conquest with France. She had two motives for this—the rival of France on the seas, in the colonies, and the East Indies, disputing with the French vessels the navigation and the commerce of the sea, the destruction of the French fleet, and occupation of ports in the Mediterranean, formed a natural object of ambition, and promised too rich a spoil to be overlooked. On the other hand, although liberal theories had established themselves between the reflecting portion of the two nations, yet, as English liberty was entirely aristocratic, and French liberty declared itself daily more and more democratic, the British aristocracy was indignant and alarmed at the example of a victorious democracy who sought to root out aristocracy as it had done royalty.

Pitt, who was the personification of the genius of aristocracy of his country, was all powerful because he had been the first to perceive these perils. In vain did the more clamorous but less solid opposition, composed of Fox and his party, persist in blaming war and contesting the subsidies. Popular opinion abandoned these partisans of the French Revolution, since this revolution destroyed kings and queens, and proscribed its noblest citizens. Robespierre ruined the popularity of Fox, and the war against France was no longer a war of ambition or policy, but became social. Pitt obtained all he asked, because he was believed to be desirous of saving everything.

Pitt had for allies Spain, severed from the family bond by the dethronement of the Bourbons in France; Russia and Holland, who insured him Sweden and Denmark; Prussia, engaged by the treaty of the 14th of July; Austria, the empire; the greater number of the independent German princes; Naples, Venice, and lastly Turkey, who had refused, at his solicitation, to receive the French ambassador, Semonville. The Swiss cantons themselves, particularly Bern, excited by his agents, and indignant at the murder of their unfortunate children on the 10th of August, seized the French envoys, Maret and Semonville, and surrendered them to the Austrians. Thus, in spite of the internal dissensions of the coalition, England still maintained it rather in battle array than as a camp on the banks of the Rhine, and remunerated the efforts against France.

The duke of York, the king's son, a brave and skilful soldier, commanded, at the extremity of the prince of Coburg's line, the Anglo-Hungarian army, reinforced by some Austrian and Hessian troops. The only army capable of defending the convention was encamped before Arras; and the passage of the Somme could alone oppose the two hundred thousand men with which the prince of Coburg could march on Paris. Envoys from Vienna and Berlin deliberated with Pitt at London on the plan of the campaign; but instead of concentrating their forces, and marching on the Somme, they resolved on a

plan more in conformity with the dissension and uncertainty that prevailed in the cabinets. The siege of Dunkirk was resolved upon, and Admiral Maxbridge had orders to prepare to bombard the place with his squadron, whilst the duke of York attacked by land. The Anglo-Hanoverian army advanced to Furnes, and divided itself into two bodies, one of which, under the orders of the duke of York, attacked Dunkirk, whilst the other, under Marshal Freytag, occupied the little town of Hondschoote, and covered the besieging army. These two bodies of troops were at least 36,000 strong, and were joined to the forces of the prince of Coburg by the *corps d'armée* of the prince of Orange, consisting of 16,000 men.

#### DUNKIRK, HONDSCHOOTE, AND WATTIGNIES (1793 A.D.)

General Houchard, commander-in-chief of the French army of the north, received orders from Carnot to raise the siege of Dunkirk at any sacrifice. This city, although incapable of holding out any length of time, performed prodigies of valour to avoid the humiliation of surrendering to the English. Jourdan, *chef-de-bataillon* a few days before, and now created general by Carnot, commanded a corps of 10,000 men, encamped on the heights of Cassel, five leagues from Dunkirk. Informed of the intended attack on the town, he hastened thither, superintended the preparations for defence, and then returned to Cassel, leaving General Souham to command Dunkirk. An officer, whose name was destined at a future day to become illustrious, Lazare Hoche, who had already attracted the notice of Carnot by his ardour and intelligence, aided General Souham in the defence of the town. Carnot detached 15,000 of the best troops of the army of the Rhine, and sent them to Houchard's force, to drill and support the raw recruits, of whom his troops were almost entirely composed. Houchard advanced at the head of 40,000 men against the English line. On his passage through Cassel, he united the corps of Jourdan with his own, and marched on Hondschoote, where the duke of York and Marshal Freytag had fortified themselves. The duke of York, Freytag, and Walmoden felt the most perfect security in the strength of their position and the number of their troops.

On the 6th of August the outposts of the two armies met at Rexpoëde, a large village between Cassel and Hondschoote. Jourdan, dispersing everything before him, had advanced as far as this village, and halted there for the night. Jourdan, after vainly attempting to carry the village, returned to join Houchard and the representatives at Rembek; Walmoden retreated with his division on Hondschoote. On the 8th, Houchard attacked.

On the French side Collaud commanded the right, Jourdan the left, Houchard the centre, and Vandamme the advanced guard. A redoubt, with eleven pieces of cannon, commanded the town and swept the roads of Bergues and Blenheim, whilst another redoubt was thrown upon the route de Warein, and every approach flooded. To carry these redoubts it was necessary to march for ten minutes up to the waist in water, and exposed to the fire of the artillery and sharpshooters, securely posted behind the walls and hedges. Houchard, who carefully avoided exposing his troops, lost time in a series of formal attacks, which, whilst they compromised nothing, ruined everything.

The representative of the people, Levasseur, a brave patriot, although unskilled in military affairs, unceasingly demanded explanations of all his orders from the general, threatening to deprive him of the command, if he did not obey him. On horseback, at the head of the troops, and conspicuous



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by his tricoloured scarf and floating plume, Levasseur made the soldiers blush and the generals tremble. He pointed with one hand to Hondschoote, with the other to the guillotine. Jourdan himself led an attack. More than four thousand men fell, dead or wounded, around the redoubts, and the redoubts themselves, stormed at length, ceased their fire only when the last artilleryman was bayoneted at his gun. The English fell back in good order.

Walmoden, attacked and forced on every side except Belgium, withdrew his shattered forces to Furnes, whilst the duke of York, who had been present at Hondschoote, galloped to Dunkirk to raise the siege. Houchard, in spite of the observations of Jourdan and the representatives, who entreated him to follow up his victory, by pursuing the Hanoverians on the road to Furnes, remained inactive for two days. This simple manœuvre would have placed the army of the duke of York between the ramparts of Dunkirk and the army of Houchard. Not an Englishman would have escaped, for Hoche was in Dunkirk, and in two hours these sandhills would have been the Caudine Forks of England. Houchard, however, did not or would not see this, and suffered the duke of York to march quietly along a slip of sand which connects Dunkirk with Furnes, and join Walmoden and the prince of Orange in Belgium.

The news of the battle of Hondschoote filled Paris with joy, but the convention reproached the victorious general with his victory as a treason; and the commissioners of the army of the north, Hentz, Peyssard, and Duquesnoy, sent Houchard to the revolutionary tribunal. The unfortunate Houchard was condemned to death, and met his fate with the intrepidity of a soldier and the calmness of innocence. His death taught the other generals that victory would not always save them from the scaffold; and that there was no safety but complete obedience to the orders of the representatives of the people.

The military operations on other frontiers, until January, 1794, were confined to the occupation of Savoy by Kellermann, and Nice by Biron, an unfortunate campaign in the Pyrenees against General Ricardos, but in which the aged French general, Dagobert, in his seventy-fifth year, covered himself with glory; the nomination of Jourdan, to replace Houchard, at the army of the north, and his manœuvres to cover Maubeuge, threatened by the coalition, to whom the capture of Maubeuge would open the approaches to Paris. Maubeuge, defended by a strong garrison and an entrenched camp of 25,000 men, was decimated by famine and disease. One hundred and twenty thousand men besieged it. General Ferrand commanded the camp, General Chancel the town. The patriotism of the soldiers and inhabitants could only have maintained the defence of this gate of France a few hours longer, when Jourdan and Carnot announced their approach by the sound of their cannon.

Eighty thousand men, under the prince of Coburg, entrenched in a position of which Wattignies was the centre, awaited the French, who attacked them in five columns, at ten o'clock in the morning, on the 15th of November. The French were repulsed at several points; and Carnot accused Jourdan of cowardice, who, stung to madness, rushed at the head of one of the divisions, to the attack of an almost inaccessible platform, commanded by the batteries of Clerfayt; his whole column was mowed down by their fire, and he was well-nigh the only survivor. Carnot, after acknowledging his injustice, left him at liberty to follow his own plan. Jourdan formed 25,000 men into a compact body, which enclosed in its centre the flying artillery, opening to admit of its playing, closing to cover the guns, and thus carrying a moving

citadel with it to the summit of the platform. This formidable column swept all before it, and the imperial cavalry in vain endeavoured to break the other columns. One alone, that of General Gratien, was thrown into disorder, but the representative, Duquesnoy, deprived Gratien of his command, rallied the soldiers, and returned to the combat. Wattignies was carried; and the cannon of Maubeuge replied with joyful salvos to the thunder of the guns of Carnot and Jourdan. The battle of Wattignies would have been more decisive, if the 25,000 men of the camp of Maubeuge, under Ferrand, had prevented the prince of Coburg and Clerfayt from repassing the Sambre. The soldiers in the camp, and Chancel, who commanded the town, desired it, but want of orders and excessive prudence prevented Ferrand from consenting. A victim was necessary to the convention, and Chancel mounted the scaffold.

At the army of the Rhine, the zealous representatives of the people had replaced Custine by Beauharnais, Beauharnais by Landremont, Landremont by Carlen, who but a month before was only a captain, and Carlen by Pichegru. This army, consisting of 45,000 men, defended the entrance of Alsace by the fortified lines of Weissenburg. Wurmser, the oldest but the most daring of all the generals of the empire, surprised these lines owing to the incapacity of Carlen. This general, threatened on the other side by the duke of Brunswick, retired to the heights of Zabern and Strasburg, and Wurmser, who was born in Alsace, entered in triumph Hagenau, his country. A secret treaty for the surrender of Strasburg was negotiated between Wurmser and certain principal families, and the only stipulation was the Austrian general should occupy it in the name of Louis XVII. This plot, which was discovered in time, brought to the scaffold seventeen of the principal inhabitants of Strasburg, some convicted and others accused of royalism. The fort Vauban was stormed by the Austrians, and Landau could not hold out much longer. Saint-Just and Lebas were sent to Alsace, to intimidate treason or cowardice by death. Pichegru and Hoche also arrived, the one to assume the command of the army of the Rhine, the other (though only five-and-twenty), that of the army of the Moselle. "We shall be commanded as Frenchmen should be," said the letters from the army, after the troops had been reviewed by the two generals: "Pichegru possesses the gravity of genius; Hoche is youthful as the Revolution, robust as the people, and his glance is proud and aspiring as that of the eagle." These two new leaders fully justified the enthusiasm of the army.

Hoche — young, handsome, and martial, a hero of antiquity by his look, figure, and courage, a modern hero by the study, the reading, the meditation that gave moral strength, of an humble family, yet born to a great destiny — had enlisted into the French guards, and did his comrades' duty for half their pay, which he employed in the purchase of treatises on warfare and history. Sent to Paris, as aide-de-camp to General Leveneur, after the flight of Dumouriez, he was summoned before the committee of public safety, to inform them of the precise state of the army, and astonished the members of it by the clearness of his answers, the greatness of his conceptions, and the martial eloquence of his language. This interview, in which the statesmen discerned the warrior, procured him the rank of adjutant-general; and the defence of Dunkirk won him the notice of Carnot, and the rank of general of brigade; and his skilful manœuvres before Furnes and Ypres, to repair the faults of Houchard, caused him to be at once appointed to command the army of the Moselle. Hoche had but one defect — the feeling of his own superiority degenerated occasionally into contempt for his colleagues. In

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a revolution, where everything was accessible to ambition and genius, it is impossible to say what Hoche might have attained had not death checked his career.

### THE DESTRUCTION OF LYONS

In La Vendée the different generals sent by the committee of public safety wasted their troops in a civil war, which sprang up beneath their feet; they gained solitary battles, and lost the campaign. Two other insurrections also broke out at Lyons and Marseilles, in the very heart of the republic, and attracted the attention, the force, and the desperate energy of the convention.

Like Bordeaux, Marseilles, and Toulon, Lyons had enthusiastically adopted the doctrines of the Girondists, and the majority shuddered at the names of Robespierre, Danton, and the Mountain. The rich beheld in this party, in the convention, the spoliators of their fortune, the people the destroyers of their religion. Commerce decreased, luxury was proscribed; and nothing was fabricated but arms. From the day on which the republic assailed its banks, its markets, its factories, and its priests, Lyons no longer recognised the republic. The city began to mingle its complaints with those of the royalists, who flocked from all the adjacent provinces to take shelter within its walls. This change of popular feeling irritated still more the threatening but overawed Jacobins of Lyons.

There was at this time in the city a man of the most dangerous class during popular convulsions — a fanatic of the impossible. His name was Chalier, and, like Marat, he had been attracted from a distant land by the blaze of the Revolution. He was born in Piedmont, or Savoy. Designed for the church, Chalier had been brought up by the monks at Lyons; and it seemed as though the fate of Lyons, already so like that of Florence, was to become still more analogous by possessing an agitator between Savonarola and Marat. He was driven out of Italy for propagating revolutionary doctrines, and thus attracted the notice of Robespierre, Marat, Camille Desmoulins, and Fauchet, and he came to Lyons to found under their auspices a club, whose ardour he kindled and incited by his wild and mystic discourses.

The morning after the massacres of September, a small band of assassins had murdered eleven officers of the royal Pologne regiment, who had been imprisoned the previous evening on suspicion of royalism. The entrances to all the prisons of Lyons were heaped with dead bodies, and these corpses were suspended on the next day to the trees in the public walk of Bellecour, and linked together by chains of human limbs, to strike terror into the aristocrats. To add to this excitement that of terror, Chalier sent for a guillotine from Paris, and permanently erected it. He proposed the establishment of a revolutionary tribunal; then, seizing a crucifix, he dashed it to the earth, and trampled on it.<sup>e</sup> The Girondists rose to resist his blood-thirsty followers and, after several street battles, overcame the Jacobins, and sent Chalier to be the first victim of his own guillotine. This happening just as the Girondists were brought to death in Paris, left Lyons in desperate plight. An open revolt was the only hope, and the city appointed the count de Précý its commander.<sup>a</sup>

The convention, on its side, accepted the struggle with the unbending determination of a power which does not yield before the amputation of a member to save the body. Its country was in its eyes not a city, but a principle. It ordered Kellermann, general-in-chief of the army of the Alps, to



leave his frontiers and concentrate his forces round Lyons. Kellermann, who disputed with Dumouriez the glory of Valmy, bore at this moment in the south the whole weight of the Austrians, the Allobroges, and the Piedmontese, whose forces crossed the other side of the Alps. With a small body of troops Kellermann bore down all resistance. Kellermann, pressed by the representatives of the people, Gautier, Nioche, and Dubois-Crancé, completed the blockade of the city. The committee of public safety despatched Couthon and Maignet to overwhelm Lyons beneath the battalions of patriotic volunteers, whom the Terror caused to spring from the earth at the voice of the representatives.

The besieging army sat down before Lyons in the commencement of August, and was divided into two camps. The whole of the inhabitants were divided into two bodies, one of whom defended the ramparts; whilst the other checked the progress of the flames, carried ammunition and food to the troops, bore the wounded to the hospital, and buried the slain. Kellermann asked to be allowed to return to the Alps. Doppet succeeded him, and at length Lyons fell in October. Couthon's first care was to command that the persons and property of the inhabitants should be scrupulously regarded. Not the slightest tumult or violence was permitted; and peasants from Auvergne, who hurried to the scene of hoped-for plunder, bringing carts, mules, and sacks to carry off the spoils found in the richest city of France, were dismissed empty-handed, and sent back murmuring and discontented to their mountains. Lyons was selected as an example of the severity of the republic. No longer satisfied with punishing individuals, Terror desired to make the punishment of an entire city at once an example and a warning to all others. The Jacobins, friends of Chalier, long compromised, both by the royalists and Girondists of Lyons, came forth from their hiding-places calling loudly for vengeance on the representatives, and demanding of the convention that their enemies should at last be given up to them. For some time the representatives sought to restrain this fury, but finally they were compelled to yield to it, contenting themselves by reducing it to order by the institution of revolutionary tribunals, and decrees of extermination.

In this matter, as well, indeed, as in all the acts of the reign of terror, the odium of all the blood that was shed has been thrown upon one individual. The confusion of the moment, the despair of the dying, and the resentment of the survivors made it difficult to judge who was guilty of the deed, and not unfrequently handed down for the execration of posterity the names of the most innocent. History has its chances, as well as the battle-field, and absolves or sacrifices many, whose character it is the work of after ages to place aright before the world.

Thus then were all the crimes committed by the republic of Lyons laid to the charge of Couthon, merely because he chanced to be the friend and confidant of Robespierre in the suppression of federalism, and in the victory of the united republicans over civil anarchy; but a careful examination of dates, facts, and words, impartially considered, will effectually do away with so unfair a charge. Couthon entered Lyons rather as a peacemaker than an executioner, and opposed with all the earnestness his position permitted the excess to which the Jacobins carried their vengeance. He strove against Dubois-Crancé, Collot d'Herbois, and Dorfeuille, to moderate the wild fury of these fierce spirits, and was by them denounced to the Mountain and the Jacobins as one who prevaricated and showed an undue indulgence to their enemies. Finally he withdrew ere the first sentence of death was passed, in

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order to escape being either a witness or accomplice of the blood shed by the representatives of the implacable party of the convention.

In the meanwhile the Mountain and the Jacobins of Paris, incensed, by means of the accusations of Dubois-Crancé, at what they considered the dilatoriness of Couthon, urged the committee of public safety to strike a blow against the second city of the republic, which should serve as a warning to future revolutionists. Barrère, at all times ready to side with the most influential party, on the 12th of November ascended the rostrum, and read to the convention, in the name of the committee of public safety, a decree, or rather *Plébeide*, against Lyons. "Let Lyons be buried beneath her own ruins," exclaimed Barrère, "and let the plough pass over the site of her edifices, save those devoted to the reception of the poor and needy — workshops, hospitals, or buildings set apart for public instruction. The very name of the city shall perish amid its ruins, and it shall henceforward be known only by the appellation of the 'free city.' This simple inscription shall tell the whole history: 'Lyons took up arms against liberty — Lyons has ceased to be a city!'" The severity of this decree cast terror throughout Lyons. Couthon himself, while affecting to approve of it, believed it impracticable, and again allowed a lapse of twelve days ere he attempted to carry it into execution. This delay enabled the citizens to fly in great numbers. He was superseded by Collot d'Herbois and Fouché, the new proconsuls appointed by the Mountain. Collot d'Herbois was filled with a ferocious vanity which saw no glory save in excess, and whose fury was tempered by no moderation. Fouché was believed to be a fanatic; he was only a skilful dissimulator.

The sacred symbols of religion were destroyed, and the churches profaned by impious and indecent songs, dances, and ceremonies. "We have yesterday founded the religion of patriotism," wrote Collot. The heads of ten members of the municipality fell next day, and a mine, exploding, destroyed some of the finest buildings in the city. The cells were choked with prisoners. Whilst proprietors and merchants were perishing, the houses were destroyed beneath the hammer. Shopkeepers, lodgers, families, expelled from the proscribed houses, had scarcely time to leave their houses, to carry off the old, the infirm, and children, to other residences. Every day the pickaxe was seen attacking staircases, or tilers unroofing houses. Whilst the alarmed inhabitants were throwing their furniture out of the windows, and mothers carried the cradles of their children over the ruined rafters, twenty thousand pioneers of Auvergne and the lower Alps were employed in razing the abodes to the ground. The cellars and foundations were blown up with gunpowder. The pay of the demolishers amounted to 400,000 francs for each *décade*; and the demolitions cost 15,000,000 francs to destroy a capital of more than 300,000,000 worth of edifices! Hundreds of workmen perished buried beneath the walls that fell in, having been recklessly undermined.

Eight or ten condemned died every day, on leaving the tribunal, on the scaffold erected permanently in front of the steps leading to the town-hall. Water and sand, spread every evening after the executions around this sewer of human blood, did not suffice to cleanse the earth. A red and fetid mud, constantly trampled by a people thirsting to see their fellow-creatures die, covered the square and reeked in the air. Around these actual shambles of human flesh there was a scent of death. The blood, trickling through the planks, flowed into a ditch ten feet deep, which carried it to the Rhone, together with the filth of the neighbourhood. More than six

thousand prisoners were at a time locked up in the dépôts of the guillotine.

All the notable and illustrious citizens whom Couthon had allowed to escape were brought back. On the other side of the bridge, in the lower plain of the Brotteaux, had been dug a double ditch in the marshy soil, between two rows of willows. Sixty-four condemned persons, handcuffed two and two, were placed in a line in this alley, beside their open sepulchre. Three pieces of cannon loaded with ball, were placed at the extremity of the avenue. Right and left, detachments of dragoons, sword in hand, seemed waiting the signal to charge. The victims sang in chorus the hymn which had led them into battle. They seemed to seek in the words of this, their last song, the forgetfulness of the blow which was about to strike them :

"To die for one's country,  
Is the happiest and most enviable fate!"

The artillerymen listened, with lighted match in hand, to these dying men singing their own death-song. Dorfeuille allowed the voices to finish slowly the grave modulations of the last verse, then raising his hand as a signal, the three cannon exploded at once. The smoke concealed the guns, and for a moment hovered over the ground : drums beat to stifle all cries. The mob pressed forward to contemplate the effect of the carnage. The artillerymen had been deceived ; the undulations of the line of victims had allowed the balls to deviate, and twenty prisoners had fallen beneath the fire, dragging down with them their living companions, who were thus associated in their dying throes, and inundated with their blood. Shrieks, moans, fearful gestures, came from this confused heap of mutilated members, carcasses, and survivors. The artillerymen then loaded with grape, and fired ; but even then the massacre was incomplete. A heart-rending cry, heard across the Rhone, even into the city, rose from this field of agony. Some limbs still palpitated, some hands were still extended towards the spectators, imploring the final blow. The soldiers shuddered. "Forward, dragoons," cried Dorfeuille, "charge !" The troopers, at this command, put spurs to their horses, who dashed forward at a gallop, and with the point of the sabre and pistol-shots they killed the last victim. This scene of horror and agony was protracted for more than two hours !

A sullen murmur of indignation hailed the recital of this horrid scene in the city. The people felt dishonoured ; and compared itself to the most cruel tyrants of Rome, or the executioners of St. Bartholomew. The representatives stifled this murmur by a proclamation which commanded that all should approve, and declared pity to be conspiracy. Citizens, even the most elegant females, then affected revolutionary rigour, and concealed their horror beneath the mask of adulation. Fouché, Collot d'Herbois, and Dorfeuille sought to stifle remorse.

Two hundred and ten Lyonnese prisoners were next led out. A long rope was extended from one willow to another. They fastened each prisoner to this rope by the end of the cord which confined his hands behind his back. Three soldiers were placed four paces off in face of each victim, and the cavalry placed in small bodies behind. At the word Fire ! the 630 soldiers at once directed three bullets against every breast. A cloud of smoke covered the scene for a moment, and then lifting, there were seen, besides the corpses strewn on the ground or hanging to the cord, more than one hundred young men still erect. The soldiers, with great reluctance, finished with the bayonet and the butt-end of their muskets the victims



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expiring in the causeway, and falling night extinguished their dying groans. Next day, when the grave-diggers came to bury the dead, several bodies still palpitated, and the pioneers killed them outright with blows of the pickaxe before they covered them over with the blood-stained mould.

Montbrison, St. Étienne, St. Chamond, all Lyonnese colonies, were the theatres of the same atrocities or supplied victims. The same impatience for death seemed to possess executioners and victims: the one had the frenzy of murder, the other the enthusiasm of death. The horror of living had removed the horror of death. Young girls and children begged to fall beside their fathers and kinsfolk thus shot down; and daily the judges had to refuse the supplications of despair, imploring the penalty of death, less fearful than the punishment of surviving. Every day they granted or refused these requests.

The executions *en masse* only ceased in consequence of the indignant refusal of the soldiers to be converted into executioners. The corpses that covered the banks of the Rhone threatened to cause a pestilence, and the adjoining towns and villages complained of the infected state of the air and the water. Collot d'Herbois, recalled to Paris upon the first expressions of indignation called forth by these massacres, justified himself to the Jacobins. "We are called Anthropophagi," said he: "they are aristocrats who give us this appellation."

#### THE SIEGE OF TOULON

But whilst the smoking ruins of Lyons were quenched in rivers of blood, the torch of civil war was kindled at Toulon. Toulon, the most important port of the republic, had passed rapidly from the excess of Jacobinism, to disgust and abhorrence of the Revolution. The presence of naval officers, almost all of whom were royalists, the influence of the priests, the outrages and insults offered by the Jacobins to religion, the indignation caused by the excesses the army of Carteaux had committed at Marseilles, and everything urged Toulon on to an insurrection.

The English fleet under Admiral Hood, which was cruising in the Mediterranean, learned all these particulars by secret correspondence with the royalists of Toulon. This fleet consisted of six vessels of the line and twenty-five frigates. Admiral Hood presented himself to the Toulonese as an ally and liberator, rather than as an enemy. He promised to guard the city, the harbour, and the fleet, not as a conquest, but as a deposit which he would hand over to Louis XVI's successor, as soon as France should have repressed her interior tyrants. The opinion of the Toulonese passed, with the rapidity of the wind, from Jacobinism to federalism, from federalism to royalism, from royalism to defection. Ten thousand fugitives of Marseilles driven into Toulon by the terrors of the vengeance of the republic, the shelter of the walls, the batteries of the vessels, the combined English and Spanish fleets, ready to protect the insurrection — gave to the Toulonese the idea of this crime against their country.

Of the two admirals who commanded the French fleet in the port of Toulon, one, Admiral Trogoff, conspired with the royalists; the other, Admiral Saint-Julien, endeavoured to maintain the republicanism of his crews. Thus divided in feeling, the fleet was neutralised by opposite tendencies. It could only follow, by being itself torn by contrary factions, the movement given to it by the conquering party. Placed between an insurgent city and a blockaded sea, it must be inevitably crushed either by the cannon of the fortress, the guns of the English, or by both fires at once. The population of

Toulon, when so many opposing elements combined at once, rose at the arrival of the advance-guard of Carteaux, with an unanimity which shut out every idea of remorse. They closed the Jacobin clubs, destroyed their president, imprisoned the representatives of the people, Bayle and Beauvais, sent within their walls, and called in the English, Spanish, and Neapolitans.

At the sight of the enemy's squadrons Beauvais committed suicide in his prison. The French fleet, with the exception of a few vessels which Admiral Saint-Julien still kept for some days to their duty, hoisted the white flag. The Toulonese, English, and Neapolitans united, to the number of 15,000 men, armed the forts and approached to the city, against the troops

of the republic. Carteaux, advancing from Marseilles at the head of 4,000 men, drove back the enemy's advance-guard from the gorges of Ollioules. General Lapoype, detached from the army of Nice with 7,000 men, invested Toulon on the opposite side. As soon as Lyons allowed the troops at the disposal of the committee of public safety to be at liberty, Carnot hastened to direct them against Toulon, sending thither General Doppet the conqueror, and Fouché, the exterminator of Lyons.

#### NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

A captain of artillery, sent by Carnot to the army of the Alps, was stopped on his way, to replace the commandant of artillery, Donmartin, who had been wounded, at the army of Toulon. This young man was Napoleon Bonaparte.<sup>1</sup> His fortune awaited him there. His fellow-countryman Salicetti presented him to Carteaux. In a few words and



NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

(1769-1821)

in a few days he displayed his genius, and was the soul of all operations. Predestined to make force surmount opinion, and the army superior to the people, he was first seen in the smoke of a battery, striking with the same blow anarchy in Toulon and his enemies in the roadstead.

[<sup>1</sup> The most remarkable event in the military history of 1793 is the siege of Toulon, not so much from its importance, as from its first bringing to light the talents of Napoleon Bonaparte. He was born in Corsica, of a good family, in 1769, and educated at the artillery school of Brienne. As all the students of this establishment, and, indeed, all intended to hold rank in the army under the ancient régime, were noble, the officers emigrated at the Revolution; Bonaparte and three comrades being the only ones that remained of his regiment. The place of an officer of artillery could not be supplied from the lower and uninformed ranks of life, as those of the line were in France; and thus he found himself, at the age of twenty-four, with the rank of major, and the chief of his arm before Toulon. Two successive generals appointed to command the siege were totally ignorant of their profession. The members of the convention present with the army were self-sufficient, and still less capable of conducting a siege. The task fell upon young Bonaparte, who had not only to devise good counsel,\* but to make it prevail. The latter he effected by reports and written plans, that proved his talents. †]

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His future was in this position: a military genius bursting forth in the fire of a civil war, to seize on the soldier, illustrate the sword, stifle the utterance of opinion, quench the Revolution, and compel liberty to retrograde for a century! Glory, vast but deplorable, which posterity will not judge like his contemporaries!

Dugommier had replaced Carteaux. He called a council of war, at which Bonaparte was present. This young captain, instantly promoted to the rank of a *chef-de-bataillon*, reorganised the artillery, moved the batteries nearer to the city, discovered the heart of the position, directed all his blows thither, and, neglecting all else, went right forward. The English general O'Hara, leaving Fort Malbosquet with 6,000 men, fell into a snare laid for him by Bonaparte, was wounded and taken prisoner. Fort Malbosquet, which commands the roadstead, was attacked by two columns in spite of the orders of the representatives. Bonaparte and Dugommier were the first who entered the breach—their victory was their justification. "General," said Bonaparte to Dugommier, broken down by fatigue and age, "go and sleep, we have just taken Toulon." Admiral Hood saw at daybreak the French batteries bristling over the embrasures and ready to sweep the roadstead. The winds of autumn were blowing a gale, the sea ran high, the sky was lowering—all betokened that the coming storms of winter would prevent the English from getting away from the roadstead.

At the close of day the enemy's boats towed the fire-ship *Vulcan* into the centre of the French fleet. Immense quantities of combustibles were piled up in the magazines, dockyards, and arsenals. Some English, with a lighted match in their hands, awaited the signal for firing. The clock of the port struck ten o'clock—a rocket was let off from the centre of the city, which rose and then fell in sparks. This was the signal, and the match was applied to the train of powder. The arsenal, the storehouses, ship timber, pitch and tar, flax, the ships' stores, of the fleet and this naval dépôt, were all destroyed in a few hours. This blaze, which engulfed half the marine of France, for a whole night lighted up the waves of the Mediterranean, the sides of the mountains, the camps of the representatives, and the decks of the English vessels. The inhabitants of Toulon, abandoned for some hours to the vengeance of the republicans, wandered about the quays. The silence which the horror of fire cast over the two camps was only interrupted by the explosion of the powder magazines, of sixteen vessels, and twenty frigates, whose decks and guns were projected into the air before they were swallowed up by the waves.

The report of the departure of the combined squadrons, and the surrender of the city, had already spread among the populace. Fifteen thousand Toulonese and Marseillaise refugees, men, women, children, old people, wounded, infirm, had left their abodes, and hastened to the beach, where they struggled for places in the boats which would take them on board the English, Spanish, and Neapolitan vessels. The raging sea and the fire swept between the waves rendered the conveyance of fugitives more dangerous and slow. Every instant the cries from a boat that sank, and the dead bodies flung ashore, disheartened the sailors. The burning fragments of the arsenal and the fleet rained down upon this multitude, and struck numbers to the earth. A battery of the republican army was firing shot and shell at the port and quay. Wives lost their husbands, daughters their mothers, mothers their children, in the confusion. Touching and terrible dramas were buried beneath the horrors of that night. It recalled the ancient generations of Asia Minor or Greece, abandoning *en masse* the land of their birth, and



bearing away upon the seas their riches and their gods, by the flames of a city in conflagration. About seven thousand inhabitants of Toulon, exclusive of the officers and seamen, found shelter on board the English and Spanish vessels. The crime of having delivered over the stores and arms of France to the foe, and of having hoisted the flag of royalty, was not to be forgiven. They uttered from the crests of the waves a last adieu to the hills of Provence, lighted up by the flames which consumed their roofs and olive trees.

The English weighed anchor, carrying off the vessels they had not destroyed by fire, and put to sea. The refugees of Toulon were nearly all conveyed to Leghorn, and established themselves at Tuscany. Their families still dwell there, and we hear French names of that period amongst the foreign appellations on the hills of Leghorn, Florence, and Pisa.

Next day, December 20th, 1793, the representatives entered Toulon at the head of the republican army. Dugommier, pointing to the city in ashes, and the houses nearly empty of inhabitants, entreated the conventionalists to content themselves with this vengeance, and to suppose generously that all the guilty had gone into exile, and thus spare the rest. The representatives despised the magnanimity of the aged general—their office was not only to vanquish, but to terrify. The guillotine entered Toulon with the artillery of the army, and blood flowed as it had at Lyons. Fouché urged on the punishments. The convention, by a decree, struck out the name of the city of traitors. "Let the shell and mine," said Barrère, "crush every roof and merchant in Toulon; let there remain only in their place a military post, peopled by the defenders of the republic."<sup>e</sup>

This threat, as in the case of Lyons, was not actually carried out, and both cities still prosper. Before taking up the campaigns of 1794, we may review as a whole the insurrection which had been all this year devastating the western portion of France. The department of La Vendée, a territory of some 2,500 miles, was strongly royalist in sentiment.<sup>a</sup>

#### THE CIVIL WAR IN LA VENDÉE

That country could neither understand nor accept the Revolution. There the feudal régime had always been gentle. The understanding existing between the gentry and peasants did not resemble the general condition in France; there was between them a union unknown elsewhere. The landlord behaved paternally to his peasants, going to the weddings of their children and drinking with their guests. On Sundays there was dancing in the castle yard, in which the ladies joined. When the wild boar or wolf was to be hunted, the village priest notified the fact to the peasants in his sermon; each one took up his gun and gladly betook himself to the appointed place; the huntsmen posted the marksmen, who conformed strictly to any such orders as they received. Subsequently they were led to battle in the same way and with equal compliance.

In 1789 the inhabitants of the Bocage had already noticed with fear and regret all the changes which could not help but disturb their happiness, rather than add to it. When the population of the Bocage saw that they were being robbed of their priests who understood their manners and dialect, and that they were to be replaced by strangers, they refused to go any longer to the parish services. The newly sworn priests were insulted and ignored. After the 10th of August, 1792, measures increased in severity; the unsworn priests were hunted and persecuted with more ferocity; some churches were

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even closed. The peasants assembled armed with guns, scythes, and pitchforks to attend mass in the country and to defend their ministers against being carried off, according to Madame de la Rochejaquelein.<sup>f</sup> The execution of the king brought their exasperation to a crisis.<sup>1</sup>

The movement began at St. Florent, a little town on the Loire. On the 10th of March, 1793, the young men of that canton had been called out to fulfil a decree demanding the raising of 300,000 men. They came, but resolved not to obey, mutinied, drove off the gendarmes, and pillaged the town-hall. This done, they retired peaceably to their homes, when a carrier and wool-hawker, Jacques Cathelineau, changed their resolution.

He put himself at the head of these patriots. The courage and warmth of his words carried away the young men; soon his band was more than a hundred strong. Then he decided upon attacking a republican position held by twenty-four men at Jallais with one cannon. The position was taken. Prisoners were made; the cannon was taken possession of and christened "Missionary" by the peasants; arms and horses were also captured.

"Encouraged by this success," says Madame de la Rochejaquelein,<sup>f</sup> "Cathelineau undertook on the same day an attack upon Chemillé where there were two hundred republicans and two pieces of artillery. The rebels were already more than four hundred strong; they discharged a volley, threw themselves on the enemy, and achieved a speedy and complete victory."

There was now an army, and the gentry hastened to place themselves at the head of it. Lescure, Bonchamps, d'Elbée, La Rochejaquelein, and Charette did not disdain to associate with the popular leaders. The nature of the country lent itself to resistance. La Vendée was divided into two parts: the *Bocage* or woodland and the *Marais* or marsh. The *Marais*, which extended most towards the sea, presented a species of desert intersected with canals.

By June, the month of the Girondists' downfall, the Vendéans had already made great strides. They had taken Fonten-le-Comte. They held Saumur,



FRANÇOIS ATHANASE CHARETTE  
(1763-1796)

[<sup>1</sup> On this generally accepted theory Stephens<sup>k</sup> has this comment: "The movement, which is known as the Vendean rebellion, and which has been attributed to the highest motives of religion and loyalty, was really by no means so romantic as it has generally been represented. The excitement in the departments formed out of the old provinces of Brittany, Anjou, and Poitou caused by the civil constitution of the clergy was not greater than it had been in other districts of France; but the clergy in these provinces were far more unanimous in refusing to take the oath, and therefore it was less possible for the constitutional bishops of these departments to find substitutes for the former clergy. Very much also has often been said of the affection

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an important post which gave them command of the passage of the Loire and yielded twenty-four pieces of artillery, thousands of muskets, and much powder and saltpetre. The prisoners amounted to 11,000; they were disarmed and almost all liberated. From that moment the convention took energetic steps and despatched 30,000 federals against the Vendéans. This was civil war. Cathelineau was unanimously elected general, and illustrious gentlemen gave way gladly to the humble peasant. The army became more regulated, and for two reasons directed its march towards the sea to form a juncture with the émigrés and the English; they first attacked Sables and then Nantes.<sup>g</sup>

But now, by violent measures, the convention triumphed over its enemies; the army of Calvados was put to flight at Vernon, and at Caen the insurgents made a solemn recantation; Bordeaux, Toulon, and Lyons fell in succession before the arms of the republic. La Vendée alone continued a desperate and terrible struggle in the cause of the altar and the throne. Driven back from the attack on Nantes, where they lost the bold Cathelineau, (June 29th), the Vendéans retired behind the Loire and successively defeated the republican generals Biron, Rossignol, and Canclaux. At last seventeen thousand men of the ancient garrison of Mainz, reputed the flower of the army, were taken to La Vendée; Kléber commanded them. Léchelle was named general-in-chief, and the royalists, after having defeated Kléber and the men from Mainz, in one battle, suffered four consecutive defeats at Châtillon (July 3rd) and at Cholet (October 17th); their principal leaders, Lescure, Bonchamps, and D'Elbée, received mortal wounds on these bloody days. Surrounded on every side in La Vendée, the insurgents asked aid of England, who insisted, before granting help, that they should seize a seaport.

Eighty thousand Vendéans left their devastated country, and marched to Granville; repulsed before this town for want of artillery, and defeated at Le Mans, they were destroyed in trying to cross the Loire at Savenay (December 23rd, 1793). Charette continued the war; the isle of Noirmoutiers was taken from him. The Achilles of La Vendée, Henry de la Roche-Jacquelin, was killed March 4th, 1794, by a soldier whose life he had spared; his death was the finishing stroke which made the republicans master of the country. A system of extermination immediately set in. La Vendée, vanquished, was surrounded by General Turreau; with sixteen entrenched camps and twelve marching columns, known under the name of "the infernal columns," they overran this unhappy district, carrying sword and flame in all directions.<sup>h</sup>

#### "THE IMMORTAL CAMPAIGN OF 1794"

Carnot saw plainly that it would be impossible for France to sustain for long the prodigious efforts she was making, and he knew, in the present situation, audacity was wisdom.

But Pichegru was not Hoche; he neither showed sufficient activity in preparations for action, nor sufficient promptitude in the execution. It was

felt by the peasants of these provinces for their lords, and the way in which they followed them during this rebellion against the convention; but careful examination of the history of the rebellion shows that it was not until the populace had gained some success by themselves, under their own leaders, that the gentry of Poitou came to the front to lead the peasants. It may safely be affirmed that religious and political reasons had very little to do with the Vendean rebellion. The attempt to enforce the conscription on March 10th was followed by a general rising among the peasants of the five departments of Brittany, and the three northern departments of Anjou and Poitou. In the beginning the movement resembled that of 1789, for castles were again stormed and archives burned. The same men who had led the risings of 1789 again led the risings of 1793, and the peasants were no more moved by religious motives in 1793 than in 1789."<sup>j</sup>



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the enemy who now took the initiative, and the enemy had conceived vast projects. They purposed taking positions upon the Sambre at Landrecies, and before Maubeuge, which they had failed to do the preceding autumn, and march from thence upon the Oise, by way of Guise and Laon to Paris. The army which marched upon Paris would be protected upon its right flank by the inundation of Flanders, where they had opened the sluices, and upon its left flank by the Prussian army, which they had called from the Rhine to the Maas and the Sambre. An English and Austrian corps was to land in La Vendée, and to march upon Paris with the Vendean insurgents. "The allies," said the émigré Rivarol, wittily, "are always behindhand in ideas, in time, and in their army." The plan of the allies, in reality, would have been a good one in 1793, but it was a year too late!

The Prussian general, who commanded some sixty thousand men near Mainz, refused to desert the Rhine in order to go to the Maas. The great Austrian army, with the English and Dutch, tried to co-operate; there were 195,000 men to oppose to 180,000 of the French armies under Pichegru.

The emperor Francis II commanded the great allied army. Like Pitt, he opposed terror to terror. Upon his arrival in Belgium, he decreed that "whosoever should be convicted of conspiring to propagate the French system should be put to death."

April 17th the allies drove back the centre of the French army, which was too loosely formed, and surrounded Landrecies. A French detachment, far too small, sent by Pichegru to relieve Landrecies, was defeated by a superior force, at the head of which was the duke of York. Landrecies was surrendered April 30th by the garrison, in spite of the inhabitants: the women even protesting with indignation.

The prince of Coburg, who commanded in the name of the emperor, did not profit by this success. The Flemish population would not permit the inundation of their territory to thwart the French, and the news which came from Flanders made Coburg see that the failure of the garrison of Landrecies would not be imitated by the French army. Pichegru commenced operations ordered by Carnot, between the Lys and the Schelde in front of Lille. He defeated the Austrian general Clerfayt, and took Menin upon the Lys.

Coburg, thus outflanked upon his right, did not advance. He attempted to stop the attacking movement of the French upon the Lys, and during the month of May, battle followed battle between the Lys and the Schelde. Clerfayt's detachment was beaten a second time, trying to repulse the French upon the borders of the Lys, near Courtrai (May 11th). Their allies united their principal forces and attempted to cut through the French lines, and to thrust the left wing towards the sea. The attack, badly organised by Coburg, completely failed. The emperor of Germany saw, from the heights of Templeuve the masses of the allied forces thrown into disorder at Tourcoing, at Roubaix — in fact, everywhere. The duke of York owed his preservation to the swiftness of his horse, and the French took sixty cannon, on May 18th.

Pichegru did not turn this to his advantage. He allowed the enemy to form again upon the Schelde near Tournay, and attacked them at the end of four days, and then without any well-conceived plans, and with very little energy; and in his turn, by his own fault was repulsed. He did not renew the attack, but prepared for the siege of Ypres, according to Carnot's instructions. This would have entailed considerable risk, in the presence of an enemy who was not disorganised, if Coburg had had more decision and taken the initiative.

During these sanguinary struggles, between the Lys and the Schelde, other sharp battles were constantly taking place upon the Sambre. The army from the Ardennes, where Saint-Just and Lebas had arrived, was forced to pass beyond this river to take Charleroi, and to penetrate into the interior of Belgium. Four times it forced the passage of the Sambre; four times it was beaten back to the other bank, by the left wing of the great allied army, under the command of the stadholder of Holland. At the commencement of June, 1794, the result of the campaign seemed very doubtful. The enemy at one time hoped to attain by treason an important success, and had secret communi-

cation with the counter-revolutionary party in Cambray. The surprise of this place compelled Pichegru to abandon his enterprise upon Flanders, and to fall into the rear.

Joseph Lebon, a representative, was sent to Pas-de-Calais, and to the north; he defeated the plots, and crushed the royalists by the most terrible executions. His feeble and excitable brain was strung to such a pitch that he saw traitors everywhere; he struck ceaselessly in a sort of madness, and at Cambray and at Arras committed foolish cruelties which have gained him an odious renown; nevertheless he rendered most valuable services. And this man who passes for a second Carrier started by manifesting very humane views, and moderate opinions like the Girondins. He is a dreadful and sad example of



JEAN BAPTISTE KLÉBER  
(1753-1800)

the influence extreme situations produce upon men who have not absolute control over themselves.

The military situation was changed by the development of Carnot's plan. Carnot renewed the bold tactics he had employed before Hondschoote and Wattignies, and emptied the east to reinforce the north. April 30th he had decided with the committee of public safety that the army of the Moselle, enlarged by a part of the army of the Rhine, should proceed to the Maas and the Sambre. He made the committee take General Jourdan, his companion of Wattignies, into its good favour again, and confided to his charge the army of the Moselle. Jourdan marched through Luxemburg, defeated a detachment of the Austrian army near Arlon, and joined the army of the Ardennes, near Charleroi, June 4th.

Saint-Just and Lebas gave him chief command upon the Sambre, and he found himself at the head of 80,000 men. He had with him the heroes of Mainz and of La Vendée, Kléber and Marceau. The French, between the Maas and the sea, outnumbered the enemy by about 30,000 men, although the latter had received a reinforcement of 10,000 English and émigrés. The superiority of number would have been more than lost by the French, had the Prussian army crossed the borders of the Rhine, and joined the allies upon the Sambre, as England and Holland wished, but Prussia, while receiving subsidies from the English and the Dutch, made war to suit herself and not them.

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When the Prussians finally moved, they arrived very late : it took them twice as long as the French army from the Moselle to appear upon the Belgian battle-fields ; not only because they had a longer distance to traverse, but because they marched with all the heavy paraphernalia of a regular army. The French went, so to speak, the whole length without transport, tents, or provisions, living upon supplies rapidly raised upon the route, and bearing with heroic gaiety privations and sufferings that the soldiers of the allies would never have endured. They had no shoes ; but they had, according to the testimony of an English contemporary writer, “the best bands of music which played the finest war marches that ever fired the heart of man.”

It was not only the fear of losing Mainz again that held the Prussians back. The king, Frederick William, was exceedingly uneasy concerning the Poles. That unfortunate people made at this time a desperate effort to regain its independence. A great patriot and a great soldier, Kosciuszko, placed himself at the head of a vast insurrection. He gained a victory over the Russians, and delivered Warsaw. The king of Prussia was afraid that, if he entered too actively into the war against France, the French Republic would interfere in the affairs of Poland ; the committee had been fervently entreated by the Polish patriots to come to their aid. He feared under these circumstances the French would be able to induce Turkey and Sweden to declare in favour of Poland.

The emperor of Austria was not less discouraged than the king of Prussia. He feared that Belgium would escape him again. The restoration of his government took place there, after the defeat of Dumouriez, amidst the applause of the population, whilst at Liège the prince-bishop installed himself in terror of the scaffold. But the good feeling of the Belgians did not continue for long. The Austrian administration found itself in a terrible wasps' nest, between “the old *Joséphiste* party”—that is to say, the central and lay party, discontented with making concessions to the clergy—and the clerical party, irritated because they were not given everything, and the revolutionary and French party, which rapidly regained ground after the French had departed and the Austrians returned.

The Austrian government called for men and money to prevent the return of the French ; the provincial states and the Belgian towns refused. At the approach of the French troops, it was not only in the country of Liège, constant friend to France, that peasants and citizens attacked the Austrian regiments and the émigrés ; hostilities also broke out at Ghent and in other towns lately hostile to the French.

When Francis II, called back to Vienna by events in Poland, left his army under the command of Coburg, it was decided to evacuate Belgium, and following the example given by Prussia to concentrate upon possessions less distant and less difficult to hold (June 9th) ; and Russia was promised some new Polish provinces to obtain aid against the insurrection.

#### THE CONQUEST OF FLANDERS : CHARLEROI AND FLEURUS

At heart, Francis II and Frederick William were resigned to come to terms with Robespierre, in spite of his violence of language against them when he became dictator. Robespierre and his friends upon one side, and Carnot upon the other, hoped to be able to detach Prussia from the coalition, and Carnot doubted that Austria would be able to hold Belgium. He saw in England, in Pitt, the true enemy, and occupied himself more with naval matters relating to the Netherlands than with the Rhine. Belgium appeared



to him to be worth the price of a victory, and he prepared to attack Zealand, that group of Dutch islands facing England. Whilst waiting, the invasion of Flanders developed itself. Pichegru took Ypres (June 17th), Bruges (June 29th), and Ostend the next day, with a large amount of military and naval supplies. The fickle Flemish population, but a short time before enraged with France, now received her soldiers with open arms.

Jourdan was also in action. His first movements were unfortunate. A fifth passage over the Sambre near Charleroi had the same result as the preceding four. The French were again thrown back upon the other bank (June 16th). Jourdan promised to make up for this check by a victory; he sent for the artillery from Maubeuge, again crossed the Sambre, and invested and bombarded Charleroi. Coburg lost several days in hesitating as to whether he should march to the relief of the Flemish towns, or to the relief of Charleroi. The French did not lose an hour. June 25th the batteries were reduced to silence, and a breach was made. The Austrian commander demanded a parley; Saint-Just refused. "It is necessary," said he, "to surrender at discretion, and at once."

Charleroi surrendered. The garrison was treated humanely and honourably. The same evening Coburg appeared in sight with 80,000 men. He endeavoured to recover by a great battle all he had lost. Jourdan awaited him before Charleroi with his army drawn out in a great half-circle, the two extremities extending to the Sambre, above and below the conquered town. The forces were nearly equal. The French, contrary to their plan at Jemmapes and Wattignies, took a defensive line of battle. Coburg did not understand how to do what Carnot had done against him at Wattignies; instead of concentrating his principal forces against one of the extremities of the too-extended line, he attacked all points at once. A partial success terminated in nothing; after a long day of determined attacks against the French positions, which occupied a vast space of hills, woods, and valleys, several posts being taken and retaken, and great losses sustained by the assailants, Coburg was discouraged and beat a retreat. This celebrated day, June 28th, 1794, is known in history as the battle of Fleurus, from a village which had already given its name to a victory gained by the French under Louis XIV. But much blood had been shed for nothing since the abandonment of Belgium had been decided upon beforehand by the emperor Francis.

The battle of Fleurus did not produce the overwhelming consequences it would have done if Hoche had been with the army; it decided, however, the result of the campaign. After a series of combats in which the different French divisions drove the enemy before them from post to post, the army of Pichegru and the army of Jourdan effected a junction in Brussels, July 10th. Before the end of the month, Belgium and the country of Liège were evacuated by the enemy; the French having succeeded in separating the Austrian army from the English and the Dutch, the Austrians withdrew to the right bank of the Maas, and the English and Dutch forces fell back upon the Dutch Brabant in order to protect Holland. A part of the French army fell back upon the four places still occupied in French territory by the enemies' garrisons—Landrecies, Le Quesnoy, Valenciennes, and Condé. The enemy had accumulated great means of defence in these fortresses, and were in a position to sustain long sieges. The committee of public safety tried to terrify these foreign garrisons. On July 4th the convention passed the following decree:

"All the troops of the coalition of tyrants, shut up in French territory invaded by the enemy on the northern frontier, who do not surrender at

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discretion within twenty-four hours after the warrant is made known, will not be permitted to capitulate, but will be put to the sword."

These terrible threats had their effect. The first place attacked, Landrecies, surrendered immediately, July 15th. Then others were attacked, whilst Jourdan faced the Austrians upon the Maas, and Pichegru commenced the invasion of Holland, that is to say, in the thoughts of the committee, by the attack of the English outposts.

## NAVAL DISASTERS

While the English army shared the reverses of the Austrians in Belgium, a great conflict took place between their fleet and the French fleet on the sea. The French privateers had done a great deal of harm to English commerce by disabling and capturing their ships. Pitt hoped to avenge himself by an immense capture. France, threatened by starvation, awaited with anxiety a convoy of two hundred vessels filled with corn and colonial supplies from the United States of America.<sup>1</sup> This meant more at the moment than the support of an army. An English fleet of twenty ships-of-the-line, commanded by Admiral Howe, got under way to intercept the convoy. The committee of public safety enjoined the admiral commanding the French fleet at Brest, Villaret-Joyeuse, to save the convoy at all price. Villaret sailed with twenty-four ships. The French had but few experienced officers, and had been obliged to enlist men who had never been to sea before; but the deputy Jean Bon Saint-André, who embarked with the admiral, inspired them with such courage that they greeted the sight of the enemy's fleet with enthusiastic acclamations, and loudly cried for battle.

Enthusiasm, unfortunately, could take the place of science even less in naval than in military warfare. Yet, thanks to the energy and intelligence of their sailors, the French fleet withstood the repeated attacks of the English (May 29th).

After the first engagement, Villaret and Jean Bon Saint-André deemed it necessary to manœuvre and draw the enemy as far as possible from the route that the convoy from America would take. They drew off. Admiral Howe followed them. The struggle recommenced June 1st. Both sides had received reinforcements, which more than replaced the ships already disabled. The French had twenty-six ships-of-the-line; the English numbered just thirty-four.

A false manœuvre by one of the French ships enabled Admiral Howe to break the line and to surround the flag-ship, the *Montagne*, a magnificent vessel of 130 guns; with Villaret and Jean Bon Saint-André on board. The *Montagne* disengaged herself by heroic efforts. After two hours under a terrible fire, the greater portion of the French and English ships were dismantled or disabled. The victory would rest with the admiral who could seize the greater number of vessels.

The advance-guard of the French having given way, Villaret could not capture the enemies' ships. He saved four of his own by having them towed by frigates and sloops of war; but six others, which were nothing better (at least so said Jean Bon Saint-André) than "buried carcasses," remained in the power of the enemy.

A seventh ship, the *Vengeur*, sank. Her crew united round the stump of the great mast, and nailed there the tricolour flag, so that it should not fall

[<sup>1</sup> Gouverneur Morris, ambassador to France from the United States, had arranged this method of repaying in wheat the money France had lent during the Revolution.]

into the power of the English, and sank into the abyss, crying, "Long live the republic!"<sup>1</sup>

The English fleet had suffered too severely to renew the attack. It was the most furious naval battle that had been witnessed since the battle of La Hogue, under Louis XIV. During this great struggle, the convoy had passed, and entered safely into one of the ports of Brittany. The mutilated portion of the French fleet that the English had not followed, a few days after the battle gave chase to a fresh squadron of English vessels that menaced the coast of Brittany.

#### FRENCH MILITARY SUCCESES IN EVERY DIRECTION

The English successfully renewed their aggressions against Martinique and Guadeloupe, and took those little islands. A small squadron left Brest and drove them from Guadeloupe. Together with the Spaniards, they invaded the French port of Santo Domingo, and sent their bands of émigrés, who suborned both the whites and the blacks. But the blacks, led by a man of great courage and of remarkable capacity, the negro Toussaint L'Ouverture, turned against the English and the Spaniards, and assisted what remained of the French troops to drive back the enemy to certain points of the west side of the island. Hopes were raised that this great colony would not be altogether lost to France (June, 1794).

The English did not attempt to assist the insurrection that had arisen in La Vendée. A landing there would have been impossible — the insurgent forces had no maritime position. To return again to the war of the Vendéans and Chouans: the English had the best fortune in Corsica, where their fleet, escaped from Toulon, had gone to give assistance to the insurgent population. Paoli's party feared to be unable to maintain the independence of the island, and had recognised the king of England as sovereign. The allies of the English during this time met with reverse after reverse in the Alps and the Pyrenees. The Piedmontese did not receive any assistance from other Italian states, which belonged to the coalition and were only reinforced by a few thousand Austrians. The French army in the Alps seized the passes of Little St. Bernard and of Mont Cenis, which gave them the entry into Piedmont.

In Italy the army had equal success. Young Robespierre, *représentative en mission*, had given the command of the artillery to Bonaparte, who became general. Dumerbion, who commanded the army in the place of Hoche, now a prisoner in Paris, allowed himself to be guided by Bonaparte; the French forces took Oneglia and drove the Piedmontese from the strong positions of Saorge and the Col di Tenda (April, 1794). They were now able to descend whenever they wished into the plains of Piedmont.

In the eastern Pyrenees the French success was even more brilliant. The brave and skilful general Dugommier, after retaking Toulon, had been sent to Perpignan. He reorganised the army in the eastern Pyrenees, took the offensive, drove the Spaniards into their camp at Boulou, carried off from them 140 cannon and all their baggage, and put them to flight in great disorder (May 1st).

[<sup>1</sup> This famous incident is accepted by practically every French historian, but it is ridiculed by English naval officers present in the action and put down as an invention of Barrère's! According to the English account, the sailors of the *Vengeur* very readily consented to be rescued by the victors and were taken off just before the riddled hulk sank. The French claim to have had in the engagement only 26 ships to the English 34; while the English claim to have had only 25.]



[1794 A.D.]

The positions occupied by the Spaniards in Roussillon were retaken; the French encroached upon the Spanish frontier, and occupied Cerdagne.

Before the end of July, the general aspect of the war could be summed up thus: The reverses of the commencement of '93 were entirely retrieved in the north. Belgium had again fallen under the power of the French Republic; the French frontier in the Pyrenees was freed from Spanish invasion; Holland and Italy were open to French armies. The plan of campaign drawn up by Carnot had been successful at every point.<sup>i</sup> Pichegru continued his march towards the mouth of the Schelde and the Maas, driving back to the sea the duke of York and the English, while Jourdan occupied the Maas from Liège to Maestricht, opposed to Clerfayt and the Austrians. It was important for him to cross the river, so as to gain the banks of the Rhine; and, in order to succeed, he had to force the lines of the Ourthe and the Roër, tributaries of the Maas.

Jourdan gave battle twice successively on these two rivers; he gained two victories, pursued Clerfayt as far as the Rhine, took Cologne, and besieged Maestricht. The army of the north also won the bank of this river: Bois-le-Duc and Wenloo fell before it. The duke of York, unfortunate in his operations, abandoned the district lying between the Maas and the Waal, one of the branches of the Rhine, and fell back towards Nimeguen, on the Waal, where Pichegru soon appeared to brave him; on November 8th this important place fell into the power of the French.<sup>h</sup>

#### PICHEGRU CONQUERS HOLLAND (1794-1795 A.D.)

The French armies, consolidated on the left bank of the Rhine, and with no formidable impediment to obstruct their passage to the right shore, menaced Holland and Germany. Was it prudent to move them onwards, or ought they to be withdrawn into cantonments? Such was the question to be solved.

Notwithstanding their triumphs and long sojourn in fertile and teeming Belgium, they were in the utmost destitution. The country they occupied, overrun for three years by innumerable legions, was entirely exhausted. With the evils of war were combined those of the French administration, which had introduced in its wake assignats, requisitions, and the maximum. Provisional municipalities, eight intermediate authorities, and a central administration established at Brussels, governed the country pending its definitive fate. The traders and farmers concealed all they possessed, and both officer and soldier were exposed to the greatest privations.

Levied *en masse* the preceding year, accoutred on the spur of the moment, and hastily transported to Hondschoote, Wattignies, Landau, the army had since received nothing from the government but powder and projectiles. Long ago it had ceased to encamp under tents; it bivouacked under the foliage of trees, despite the commencement of a winter already inclement. Many soldiers, in defect of shoes, enveloped their feet in wisps of straw, and covered their bodies with mats in place of mantles. The officers, paid in assignats, often found their appointments depreciated to eight or ten actual francs per month; those who received supplies from their friends were seldom allowed to appropriate them, for everything was absorbed by the requisitions of the French administration. They were reduced to the condition of the private soldier, marching on foot, carrying knapsacks on their backs, feeding on the coarse ration-bread, and trusting for existence to the precarious chances of war. The war administration seemed exhausted

by the extraordinary efforts it had made to levy and equip twelve hundred thousand men. Nor was the new organisation of the government, weak and disjointed, calculated to impart to it the requisite vigour and activity.

The time was now at length arrived for entering into cantonments, since the French were in possession of all the important points on the Rhine. Doubtless, to conquer Holland, and thus secure the navigation of the three great rivers, the Schelde, the Maas, and the Rhine, deprive England of its most powerful maritime alliance, menace Germany on its flanks, interrupt the communications of the continental enemies of France with the insular, or at least oblige them to make the long circuit of Hamburg; in short, open up the richest country in the world, and the most desirable for France in its present commercial prostration—was an object, with such inordinate advantages, apt to tempt the ambition of the government and armies of France.

The committee of public welfare, stimulated by the Dutch refugees, seriously discussed the expediency of pushing for a point beyond the Waal. Pichegru, in a plight deplorable as that of his soldiers, who were covered with itch and vermin, had repaired to Brussels for relief from a cutaneous disorder. Moreau and Regnier had succeeded him in the command: both counselled repose and winter quarters. In this state of repose the army confidently expected to pass the season; and assuredly it had achieved enough to be proud of its glory and services. But a hazard, partaking of the miraculous, opened for it a new career, to close in yet more brilliant destinies. The cold, already intense, soon increased to such a point as to foster hopes that the great rivers might be probably frozen. Pichegru quitted Brussels, without waiting for his effectual cure, eager to be on the spot to take advantage of the season if it offered the opportunity of fresh conquests. In effect, the winter speedily became more severe, and gave tokens of proving the most rigorous that had occurred during the century. On the 23rd of December, the Maas was firmly frozen, so as to bear the weight of cannon. General Walmoden, to whom the duke of York had devolved the command upon his own departure for England, and whom he had thereby condemned to a series of humiliating disasters, found himself in a precarious position. The Maas being frozen over, his front was exposed; and the Waal being filled with ice, threatening to carry away the bridges, his retreat was endangered. He speedily learned that the bridge of Arnheim had been actually swept away and he thereupon hastened to transfer his baggage and heavy cavalry to the rear, and in person directed a retreat on Deventer, on the banks of the Yssel.

The French soldiers, braving the hardest winter of the century almost in a state of nudity, marching in shoes whereof the upper leather was all that remained, left their quarters with alacrity, and cheerfully renounced the repose they had scarcely begun to enjoy. On the 28th of December, in a cold of seventeen degrees, they traversed the ice with their artillery, surprised the Dutch, nearly benumbed by the cold, and completely routed them. Whilst they took possession of the isle of Bommel, the division besieging Breda attacked and stormed the lines. The Dutch, assailed on all points, retrograded in disorder, one part towards the headquarters of the prince of Orange, at Gorkum, the residue to Thiel. Such was the confusion of their retreat that they even omitted to take measures for defending the passage of the Waal, which was not entirely frozen over.

Whilst the republicans awaited the operation of the frost with the utmost impatience, the fortress of Grave, heroically defended by the commandant Debons, surrendered, almost in a heap of ruins. It was the principal of the

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strongholds possessed by the Dutch beyond the Maas, and the only one which had not yielded to the ascendancy of the French arms. The French entered it on the 29th of December. At length, on the 8th of January, 1795, the Waal was solidly frozen. On beholding this general movement, Walmoden and his army retrograded. The prince of Orange deserted his army, presented himself before the states assembled at the Hague, announced to them he had attempted all in his power for the defence of the country, and declared that nothing more could be done. He urged the representatives to offer no further resistance to the conqueror, in order to avert still greater calamities, and with this exhortation set sail for England.

From that moment, the advance of the invading army became the rush of a torrent. The states of Holland resolved that all resistance to the French should cease, and commissioners be despatched to open to them the fortresses they might deem requisite for their security. In every town, the secret committees previously formed manifested their organisation, annulled the established authorities, and spontaneously appointed others in their stead. The French were received with open arms, and as liberators; the food and raiment they so woefully lacked were brought to them with alacrity. At length, on the 20th of January, Pichegru made his entry into Amsterdam. The inhabitants flocked to greet his advent, bearing in triumph the persecuted patriots, and rending the air with cries of "The French Republic forever! Long live Pichegru! Liberty forever!" They could not sufficiently admire those intrepid men, who, half-naked, had defied the rigour of so unparalleled a winter, and achieved such brilliant actions. The French soldiers gave, on this occasion, an admirable example of order and discipline. Hungry and scantily clad, exposed to a pitiless storm of snow and hail, in the heart of one of the richest capitals of Europe, they waited patiently for several hours, around their arms, piled in pyramids, until the magistrates had provided for their nourishment and distribution. Whilst the republicans had marched into the city on one side, the Orangists and French émigrés had disappeared by the opposite extremity. The sea was covered with vessels bearing from the shore fugitives and property of every description.

On the same day, Bonnaud's division, which had on the eve captured Gertruydenberg, traversed the frozen Biesbosch, and entered the town of Dordrecht, where it found 600 pieces of ordnance, 10,000 muskets, and magazines of provisions and ammunition for an army of 30,000 men. This division subsequently passed through Rotterdam on its way to occupy the Hague, where the states were in session. Thus, the right towards the Yssel, the centre towards Amsterdam, and the left towards the Hague, were successively advancing to the conquest of all the Netherland provinces. Already extraordinary as an operation of war, it was invested with the character of marvellous by a final stroke. A portion of the Dutch fleet lay at anchor near the Texel. Pichegru, unwilling to allow it time to break through the ice and make sail for England, detached some divisions of cavalry and several batteries of light artillery towards North Holland. The Zuyder Zee was frozen, and the French squadrons scoured at a gallop its icy plain, when the singular spectacle was exhibited of hussars and horse-artillerymen summoning ships of war, embedded in the frozen mass, like a fortified town. The Dutch vessels promptly struck their flags to these novel assailants.

Whilst affairs were thus progressing on the left, the right, crossing the Yssel, drove the English before it and chased them beyond the Ems. The provinces of Friesland, Drenthe, and Groningen, were thus subdued, and the seven United Provinces lay at the mercy of the victorious republic.



This conquest, due to the season, the indefatigable courage of the French soldiers, and their capacity to withstand accumulated sufferings, much more than to the ability of the generals, excited in Europe an astonishment mingled with dread, and in France a boundless exultation. Carnot, having directed the operations of the armies during the campaign in the Low Countries, was the principal and veritable author of the successes. Pichegru, and especially Jourdan, had admirably seconded his views throughout the series of sanguinary conflicts. But after the army had proceeded from Belgium into Holland, all was owing to the soldiers and the frost. Nevertheless, Pichegru, generalissimo of the forces, monopolised the glory of this miraculous conquest, and his name, borne on the wings of fame, circulated through all Europe as that of the greatest French captain.

It was not sufficient, however, to have conquered Holland; the equally difficult task remained to exhibit prudence and policy in its treatment. The first great point was to protect the country from excesses, in order not to indispose the population. Next in importance was the political direction to be impressed on Holland; and here two contrary opinions were to be considered. One party maintained that the conquest should be rendered advantageous to the cause of liberty, by revolutionising Holland; another held that too marked a spirit of proselytism should not be manifested, in order to avoid giving fresh umbrage to Europe, now ready to seal a reconciliation with France.

#### SUCCESES IN SPAIN

The triumph of France, so complete and astonishing in Holland, was not less signal in Spain. There, the climate, from its mildness, had not obstructed the operations of the army. Dugommier, quitting the upper Pyrenees, had moved in presence of the hostile lines, and attacked on three points the long chain of positions occupied by General de la Union. The gallant leader of the French, Dugommier, was killed in the central onslaught by a cannon-ball. The left wing failed to make any impression: but the right, thanks to the bravery and energy of Augereau, obtained a complete victory. The command-in-chief was conferred on Pérignon, who resumed the attack on the 20th of November, and gained a decisive advantage. The enemy fled in disorder, and abandoned to the French the entrenched camp of Figueras. Consternation seized on the Spaniards; the commandant of Figueras threw open the gates of that town on the 29th of November, and the French entered into possession of one of the finest fortifications in Europe. Such was their position in Catalonia. Towards the western Pyrenees, they had taken Fuenterrabia, San Sebastian, and Tolosa, and occupied the whole province of Guipuzcoa. Moncey, who succeeded General Müller, had cleared the mountains and advanced even to the gates of Pamplona. However, deeming his situation too hazardous, he had retraced his steps, and, resting on more secure positions, awaited the return of spring to penetrate into the Castilles.

The winter, therefore, had not been allowed to retard the progress of this immortal campaign, and it only now finally closed amidst the stormy and inclement weather of Pluviôse. If the auspicious campaign of 1793 had saved France from the horrors of invasion by the deblockades of Dunkirk, Maubeuge, and Landau, that of 1794 crowned her with the laurel of a conqueror, by subjugating to her sway Belgium, Holland, the districts comprised between the Maas and the Rhine, the Palatinate, the great barrier of the Alps, the line of the Pyrenees, and several places in Catalonia and Biscay. Hereafter, doubtless, we shall witness still greater marvels; but these two

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campaigns will hold their place in history as the most decidedly national, legitimate, and honourable ever undertaken by France.

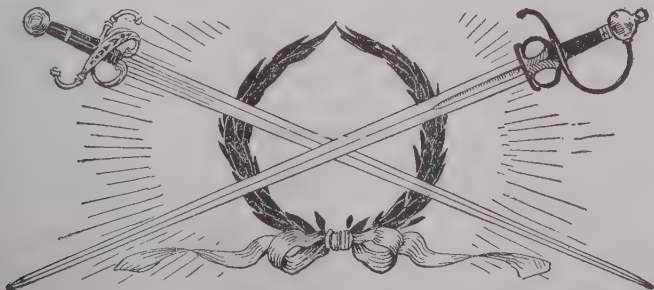
The coalition could not bear up against such rude and numerous shocks. The English cabinet alone, which, by the aid of the incompetent duke of York, had merely lost the territories of its allies, and, under pretext of recovering those of the stadholder, had acquired forty or fifty ships of war, and projected the appropriation, under the like pretence, of the Dutch colonies, could have no urgent reasons for terminating the war; on the contrary, it trembled at the prospect of its conclusion by the rupture of the coalition. But Prussia, which beheld the French on the banks of the Rhine and the Ems, and saw the torrent ready to sweep into her own confines, no longer hesitated. She forthwith despatched an envoy to Pichegru's headquarters, empowered to conclude a truce and undertake to open immediate negotiations for peace. The place selected for the conference was Bâle, where the French Republic maintained an agent.

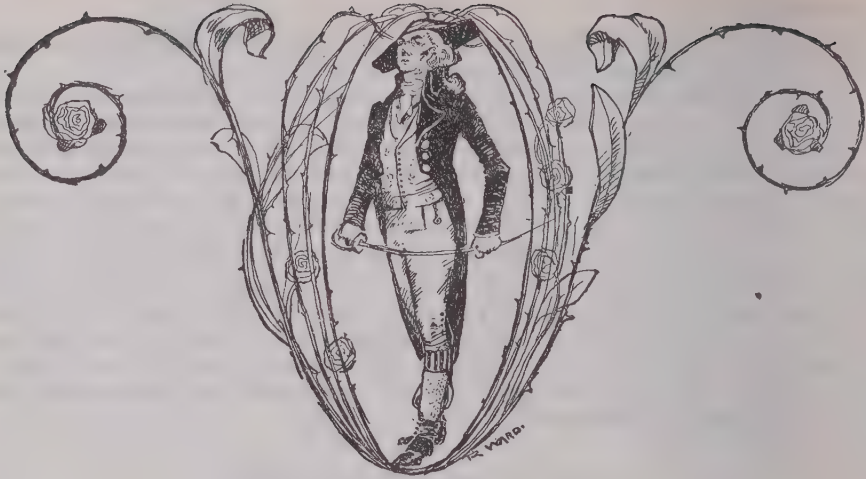
## TREATY OF PEACE WITH PRUSSIA

On the 2nd of January, 1795, a Prussian envoy came to the committee of public safety to declare that his king would not oppose the abolition of the stadholdership in Holland nor the occupation of the left bank of the Rhine by France, save that the definite cession of the Rhenish provinces should be adjourned until the general peace. The motive urged for this adjournment was the fear that Austria, if she got the upper hand in the war, should take the country on the left side as being French and not by right of conquest. On the 13th of January the conference opened at Bâle between the plenipotentiary of Prussia and the French minister in Switzerland, Barthélemy, who, by his skilful negotiation, had hindered Switzerland from entering the coalition. Peace was signed between France and Prussia the 16th Germinal (April 5th, 1795).

The Peace of Bâle was hailed with enthusiastic applause by the convention and all France. France had attained the highest power she had ever known. She had added to herself, by voluntary union, by conquest, or by alliance, immense territories and 13,000,000 souls. Her allies, the Dutch, were as much attached to her fortunes as the new citizens of Savoy, Belgium, or the Rhine.

In seventeen months she had been successful in 27 battles and 120 fights and had taken 116 strongholds.





## CHAPTER XIII

### THE REACTION

[1794-1795 A.D.]

Despicable as Robespierre himself might be, the death of Robespierre was a signal at which great multitudes of men, struck dumb with terror heretofore, rose out of their hiding-places; and, as it were, saw one another, how multitudinous they were; and began speaking and complaining. They are countable by the thousand and the million; who have suffered cruel wrong. Ever louder rises the plaint of such a multitude; into a universal sound, into a universal continuous peal, of what they call Public Opinion. Camille [Desmoulins] had demanded a "Committee of Mercy," and could not get it; but now the whole Nation resolves itself into a Committee of Mercy; the Nation has tried Sansculottism and is weary of it. — CARLYLE.<sup>b</sup>

ROBESPIERRE had made his stand against the people, and vanquished them. At that moment the reaction took place, the recoil upward. Like a diver, who, the moment he touches the bottom, springs rapidly back towards the surface, the Revolution commenced to reascend, traversing the same currents which it had passed in its descent, rising from Jacobinism to Girondism and from Girondism to royalism—at last to absolute power. The descent and ascent filled nearly about the same period, the one from 1789 to 1794; the other from 1794 to the ascendancy of Bonaparte in 1799. The people were, indeed, little contented with a course of things that was gradually consigning them to their original obscurity and want of influence. They rose, they fought, they struggled; but, once defeated, they were always defeated. At last the middle classes, the good bourgeois, began to perceive that they, too, were about to be set aside, and that the government was tending fast to absolutism. They rose in arms, and fought their quarrel on the day of the sections.

It is this route that we have still to trace and to describe; we enter on the domestic struggle of the period immediately subsequent to Robespierre's fall, having already taken a view of the military fortunes of the country. The insurrection of La Vendée was crushed, though not extinguished, in the



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winter of 1793-1794. Had England supported it with the same force and spirit with which she afterwards aided the peninsula, she would have saved millions, and spared Europe the fame and empire of Bonaparte. An English army and a Bourbon prince would have rallied the whole of the west of France, and its probable successes would have come at the opportune time when the republican feeling was on the ebb; when the apathy of suffering had seized on many, and when a strong party was raising its head in favour of constitutional monarchy. But Pitt, whom the Jacobins accused of being the spring and mine of every commotion, was, on the contrary, ignorant of the very names of the leaders of La Vendée.

## THE THERMIDORIAN REACTION

Whilst Pichegru and Jourdan, aided by Bernadotte, were chasing the Austrians, the English, and the Dutch before them, the convention continued its debates and quarrels, no longer sanguinary indeed, but still violent in the extreme. Robespierre had been overthrown by a coalition formed betwixt the Dantonists and his jealous brethren of the committees. But the enmity of these to Robespierre was merely personal. They were no less terrorists, greater terrorists, in our opinion, than even he. Billaud-Varennes, Collot d'Herbois, and Barrère, had sought to change the man rather than the system. They were as disinclined as ever to "moderantism," which they suspected would prove dangerous to the republic, and still more dangerous to themselves. The members on the other hand, called "moderate" in the language of the day, though sufficiently sanguinary, the menaced friends of Danton, such as Tallien, Fréron, Legendre, assumed the new name of "Thermidorians," as if to cut off all connection with the past. But still they avoided to undertake any sudden reaction, and the prisons were but gradually opened, the revolutionary tribunal abolished but by degrees. The executive government was modified, not changed. Of the twelve members of the committee of public safety, three were to be renewed each month, by which provision Tallien immediately entered, Collot and Billaud ceased to belong to it.

Just vengeance, too, though slow, did not altogether sleep. The judges of the tribunal of blood, and the public accusers, were sent to the scaffold. Steps were taken to bring the proconsuls, Carrier and Lebon, to the same fate. David and his brother ruffians of the committee of general safety were put in arrest. These measures, however wise and short of just retribution, were sufficient to alarm the terrorists, and those implicated in the extreme and violent acts of the Revolution. Nor were the moderate and reactionary party out of doors satisfied. So many had the deaths of fathers, mothers, relatives of all kinds, to avenge, that truce was impossible between them and their enemies. The sectionary meetings were the chief scene of these complaints and recriminations. The citizens, recovered from their terror, appeared there to exclaim against those who had terrified them; whilst the rabble and its representatives clamoured that the aristocrats were all let loose to plot once more the downfall of the republic. The press, too, recovered its freedom; and made use of its power in favour of moderation. Such journals as those of Marat and of Hébert were no longer tolerated. Humanity of taste, as well as of feeling, resumed its natural ascendancy.

There was another singular effect observable at this period: men in the maturity and advance of life had universally disgraced themselves: they had either joined the violent, and from passion or calculation rushed into

crime; or else they had shrunk in pusillanimity away, and remained suffering and hidden during the dreadful crisis. The military profession formed a bright exception, which is one grand reason for the ascendancy, not unmerited, which it speedily acquired. But all civilians were under the ban. The consequence was that, in the capital especially, youth pushed age and manhood aside. The young alone undertook to raise the banner of moderation, to stoop no longer, as their sires had done, beneath the menaces of the terrorists, and to support by force, if requisite, the triumph of national liberty over the arbitrary and despotic principles of the thorough revolutionists. This leagued band of young men gratified at once the vanity of their age and their contempt for sansculottism, by elegance of dress and

of manners. They were called, in derision, by their enemies, *la jeunesse dorée* ("the begilded youths").

The same epithet was applied to the salons that now dared to open and to receive society. These no longer belonged to the ancient noblesse, whom the French had proscribed, far more on account of their social arrogance than of their political privileges. Wealth now had the undisputed lead, birth and talent having fallen under the axe of the Terror; financiers, jobbers, contractors, Jacobins, enriched by rapine, all the cunning ones who had speculated with success in the Revolution—these men now claimed the chief consideration; their wives or mistresses became the queens of the gay circles.

Madame Tallien bore away the palm amongst them. She was the widow of an émigré. Tallien, secretary of the commune during the massacres of September, having gone



MADAME DE STAËL

(1766-1817)

as a proconsul to Bordeaux, which he deluged with blood, became enamoured of her. She had the merit of softening the vindictiveness of the tyrant, and recalling him to humanity. Robespierre had imprisoned her; and fears for her life had principally given Tallien the courage to declare against the Terror and its chief. Tallien then married his mistress, who was known as *Notre Dame de Thermidor*. With her, Madame Récamier, wife of a rich banker, disputed the palm of beauty. That of wit, high intellect, and nobleness of character fell to Madame de Staël. Nor are these details unimportant to history. The resurrection of polite society, so long extinct,—the natural pre-eminence of the well-bred in such circles, thus giving flagrant contradiction to the revolutionary principle, the empire recovered by sarcasm and ridicule now turned against popular excesses,—contributed to change altogether the general tone of feeling. The persiflage of conversation effected now in France what the written persiflage of Hudibras worked in England upon the Revolution—namely, shamed and killed political fanaticism. Another similarity in the fate of the two countries, at these similar epochs, was the dissolution of morals consequent upon the decay of enthusiasm.

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About a month was allowed to elapse after the fall of Robespierre, ere any rupture was menaced betwixt the parties in the convention. After that interval, Lecointre, deputy for Versailles, could no longer restrain his spleen; and accused Billaud-Varennes, Collot, and Barrère, as accomplices of the fallen tyrant. The body of the Thermidorians had, however, not as yet made up their minds for new strife. They disapproved of Lecointre's zeal; and his accusation in consequence fell to the ground. This circumstance, therefore, restored the courage of the fierce Mountainists. They bullied, clamoured, and the Jacobin club once more resounded with furious declamation. An attempt was made to assassinate Tallien; and the Thermidorians found themselves obliged to abandon their moderation. Their first attempt was against the clubs; and divers proposals were made to forbid members of the convention from belonging to them, for purifying them of the anarchists, as had been done universally with respect to the municipal councils.

But the majority of the convention, of which, as yet, timidity was the chief characteristic, feared as much to appear counter-revolutionists as terrorists, and could not be moved to decision without an impulse from without. This was given them by the trial of a number of citizens of Nantes, who had been sent to the revolutionary tribunal at Paris. In their defence they revealed all the crimes of Carrier, who had decimated their city, and invented the famous *noyades*, or drownings of prisoners. These details excited the public indignation. The accusation of Carrier was loudly called for. He defended himself with energy, declaring, with some truth, that the entire convention participated in his crimes, and that "the whole assembly was culpable, even to the very bell of the president." Nevertheless, after long debates and delay, Carrier was ordered to stand his trial. This affair excited to the utmost the interest and animosity of both parties. The terrorists saw in Carrier's downfall their own ruin. The moderates demanded loudly, in his case, the verdict to which the convention had been unwilling to reduce the colleagues and betrayers of Robespierre. Billaud-Varennes, no longer listened to in the convention, consoled himself in the Jacobins, and on one occasion menaced that "the lion might awaken." The lion could be no other than the Terror; and this threat had the effect of awakening the very opposite feeling.

#### THE JACOBIN CLUB CLOSED

A body of the *jeunesse dorée*, the youth of the capital, surrounded the Jacobin club, broke the windows, insulted and chastised divers of the female furies of the galleries, that sought to escape. The Jacobins defended their hall, and even sallied out on their besiegers. The patrol at length interfered, dispersed the youth who besieged, but at the same time cleared the hall of the Jacobins. From this little engagement it appeared that the moderate party was strongest even in the streets. This gave courage to the timid majority of the assembly. It rallied to the side of the Thermidorians; and the Jacobin club was ordered to be finally closed. This was followed up by the recall of the exiled and proscribed deputies, who returned in considerable numbers; and, reinforcing the moderate side, flung at once the whole weight of power into the hands of the Thermidorians.

But few of the leading Girondists still survived to take advantage of the decree of recall. In addition to the twenty-one tried and executed together, Salles, Guadet, and Barbaroux had been taken, and underwent the same fate at Bordeaux as their brethren at Paris; Pétion and Buzot were found dead



in the forest where they had been concealed, the remains of the former partly devoured by wolves. Condorcet, the literary and philosophic head of the party, after lurking for many months in the vicinity of Paris, was discovered by chance, and swallowed poison. Most of them perished but a short month previous to the 9th Thermidor, which would have restored them to the convention and to their lost influence. Louvet, Lanjuinais, and Isnard were the principal ones of those who returned.

In many, perhaps most, shocks and maladies incident to the human frame, the increase of pain is counteracted by the numbness of feeling, and agony is lost in insensibility. It is in the moment of recovery, of returning strength, at the moment of revival from faint, that suffering is most poignant, and the weight of ill most felt. Somewhat similar to this was the state of France recovering from the Terror. That dread reign had stricken all with stupor, but it banished most disorders. The country was defended by "requisitions"; money was found by the simple printing of assignats; whilst all commodities, limited to a maximum or fixed price, were to a certain degree attainable.

#### THE INSURRECTION OF THE HUNGRY

Food was not plentiful, indeed; but its want did not then amount to famine. From the moment, however, that Terror ceased, the farmer, the shopkeeper, felt no longer compelled by imminent death to bring forth their commodities in order to sell them at a low price: the assignats sank almost to extinction of value; it was no longer in the power or wish of the government to keep the mob in pay, as Robespierre had continued partly to do. And hence the working classes fell back into that state of idleness and famine which they had experienced at the commencement of the Revolution. Riot appeared in the streets, the young men of the better classes often combating the rabble of the faubourgs.

The recent execution of Carrier, and the approaching trial of Billaud-Varennes, Collot d'Herbois, and Barrère, rendered it incumbent on the old Mountainists to use the utmost efforts to rouse the people. They succeeded in mustering the sections of the faubourg St. Antoine. And from these accordingly, in the spring of 1795, petitions began to flow in to the convention, the old prelude to disorder. The cry and pretext were also the same as in the old insurrection. Bread was their demand — bread, and the democratic constitution of 1793. The convention repelled these covert menaces with dignity; the president Thibaudeau had the courage to tell several hundreds of turbulent petitioners to return to their labours.

Exertions at the same time were made to meet the wishes of the people. Boissy d'Anglas at the head of the commission for provisioning the capital — there was no longer a mayor, Paris being divided into twelve municipalities — took measures for warding off famine. As to the democratic constitution of 1793, it was found impracticable; and it was now openly avowed that the people were incapable of thus governing themselves. Each epoch had given birth to its constitution. A committee was now appointed to prepare another. On the 21st of March a new petition was prepared, and presented by all the force that the Jacobins could muster. The moderates were, however, prepared on this occasion, and the young Parisians flocked to the Tuileries and Carrousel, armed with sticks, and prepared for the combat. Repulsed from the assembly, the furious petitioners insulted the youth in the garden, whom they called aristocrats and traitors. From reproaches they proceeded to blows; but fortunately there were no sharp weapons to

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inflict them. The faubourgs had been long since disarmed of their pikes, and now their rabble were beaten in a bloodless engagement, and smartly castigated by the sticks of their young enemies, who put them to flight.

This affair was but a skirmish, in which the rabble, not having put forth their strength, were beaten. The redoubtable faubourgs knew full well that they were more than a match for the mere youth who formed the guard of moderantism; but there was need of organisation, of a systematic combination, of an opportunity and pretext. While the anarchists were thus plotting, the convention proceeded to judge Billaud-Varennès, Collot d'Herbois, and Barrère. They defended themselves by implicating the assembly; their colleagues, Carnot and Prieur, not included in the accusation, because known to have occupied themselves exclusively with administration, leaving the police and the supply of the guillotine to their brethren, came forward and demanded to be arraigned at the same time. This caused delay; for Carnot, looked upon as the organiser of military success, was too popular to be visited with condemnation. The trial, therefore, dragged on from day to day, interrupted by tumult and noisy petitions. At length the plotters of the faubourgs thought proper to act.

They rose in insurrection on the 12th Germinal (the 1st of April), placed the women and children in the front of their column, and marched to the convention. The seditious movement being unexpected, there was at first no force to repel it, and the mob entered the Tuileries without opposition, forced the doors of the assembly, and rushed in amongst the members, shouting, "Bread, the liberation of the accused patriots, and the constitution of 1793!" The insurgents, however, conducted themselves with too little premeditation and order; they refused to clear the hall. Thus the opportunity was lost; they knew not how to make use of their conquest, retired, and dispersed.

The convention no sooner found itself restored to liberty in the evening of the tumultuous day, than it proceeded to measures of energy. Billaud-Varennès, Collot d'Herbois, and Barrère, were condemned to transportation; and seven of those Mountainists who had so lately applauded the insurgents were arrested, and ordered to be sent to the castle of Ham in Picardy. The difficulty was to execute these decrees, and to despatch the condemned upon their journey, preventing rescue by the mob.

Pichegru, then returned to Paris from the conquest of Holland, was intrusted with this task, and appointed to the command of the capital. It required all his energy to execute the commission. His name was most useful, young men who would otherwise have shrunk, gladly rallying to serve under him. The carriages bearing the prisoners were stopped, as had been expected, and the gendarmerie was beaten. Pichegru, however, held firm; and after a smart fire of musketry and cannon on either side, the troops of the convention were victorious, and the prisoners were taken to their place of destination. At three in the morning Pichegru appeared at the bar of the assembly, and declared his mission executed.

This defeat exasperated rather than crushed the popular party. Their endeavour to liberate their friends had, on the contrary, precipitated their condemnation, and included others in the sentence. They had failed too, it appeared, not from want of force, but of system; and perhaps from having shown too much forbearance. They resolved to remedy these two defeats in the next insurrection. It broke out in about seven weeks subsequent to the preceding one, and is known as that of the 1st Prairial, coinciding with the 20th of May, 1795.

## THE INSURRECTION OF THE 1ST PRAIRIAL

On the evening of the 19th of May the disturbance, already apparent, showed itself openly. The clubs echoed with cries for revolt. Groups formed in the streets; women in crowds joined these groups, where were heard seditious words, bitter complaints, or atrocious threats. They loudly declared for an insurrection on the morrow. It was declared that the convention would force the people to die of hunger, that it had only overthrown Robespierre to establish a new tyranny. A handbill was distributed, containing the plan of insurrection and the resolutions to be passed. The women were to enter first, for the assembly would not fire on them; then the men should come to accomplish the desire of the people.



A FRENCH GENERAL,  
END OF THE EIGH-  
TEENTH CENTURY

On the 1st Prairial from five o'clock in the morning the tocsin was sounded in the suburbs of St. Antoine and St. Marceau. It was only three hours after that the committee of public safety beat an alarm in those sections faithful to the preservation of public order. At eleven o'clock the convention began its sitting. The members of the committees were not all present. Isabeau, in the name of the committee of public safety, read a copy of the handbill being scattered broadcast through the town.

The ringleaders of the rising had previously secured some of the public galleries whence this handbill was greeted with uproarious applause. A representative rose and cried, "The convention will die at its post." All the assembly solemnly repeated the same oath. The other galleries applauded in their turn. The convention knew the danger it was in. The popular manifesto left no doubt as to what would happen. At the same time no defence nor help was visible. The committee of public safety could not even be sure of the near arrival of the faithful sections. Twelve representatives were charged to go into the sections to enlighten them.

And now women forced themselves in crowds on to the public tribunes. They climbed on the benches, crying "Bread!" The president looked embarrassed. They mocked at him amid the troubled looks of the assembly. Several of them clenched their fists and uttered gross threats.

President Vernier was an honourable old man whose strength was not sufficient to fight against such a tumult. Women continued to shout. All the representatives arose and all talked at once. Among those who were most animated was Ferraud. He was young; generally he was with the military forces; on the 9th Thermidor he had shown great activity and energy. The women recognised him and shouted insolent remarks. They asked his name. "Ferraud" he said. They understood "Fréron"<sup>1</sup> and this increased their fury.

Boissy d'Anglas, the last president but one, was then called to the chair.

[<sup>1</sup> Louis Stanislas Fréron had from 1789 edited the violent *Orateur du Peuple*, and had sat among the Mountainists in the convention. He had shown great cruelty in the provinces but had declared against Robespierre, and aided in overthrowing him. After the 9th Thermidor he turned against the Jacobins and the Terrorists and was one of the chief spirits among the *jeunesse dorée*. The starving people therefore hated his name.]



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The noise redoubled. There was no way of being heard in such a crowd — a crowd which became every moment more tumultuous. A soldier in the uniform of a brigadier general was found in the hall. He did all he could to silence the women.

The president gave a formal order to clear the hall.

Then a great noise was heard at the hall doors: the knocking was redoubled; evidently a crowd was hurrying to have it opened; the panels were already giving way. The president addressed the unknown general, saying, "Citizen, I nominate you provisional commander of the forces, and I order you to use your power to make the convention respected." He swore to die at his post in doing so. The general was called Fox. He was a Scotchman who had served in France, and afterwards acted a subordinate part in the troubles with Holland and Brabant. As he had no armed forces, the only exploit he accomplished was to drive away with a whip the women who had occupied the galleries.

The convention did not find itself in very great security, for at that moment the door which was being besieged burst in with a great noise. The crowd came swarming into the hall. National guards and gendarmes advanced with drawn swords and fixed bayonets and pushed back the people. There was a prolonged fight whilst disputing the passage. None wished to shed blood. At last the section of the Fontaine de la Grenelle, the first to bring help to the convention, arrived. It was received with joy and gratitude.

Another crowd composed of armed men now tried to force a way into the convention. Bayonets crossed and the insurgents fired into the midst of those who prevented their entrance. Finally they broke through. The guard was inferior in numbers. Ferraud, in despair, said to them, "Kill me, since you desire blood." He was thrown down, and they passed over his body, treading him underfoot. He was picked up, but had merely fainted. It was then half-past three; the hall was in possession of the rioters, who brandished their swords, shouting, "Bread and the Constitution of 1793!" which was also written on their hats. They took possession of the benches, ousting the representatives; others crowded the floor; one of them sat down opposite the president with his hat on. A young man, son of Representative Mailly, had fought valiantly; the crowd rushed upon him, and he sought refuge on the tribune. Whilst he was getting up, a ball struck him and he fell. The rioters finished him with sword thrusts and he was carried out bleeding.

Already muskets were aimed at the president; Ferraud sprang forward to shield him with his body. One of the murderers held him to prevent his mounting the steps; an officer came to his help and pushed the rioter away. He fired a shot at Ferraud, who fell at the foot of the tribune. Though mortally wounded, he still lived and made efforts to speak. The crowd continued to take him for Fréron. A woman of the streets, shut up as a lunatic some years previously, and set at liberty half cured, was that day, as she generally was, among the rioters, marching at the head of these guillotine furies, drunk with brandy and rage, like the women who followed her. She sprang upon Ferraud, broke his head with kicks and finished him with a knife, with which she also wounded Representative Camboulas who tried to keep her off. The corpse of Ferraud was dragged from the hall by the rioters, who cut off his head.

Boissy d'Anglas remained passive among insults and threats and calmly faced the pistols directed at him. Many citizens surrounded him to defend

him against the furious rabble. They took away his seal of office, but he forced them to return it. However, the tocsin sounded. The garden and court were successively filled by national guards and artillery, but they were without orders or directions. No hindrance was given to the entry of all the crowds from the suburbs. The hall was full of armed men crying, "Bread!" They tried to make speeches; they addressed abusive remarks to the convention. They caused their programme of insurrection to be read. When the president ordered silence, they cried, "Bread, you rascal! What have you done with our money?"

After a confused tumult lasting half an hour, the rioters began to cry again, "Down with the president!" and to strike him on the face. Then



A FRENCH OFFICER, END OF EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

a man entered the hall, carrying on high the head of the unhappy Ferraud on a pike. He presented it to the president, to the great joy of the crowd. Boissy d'Anglas, with grave respect, waved away the bleeding head.<sup>1</sup> He tried to profit by a temporary lull to show the rioters that this disorder hindered the convention discussing the subject of subsistences.

According to some accounts, when Ferraud's head was held up before him he recoiled in horror — to others, he bowed in homage to the gory head of his courageous colleague.

Finally a successful effort was made to clear the floor. The Mountain sat down on the lower benches; the riot leaders took their places at the top of the hall. Boissy d'Anglas left the chair and refused to preside over such a sitting. Vernier took his place and the Mountain began

to deliberate. Not a member of the majority took part in this semblance of a debate. Vernier presided with a sort of mechanical docility. He put things to the vote. The Mountain waved their hats in the air and cried "Aye!" Then Romme, after some words against the rich who lived in luxury and let the poor die of hunger, proposed that it should be forbidden to bake rich cakes and pâtés, and ordered that domiciliary visits be ordained to hunt for hidden flour. The permanence of sections and the popular election of committees was also voted with waving of hats.

[<sup>1</sup> Never did courage surpass that of Boissy d'Anglas on this memorable day. For nearly six hours he resisted the efforts of the mob. He had put on his hat, to show that sitting or deliberation was suspended. Neither menaces nor imprecations could make him yield, open the discussion, or put a single proposition to the vote. Thus precious time was gained.]

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However, this parody of a sitting, this insurrectionary inertia, left the committee time to concoct measures, and one might safely predict that the day would end like the 12th Germinal. Duquesnoy understood that it was time to act. He asked that the committee of public safety be suspended; that four representatives be endowed with power extraordinary. This was done. Boissy d'Anglas re-entered the hall and took the chair. Legendre and Delecloy presented themselves in the name of the committee of public safety. They had some trouble in entering, being pushed back and ill-treated. Legendre, however, made himself heard; he intimated that the citizens should leave the hall, and invited the representatives to remain at their posts. Then he went out.

It was midnight. The four commissioners from the Mountain, encouraged by some lively words from Soubrany, left the hall. They met at the door a comparatively small number of the national guard with Legendre, Anguis, Kervelegan, Chénier, and Bergoeng at their head. Raffet commanded the national guard. Prieur de la Marne asked him if he had a presidential order to enter the hall. "I am not accountable to you for what I do," answered the commander. "Follow me, sansculottes!" cried Prieur, turning towards the crowd. The president enjoined him in the name of the law to leave the hall. No attention was paid and the struggle re-commenced. The tramp of soldiers was heard, and the cry, "Down with the Jacobins! Long live the convention!" The crowd began to look around for some means of escape. When the column filed into the hall, there was a general *saute qui peut*; some climbed to the galleries, seeking a way out, others fled by the windows. Soon an armed force occupied the entire hall. The representatives took their seats; one was sure that the principal Mountainists were secured. In spite of the abominable murder of Ferraud, which recalled revolutionary ferocities, it was soon evident that the rioters had no wish for a fight. They had been taught to cry, "Bread, and the Constitution of 1793!" but were actuated by no definite opinions. The Mountainists lacked boldness and unity. Their discourses and decrees, beyond those which had reference to food, excited no enthusiasm among the people, who hardly understood what was required of them. When, towards 11 o'clock, they saw they were merely assisting at voting and proposals without any result, they began to go out even before the arrival of the national guard.

For some hours there had been round the Tuileries more bayonets than were necessary to force an entrance into the hall. Several times the heads of columns advanced to the doors or showed themselves in the public galleries; but as the crowd remained compact and tumultuous and noisy, they did not wish to run the risk of firing or being fired upon. There was, however, real danger for the representatives who, to get in or out of the hall, had to make a way through the crowd at the door. Some showed great courage; Kervelegan was wounded rather seriously. But the honours of the day rested with Boissy d'Anglas. His firm and unshaken constancy while covered by several guns aimed at him; his presidential authority, so persistent though disregarded; his noble demeanour when they presented the head of his unfortunate colleague—are traits that will be remembered in history and transmitted to all posterity.<sup>d</sup>

#### FALL OF "THE MOUNTAIN" AND THE LOWER CLASSES

The convention, having recovered its liberty, instantly declared its votes during the presence of the insurrection to be null, and ordered under arrest the remainder of the Mountainists who had shown sympathy with the mob.



The redoubtable faubourg St. Antoine was again defeated, but not crushed. The bands and sections again took the field in a few days, and were met in battle array by the sections favourable to the convention; but no combat ensued. Negotiations, remonstrances, were employed, and the men of the faubourg, deprived of their leader or of all aim,—for the Mountainists had already been conveyed out of their reach,—abandoned their positions and their zeal. Their last feat was to rescue the murderer of Ferraud, who had been condemned, and was proceeding to the scaffold. By this time, however, some troops of the line had been drafted to the capital. At the head of these and the national guards, General Menou, commanding under Barras, invested the faubourg St. Antoine, and menaced to bombard it. The female population dreaded this act of retribution. The faubourg submitted, in token of which its section surrendered their formidable cannon.

Here terminated the influence of the lower orders; here ended the Revolution, as far as they were concerned. It is worthy of remark that their submission was far more the effect of their own apathy than of the force brought against them. This last might, indeed, have awed the most turbulent. But the greater number were weary of disorder, and all showed in the days of Prairial a forbearance and a fear of shedding blood, certainly creditable to them. This arose from the general execration in which the popular massacres of September and the legal ones of the Terror were held. The death of Ferraud was an accident. The safety experienced by the rest of the convention—a safety that allowed them to triumph—marks that even with the mob there are bounds to crime; and that political rage, even with them, when carried to an extreme, has a turn and a recoil.

The Thermidorians, after escaping from such imminent peril, were relentless towards those of their colleagues who had triumphed in the disorder, and who had shown alacrity to restore the Terror. Tidings of a simultaneous effort of the ultra-revolutionists of Toulon increased the exasperation of the victors. All the leading Jacobins were seized, and delivered over to a military commission to be judged. Six deputies of the Mountain were condemned to death. All committed suicide. Only one or two, failing in the attempt, could be delivered over to the guillotine. In the provinces, especially in the south, the moderates did not confine their vengeance to the chief criminals. They rose in many places, especially at Lyons, and massacred those who had practised or favoured terrorism. One half of France having decimated the other, the latter, victorious in turn, proceeded to take the same barbarous revenge. Thus the clambering up from the pit of the Revolution was almost as fearful as the precipitous fall.<sup>c</sup>

#### LOUIS BLANC ON THE "WHITE TERROR" (MAY–JUNE, 1795)

The promoters of the Red Terror had been men of fierce convictions, fanatics for the public welfare, violent and gloomy souls; but at least they had spoken in accordance with their acts, they had not been seen grinning at humanity with a sword dyed with blood in one hand and their foot upon a heap of dead bodies, and they had not perfumed and adorned themselves before going to the shambles. The promoters or partisans of the White Terror, on the contrary, were men of good address, elegant libertines, fashionable women, people of an unctuous piety. Under the empire of the White Terror, atrocious thoughts were put forth in a ridiculously effeminate gibberish; they swore upon their word of honour that they would stab their disarmed enemy; they killed prisoners with shot or burned them alive,

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in virtue of the law of good manners; in the streets, to please the ladies, they flogged daughters who were guilty of weeping over the bodies of their slaughtered fathers. There were to be found men, quite as cruel as Marat, but beauteous in youth and manners that won hearts as they entered a drawing-room in the midst of a cloud of amber perfume. If they had not smelt of amber, they would have smelt of blood.

At Paris and in the north the assassins were held in respect, because in Paris and in the north the Revolution was not yet stamped out; but all the south was given to the sword. Woe to those who, in the Revolution, had enacted any sort of rôle, or only maintained the principles that it had proclaimed. However limited had been their influence, however inoffensive their conduct, however obscure their condition, a tragic death awaited them; for they were not killed only on account of what they had done, they were killed for what they had been or were, or were suspected of being. To provide a list of the victims would be impossible. Prudhomme<sup>e</sup> in his gloomy book, and Fréron<sup>f</sup> in his memoir upon the massacres of the south, are able to record only a certain number of names, yet nevertheless this list, all incomplete as it is, causes us to shudder. In it are boys and girls, almost children, who perished, hacked by sabre cuts or pierced by bayonet thrusts; there are women whom they murdered in cold blood. Men who were suspected as Jacobins were arrested; they watched for the moment when they would be taken to prison, and massacred them on the way. Dead bodies found here and there on all the roads testified in these unhappy places to the ubiquity of the assassin.

Do not the prisons at least serve as a refuge for the victims? No, the magnet does not attract iron with more force than the prisons attracted the murderers; and the aspect of these tragedies was more sinister in the dungeons.

Often they mixed libertinism with the refinements of cruelty; witness the women who, at Montbrison, were dragged to the foot of the Tree of Liberty and exposed quite nude to the lascivious looks of the young royalists, and were then flogged.

And these things were done in the name of the most sacred principles; for never, at any epoch, were the terms Justice and Humanity employed with so much complacency, until at last they were made part of the necessary vocabulary of the toilette. A woman would not have been in the fashion had she not worn a "humanity bonnet" and "justice corsets." This derisive affectation, this impious frivolity is met with again in the manner in which the reactionaries unblushingly parody the sufferings of those of their relatives whom the Revolution had struck. Wanting in respect for their own grief, they even made a carnival of their own mourning. A son mourned his father, who had died upon the scaffold, by saluting his acquaintance in the street by a movement of his head similar to that of one falling into the executioner's basket. A widow's grief displayed itself in the method of dressing her hair for a lover's rendezvous. The days of general affliction were the days whereon they proceeded to dance, to drink, and to feast to their hearts' content. There were balls "*à la victime*," when to be admitted there it was necessary to show a proper certificate, stating that one had lost a father, a mother, a wife, a brother, or a sister beneath the knife of the guillotine. The death of any collateral relative gave no right to be at such a *fête*. The indispensable costume of a dancer was that in which the brother or sister had perished, that is to say, the red shawl, and the hair cut close to the neck. These conditions fulfilled, they were received to dance, and to make love at the balls "*à la victime*." "Was it Holbein's dance of death," exclaimed

Mercier,<sup>g</sup> "that had inspired such an idea? Why, in the midst of the sounds of violins did they not make a headless spectre dance?"<sup>h</sup>

Among the ugly features of this period, the fate of one of the most pitiful victims of the Revolution may claim a space. This is the little son of the late king, Louis XVI. He was eight years old when his father was executed, and had been called the dauphin for four years. He was recognised as Louis XVII by England and Russia, but his title was a bitter mockery to the child suffering unearned hardships in prison.<sup>a</sup>

#### BARANTE ON THE CAPTIVITY OF LOUIS XVII

It is difficult not to believe that, at the moment when the convention determined to continue indefinitely the captivity of the son of Louis XVI,



LOUIS XVII

(Born 1785).

the government committees knew that this was equivalent to pronouncing the death sentence on the royal child. When, on the 3rd of July, 1793, he had been pitilessly torn from his mother's arms, the municipal functionaries who had taken on themselves the execution of this business led him away to the room in which the king had been a prisoner, and handed him over to one of their colleagues, whose insulting coarseness the royal family had often had to endure. This was the shoemaker named Simon, long known to Marat as his neighbour in the rue de Cordeliers, and still better as his assiduous admirer at the club. With Robespierre's consent he proposed him as a tutor for the "little Capet."

Whether from the natural brutality of his character and the habits of an ignoble life, or whether he had formed beforehand the project of reducing the son of so many kings to being a child without education, without morality, and without shame, he exhibited from the very

first day the wish to transform the heir to the throne into a street vagabond. It was a frightful battle that was to be waged against the good and noble sentiments, the regal instincts, and the seemly and distinguished manners which early impressions and the atmosphere in which he was born and had hitherto lived had developed in this noble child.

He began by offering some resistance; his tears were as much of anger as despair. Simon was irritated by these aristocratic ways and soon ill-treatment began; he was continually passing from insulting and threatening words to actual brutalities; his love of equality enjoyed insulting and striking the king's son. He saw, however, that by treating the child intrusted to his care in this fashion, he would end by killing instead of brutalising him.



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On this point he consulted the committee of public safety. "The wolf's cub has learned to be insolent; I shall know how to break his spirit; but if he dies under it, I will not be answerable. Do you want to kill him?" — "No." "To poison him?" — "No." "To transport him?" — "No." "To get rid of him?" This time Simon was not answered.

Encouraged by this silence, the tutor whom the republic had given to Louis XVII continued the same system of education. He had wished to make him leave off his mourning clothes, but Marat perished, and he let him retain them. Some days afterwards he dressed him in a carmagnole, had his beautiful fair hair cut off, and put a *bonnet rouge* on his head. A collection has been made with religious care and scrupulous exactness, of all the sad souvenirs of the Temple, all the details of this long torture, in which every day was marked by a fresh atrocity. It is a story which makes the heart ache and fills us with indignation. Simon sought another means of degrading the unhappy child. He made him drink wine and brandy, intoxicated him, and then made him repeat coarse oaths and obscene songs. It chanced that a member of the commune rebuked this wickedness. He was denounced and arrested "for having thought it a bad thing that Capet's son should be brought up like a sansculotte."

The captivity of Louis XVII continued under Simon's rule in alternations of savage violence and indulgence which was neither kindness nor pity. The poor little martyr became more and more self-absorbed and silent. He no longer answered when spoken to. Sometimes Simon's barbarity endangered his life. One day, as he refused to sing some obscene couplets, Simon lifted him up by his hair. "I have a good mind to crush the little viper against the wall," he said. The doctor was obliged to drag the child away from him.

He made him clean his wife's shoes, and one day forced him to wipe his feet which he had just wetted in a bath.

Nevertheless, at the end of seven months, he perhaps grew weary of the infamous business in which he was acquitting himself so well. The unhappy orphan was already half destroyed. Mute, dejected, and trembling, living under menace and in fear, his situation was to grow yet worse. The committees of the convention decided that Simon was not to have a successor, and that the municipal authorities should have all the responsibility of guarding the prisoner.

The room which Cléry had occupied during his attendance on the king was turned into a cell. The door was cut at the height of a man's breast; in front was a grating which was let down from the top. A second grating closed the space of the wicket left above the half door, which was fastened with screws, and the shutters of the window were put up. The room was warmed by a stove-pipe crossing it. The child was shut up in this prison, from which he was not allowed to go out. A bed had been put there. Bread and water were passed to him and no one entered the room. Here Louis XVII was installed on the 21st of January, 1794, the anniversary of the death of the king his father. The *Mémoires du Temple*, written by his august sister, from whom he was rigorously kept apart but who knew how he was being treated, recount the sufferings he endured in this cell.

This phase of torture lasted six months. On the 10th Thermidor, Barras, after the triumph of the convention, recommended the continuance of a strict supervision. One Laurent, a member of the revolutionary committee of the Temple section, was chosen by the committees the very next day to be "charged to guard the tyrant's children detained at the Temple."

This new jailer, true Jacobin though he was, proved capable of humanity and compassion; besides, the revolutionary wind set no longer towards cruelty. First of all he called to his prisoner from the wicket, but no answer could be obtained from the unhappy child. The door was broken open, and then Laurent beheld a most hideous and deplorable spectacle. In a dark, fetid room, full of filth, on a tumbled and dirty bed, lay a child scantily clothed in a greasy shirt and ragged trousers; an emaciated countenance, discoloured lips, great lustreless eyes, a sickly pallor, an apathetic physiognomy, an expression no longer even of suffering but of insensibility — so did the heir of the crown of France appear to the gaze of his keeper. His body was covered with sores, his joints were swollen; he was eaten by vermin and as though ingrained with dirt. It was in vain to address him. He would not answer, and let his eyes wander vaguely over those who



THE PRISON OF THE TEMPLE

had entered his room. One of them having spoken to him in accents of gentleness and pity, he answered quietly: "No, I want to die."

From that time they began to look after the poor orphan; he was placed in a better room, bathed, and given linen and clothing; a surgeon came to dress his sores, a woman was commissioned to wait on him. He was no longer addressed as "thou"; they said "Monsieur," and called him "Charles" and no longer "Capet." Sometimes he was brought to take the air on the platform of the tower, but he still remained weak and ill: he had suffered too much not to have been profoundly affected in health.

It was soon perceived that the symptoms of disease were assuming a graver appearance. He grew more and more sad and inert; sitting motionless at the fireside, he did not feel the warmth. The commissioners decided to inform the committee of public safety of

the prisoner's state; they came to make their report on the 26th of February, 1795, declaring that the child appeared to them to be very ill, that his life even was in danger.

On the 6th of May, 1795, more than two months after the visit of the members of the convention, a doctor, Desault, was summoned to the Temple for the first time. Desault declared to the committee that he had been sent for too late to attend the prisoner. He had recognised the germs of scrofula, of which the first dauphin had died in 1789; but it was not the symptoms of this kind of malady which threatened the young prince with an approaching end; he was dying of exhaustion and of a decline. Desault gave no hope of saving him, and asked that he might be removed to the country to try what good effects fresh and healthy air might produce. The committee paid no

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attention to the doctor's prescription. On the 31st of May, M. Desault died almost suddenly, of a nervous fever. The committee let five days pass without sending another doctor to the Temple. On the morning of the 8th of June, the child's symptoms became alarming. He said to Gomin, who was pitying him for suffering so much : " I shall not suffer forever."

The keeper knelt in prayer by his bed, the child holding his hand. Soon his ideas became confused. He thought he heard beautiful music coming from above ; then it seemed to him that he distinguished his mother's voice. He also spoke of his sister. The other keeper had come to replace Gomin. The air from the window seemed to revive him, but he was dying, dying calmly and without pain ; life was flickering out. His head fell on the keeper's breast. " I have something to tell you"—it was his last word. He ceased to breathe ; his heart was no longer beating ; his martyrdom was consummated.

The next day four members of the committee came to the Temple to verify the decease. They ordered a post-mortem and the report showed that it was not poison which had destroyed the son of Louis XVI, but the popular prejudice has none the less held its ground.<sup>d</sup>

#### THE PSEUDO-ACCESSION OF LOUIS XVIII (1795 A.D.)

It was claimed by some of the royalists that the poor child had not died but escaped, and a number of alleged dauphins appeared later, but none of them attracted much attention from their own time or deserve any from history, and on the death of the most pathetic child-victim of the great political avalanche, the title of king was assumed by his uncle. The count of Provence was a brother of the late Louis XVI ; during the early popular movement he, like Philippe Égalité, showed some opposition to the king, but in June, 1791, he had emigrated to Coblenz, and with his brother the count of Artois, took part in the Declaration of Pillnitz and joined the army of Condé. He was at Hamm in Westphalia when Louis XVI was beheaded and at once declared the dauphin king and called himself regent, under the name of Comte de Lille. On the death of the dauphin, he declared himself Louis XVIII and was so recognised by the powers.<sup>1</sup> He was an exile, however, till after the fall of Napoleon, though his exile was busy with schemes and correspondence with the royalists, in and out of France. To the effects of these schemes we may now return.<sup>a</sup>

#### LA VENDÉE (1795) ; ROYALIST INVASIONS

After the disaster to the Vendéans at Savenay, December 23rd, 1793, the republican general Turreau had, as we have seen, split up his army into mobile columns which were christened " infernal," because they carried the decrees of the convention into effect, burned the crops, the woods, and the villages, and forced the inhabitants to leave the country. Charette and Stofflet with their men fought them in detail and often exterminated

[<sup>1</sup> Europe, with insulting rapidity, recognised the count of Provence, a refugee at Verona, as Louis XVIII, king of France and Navarre. A man to lead them, a hero to fight at their head, was all the gallant exiles said they required. But the new king was neither manly nor heroic. His brother, the count of Artois, was a libertine in his private life, and a devotee in religious faith ; and if he had any share in the blood of Henry IV, carried the white plume of Navarre, not in his helmet, but in his heart. Both the brothers talked of drawing the sword, and fighting for their rights ; but they were greater performers with the knife and fork, and heard unmoved of the devotion and death of their followers. — WHITE.<sup>g</sup>]



whole columns against whom the peasants had the most infuriated hatred. Brittany had exchanged war for war with the republic by means of the *chouannerie*. These were composed mostly of bands of smugglers and parties of Vendéans, escaped from disaster, and united in the rocks and forests. They scattered in parties from fifty to sixty; cut up the roads, destroyed bridges, massacred or terrified the republican authorities. Puisaye, a former member of the constituent assembly, an old Girondist general who had turned royalist, was their leader. He entered into communication with the émigrés and was preparing to go to London to obtain an English fleet and army. The exiled princes hoped little from the European powers, cooled down by republican victories; they depended only on Brittany and La Vendée. The two brothers of Louis XVI and the prince of Condé formed themselves into three rival courts and wasted time in wretched intrigues. The Thermidorian government recalled General Turreau, who would have ended by making a desert of La Vendée. In his stead they appointed General Canclaux, an able and moderate man, who was to try conquest and conciliation.

Young General Hoche, who was sent to Brittany, to his regret saw himself engaged in an obscure and little-known country, but he was nevertheless to disclose talents of the highest order and obtain the highest honours there as peacemaker. Canclaux restored vigorous discipline to his army and surrounded the country with positions which he advanced bit by bit towards the interior. While circulating the convention's proclamations of amnesty he seized cattle and implements until arms were given up. By these means he succeeded. Hoche in Brittany wrote thus to his officers: "Never lose sight of the fact that policy is to play an important part in this war. Employ by turns humanity, virtue, integrity, strength, cunning, and always a dignity becoming republicans. These peasants must have priests, it seems; let them have them, as they wish to. Many have suffered and sigh again for agricultural life; let them be helped to restore their farms. As to those who have relinquished everything for war, to return them to their own country would be to make them the victims of their own idleness and restlessness. Form them into battalions and enroll them in the republican armies. They will make excellent material for the advance-guard, and their hatred of the coalition which has failed to help them will be a guarantee of their good faith."

Charette, the first to be reduced by distress, agreed to negotiate. He had acquiesced in the conference of La Jaulnaye (February, 1795). Religious liberty, an indemnity of two millions, a promise to rebuild burned houses, and permission to form a territorial guard in the pay of the state, were granted him. The representatives, as a mark of favour, accorded Charette a triumphal entry into Nantes, where he was received with cries of, "Long live the Republic! Long live Charette!" A little later Cormatin and Stofflet, commanders in upper Vendée, also acceded to this treaty and obtained similar terms.

But the royalists showed no intention of yielding. This peace to them was nothing more than a truce. Charette himself had no intention of keeping it. Hoche knew this; yet he had nevertheless advocated its accomplishment. A few months of rest ought to cool the ardour of the royalists, and display the moderation of the republicans, thus rallying to their side the majority of the Vendéans and Bretons. In point of fact this is just what happened. The royalist insurrection was controlled by two committees — one in Paris, one in London. The first corresponded with the regent who styled him-

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self Louis XVIII, the second dealt only with Pitt. But there was no understanding between them. Charette was Louis' general. Puisaye in Brittany was the arm of Pitt. He had just come to an understanding with the British government and it was arranged that a considerable fleet should bring him an army of émigrés and ammunition into Brittany. But the expedition divided into three. The first convoy consisted of nine vessels and carried 3,600 émigrés and 80,000 muskets. Puisaye ordered it to Brittany when the English and émigrés would have preferred to land in La Vendée. This fleet, after having beaten some French vessels opposing it, moored in the bay of Quiberon. This bay is bordered on the one side by the coast of Brittany; on the other by a peninsula nearly a league across and two in length; it is the famous peninsula of Quiberon. It joins the mainland by a narrow tongue of soil about one league in length and called La Falaise. The fort of Penthièvre, situated between La Falaise and the peninsula, forms the landward defences. The émigrés, disembarking on this tongue of land, wasted valuable time. Dissensions broke out between their leaders. It disgusted them to fight side by side with coarse ragged men like the Chouans.<sup>1</sup> The Chouans on their part grumbled and complained that they were to be sacrificed to the regulars. Nevertheless they effected the occupation of the fort at Penthièvre and advanced some leagues inland. But Hoche bestirred himself. He pushed the royalists back and succeeded in shutting them up in the peninsula. Soldiers set about digging trenches to complete the blockade.

Puisaye in spite of this succeeded in bringing his peasants to different points of the coast to attack Hoche in the rear, whilst he charged him in front. This plan, well conceived, was ill carried out, and the republicans gaining the day (at Ste. Barbe, July 16th, 1795), pressed the émigrés closer and closer.<sup>k</sup>

#### HOCHÉ AT QUIBERON

On the evening of the 2nd Thermidor (July 20th) at low tide, three columns of republican troops marched on Fort Penthièvre. The central one was to attack the front from the rocks, that of the right and left entered the sea, the first to turn the tower, the second to scale it. The columns of the centre and right were discovered at dawn of day by the enemy. Confounded by the batteries of the émigrés and the English sloops, they fell back in disorder, until one of their leaders called out, "Do you fly, when the fort is ours?" The rising sun saw the tricolour flag floating on Fort Penthièvre.

The left column, guided by three intrepid deserters, in a dark night, in torrents of rain, and across a momentarily rising sea, had come, without being perceived, to the foot of the rocks, and had scaled them. The comrades of the deserters who were in the fort helped the "blues" to scale the wall. All of the émigrés in the fort were exterminated. The two other columns quickly rallied, threw themselves in front, and seized the batteries which

[<sup>1</sup> The émigrés and the Chouans accused each other of cowardice and treachery by turns. These disorders of the head were presages of little good. The gentlemen could accustom themselves neither to the mode of life nor the warfare of the Chouans; some even (but, one must own, only the minority) amused themselves by holding up to ridicule the simple manners, the extravagant costumes, and the rough dialect of those whose efforts they were assisting. The peasants, already exasperated with submission to a new development, nourished baneful retaliations in their hearts. Anarchy ruled amongst the royalist chiefs, and also amongst the soldiers, everyone gave orders, and by a telling contrast it was in the revolutionary ranks that the absolute power on the part of the general, and the submission and discipline which constitute an army and contribute to success, were to be found. — CRÉTINEAU.]

had cannonaded them. The remnants of the regiments of émigrés in cantonments beyond the fort and in the peninsular villages ran too late to help. These regiments included a number of prisoners, who immediately turned face and joined the "blues," crying "*Vive la République!*"

The émigrés fell back in disorder from post to post. The few remaining Chouans threw away their arms and the red coats which had been given them, and fled pell-mell with their wives and children, cursing the émigrés and the English. This scared multitude fled as far as Port Haliguen and the smaller fortress of St. Pierre at the extreme end of the peninsula. Beyond that there was nothing but the ocean. Puisaye, seeing all lost, threw himself into a boat to rejoin the English admiral, abandoning those whom he had led to their death, in the hope of recommencing the adventure. But it must be remembered that the mistakes that had so quickly ruined the enterprise were not his, but another's.

Young Sombreuil, remaining in charge, saw before him only a small advance-guard of 700 republican grenadiers, far less numerous than the débris of his troops. An English frigate by its fire protected the émigrés, and boats were put off to collect the men. However, Hoche, having hastened to the advance-guard, did not give them time to re-embark. He opened a cannonade on the English ships and summoned the "rebels" to lay down their arms under penalty of being thrown into the sea or of being bayoneted. Many émigrés and Chouans were drowned in trying to reach the fleet; others plunged swords into their breasts, knowing they had nothing to hope for. The majority laid down their arms and gave themselves up, Sombreuil at their head. This implied no lack of courage on his part. He hoped his unlucky companions would be spared. There was no capitulation; the rigorous laws against the émigrés did not admit of their general making them any promises. Hoche did what he could and sent back the wives and children and the republican soldiers, treated the prisoners with humanity and abstained from any demonstrations likely to aggravate their misfortunes.

Seventy thousand rifles, many cannon, and immense stores of provisions—all that Pitt had prepared to arm and carry on a civil war in France—remained in the hands of the republicans. Ten milliards of false assignats were found in the baggage and burned. Sixteen hundred French prisoners enrolled by the émigrés were sent back to their corps. There remained captive royalists to the number of nearly 4,700, including 3,600 Chouans, 550 military émigrés, and 500 Toulon fugitives, who had constantly carried on a bloody war against their country.<sup>1</sup>

Tallien hastened to Paris to ask for orders. He was told that the law against returned royalists must be carried out. About seven hundred émigrés, amongst whom was Sombreuil, were shot in a field at Auray. Pitt in relating the disaster at Quiberon to the English parliament, betrayed his indifference by saying: "No English blood has been shed." "That is true," replied Sheridan in an eloquent reply, "but English honour has been shed from every pore."<sup>2</sup>

#### CHARETTE'S MASSACRE AND END OF THE REVOLT

The disaster of Quiberon and the peace concluded with Spain, which signalled the end of this month, might have discouraged Charette. His hopes were perhaps diminished, but his courage was neither less energetic nor less obstinate on that account. From Verona and London promises of help came promptly. M. de Rivière returned to announce to him that Monsieur would come and join the Vendéans with an expedition preparing



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in England. Charette therefore restored to the war its former character of fury and bitterness. His first successes had placed three or four hundred prisoners in his power. At first he had thought of negotiating an exchange of captives, but the representatives and General Canclaux had refused this. Some time after, when Charette learned that Sombreuil and the Quiberon prisoners had been put to death, he sent for two of the prisoners and said to them: "Go and inform the generals and the civil authorities of the manner in which you have hitherto been treated in my army, and of the attentions which have been paid to you. It is with pain that I find myself obliged to have recourse to reprisals in order to avenge the death of the prisoners of Quiberon. But I must, if possible, prevent similar barbarities. Not one of your comrades will be alive to-morrow, and for the future I will act thus every time that royalist prisoners are butchered."

This terrible threat was carried out when Charette was about to leave Belleville and bear towards the coast where an English convoy was to land munitions which were being sent to him. It was a Sunday and the general's staff was attending high mass, when, in the midst of the sacred chants, horrible cries made themselves heard. The soldiers who formed Charette's bodyguard had conducted the prisoners into a wood close to the village and were massacring them with blows from pikes and sticks. The general, on leaving mass, saw his men returning, all covered with blood and bearing in triumph the spoils of their victims. An officer had presided at this frightful work and was boasting of it. "Leave my presence," said Charette to him; "you are unworthy of the rank of officer." This indignation against the murderers was not due to pity for the victims. More than a hundred had just been slaughtered, but there still remained two hundred prisoners. These were shot in the courtyard of the château of Belleville. The Vendean population by no means approved this massacre. The republican army of the west coast was resuming the war in a regular manner—it was under discipline and commanded by a general of temperate character and political instincts; the inhabitants were not being exterminated, nor were their houses being burned, nor their harvests any longer carried off. It was no longer the days of the *colonnes infernales*. Poitou and the left bank of the Loire did not present a spectacle similar to that which was being enacted in Brittany, and the country of *chouannerie*.<sup>d</sup>

Hoche followed up his success at Quiberon by proceeding to attack the insurgents of La Vendée. The count of Artois, who had joined them, behaved with gross incapacity, and at length abandoning them to their fate, embarked for England. Stofflet, defeated by Hoche near Bressuire, was



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captured soon afterwards, and executed at Angers in February, 1796. His brave comrade, Charette, having disbanded his troops, was hunted for days together through the forests and marshes, and being at last taken prisoner, was conducted to Nantes, where he was shot, March 29th, 1796. After this event Hoche gradually succeeded in pacifying the northwest of France.<sup>n</sup>

#### PEACE WITH SPAIN (JULY, 1795)

Meanwhile the royalist party, which had sustained so rude a check at Quiberon, found a discomfiture equally fatal preparing for it in Spain. Moncey had again entered Biscay, taken Bilboa and Vitoria, and was closely pressing Pamplona. The favourite who governed the court of Madrid, after repudiating the overtures of peace made by the French government at the commencement of the campaign, because he was not the medium through which they were submitted, now determined to negotiate, and despatched the chevalier Yriarte to Bâle. The peace was signed at that place with the envoy of the republic, Barthélemy, on the 24th Messidor (12th of July), the very time when disasters were thickening so portentously at Quiberon. The conditions were the restitution of all the conquests of France on the territory of Spain, and, in requital, the cession to France of the Spanish portion of Santo Domingo. Here France made great concessions for an advantage almost illusory, for Santo Domingo no longer belonged to either power; but those concessions were dictated by the soundest policy. France had nothing to covet beyond the Pyrenees; she had no interest in weakening Spain: on the contrary, it behoved her, had it been possible, to restore to that power the strength it had lost in a contest so detrimental to the interests of both nations.

This peace was hailed with the most lively satisfaction by all who loved France and the republic. It detached another power from the coalition, it showed a Bourbon recognising the republic, and it rendered two armies disposable for transfer to the Alps, the west, or the Rhine. The royalists were struck with consternation. The agents at Paris, especially, dreaded lest their intrigues might be divulged, lest their letters to Spain should be made public. England would have read therein their real sentiments respecting her; and, although that power was grossly vituperated for the affair of Quiberon, it was henceforth their only pecuniary resource.<sup>m</sup>

#### CAMPAIGN IN THE EAST AND SOUTH

France was less fortunate, in the course of this year, on the eastern frontier.<sup>1</sup> Pichegru had abandoned the command of the army of the North

[<sup>1</sup> According to Jomini<sup>p</sup> the distribution of the republican forces at the commencement of the campaign of 1795 was as follows, in effective troops, deducting the detachments and sick:

	Active.	Garrisons.	Nominal, including garrisons.
North	67,910	29,000	136,250
Sambre and Meuse	87,630	66,000	170,300
Rhine and Moselle	56,820	96,800	193,670
Alps	14,000	4,800	21,000
Italy	27,500	24,000	93,500
Eastern Pyrenees	43,290	4,000	82,790
Western Pyrenees	33,780	5,000	75,180
West	42,000		70,200
Shores of Brittany	51,000		78,400
Cherbourg	26,000		37,700
	449,930	229,000	958,990]

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to take that of the army of the Rhine; he occupied the left bank of that river from Mainz to Strasburg; Jourdan, with the army of the Sambre and Meuse (Maas), was quartered on the Rhine near Cologne. The allies had lost all the left bank, except Luxemburg and Mainz. The first of these places succumbed to famine. June 24th, and from that time the French aim was to cross the river, whose right bank was defended by the Austrians, under Clerfayt and Wurmser. But the French armies lacked all necessities, were in want of munitions and pontoon-trains; therefore they had to wait several months. At last, September 6th, Jourdan effected the passage in three different places, in the neighbourhood of Düsseldorf; Pichegru crossed the river almost at the same time opposite to the strong fort of Mannheim, which surrendered almost immediately. The two armies, by combining their manœuvres and uniting in the valley of the Main, could have opposed Clerfayt and Wurmser, and would have vanquished one after the other; but this plan was not adopted.

Pichegru was in communication with the prince of Condé, chief of the émigrés: he already contemplated betraying the republic, and compromised his army and that of Jourdan by the weakness of his manœuvres: he gave Clerfayt time to fall upon him with superior forces, allowed himself to be shamefully beaten at Heidelberg, and shut himself in Mannheim.<sup>1</sup> Clerfayt then attacked Jourdan, who, separated from Pichegru, shut in on one side by the Rhine, on the other by the neutral territory of Prussia, and lacking provisions, was forced to retreat, and recrossed the river. Thirty thousand Frenchmen still invested Mainz. Clerfayt, by a bold and skilful manœuvre, forced their line, and drove the French armies back to the foot of the Vosges on the left bank of the Rhine. Only the towns of Mannheim, Düsseldorf, and Neuwied remained to France on the right bank. An armistice followed this defeat, and the troops entered cantonments.

Brilliant successes in Piedmont compensated for the check of the armies of the Rhine. The important treaty concluded with Spain had permitted the union of the two armies of the Pyrenees and the Maritime Alps, under Kellermann. The union of these forces made it possible to take the offensive, and after a brilliant victory to force the passage of the Apennines and compel Piedmont to become neutral. Kellermann was replaced by Schérer, whose army, surrounded by the sea and the Apennine chain, was opposed to the Piedmontese army, under Colli, and the Austrian army: the latter extended from the summit of the Apennines in the basin of Loano down to the sea; the former occupied the opposite side of the mountains towards the Po, strongly entrenched in the camp of Ceva. Schérer attempted a bold stroke; Masséna, by his order, crossed the summit of the Apennines, and separated the two armies of the enemy, while Serrurier deceived Colli by a false attack, and Augereau drove back the Austrians to the basin of Loano. A complete victory was the result of this skilful

[<sup>1</sup> Honoured by the republicans, and with the greatest military reputation in France, Pichegru had taken command of the armies of the North, the Sambre and Meuse, and the Rhine. When his fame was thus at its height he became a traitor, and for the promise of a marshal's baton, the governorship of Alsace, the castle of Chambord, 1,000,000 francs in cash, and 200,000 francs a year, sold his army and his country. He allowed Jourdan to be beaten before Mannheim, and betrayed all his plans to the enemy. His intrigues were suspected, and when he offered his resignation to the Directory in October, 1795, it was to his surprise promptly accepted. Pichegru's campaigns of 1794 are marked by traits of an audacious genius which would not have disgraced Napoleon; like him, he perceived the intrinsic fitness of the French soldiers for strokes of daring rather than for sustained battles. But a more thorough traitor never commanded an army. He flattered in turn Saint-Just and the terrorists, the Thermidorians and the directors, and seemed altogether unmoved by considerations of loyalty or patriotism.<sup>4</sup>]



manœuvre; the enemy was overwhelmed and put to flight, a storm of wind and snow covered their headlong flight; twenty guns and an immense amount of ammunition fell into the hands of the victors, and Italy lay open to the French.

Thus, with the exception of the check which had driven back the French armies in the east, the republic had met only with victories in the course of 1795. In the north it had conquered the whole of Holland, and in the south the passage of the Apennines, the door of Italy; the hopes which Brittany and La Vendée had founded on England vanished at Quiberon. In fact, three of the powers had laid down their arms: Prussia, Holland, and Spain. The cause of the émigrés seemed lost abroad, and all hopes were fixed on the reactionary movement at home: this movement, directed in the first place by moderate republicans, soon became royalist and tried its strength against the violence of the revolutionary action.<sup>r</sup>

The convention, in the meantime, was drawing to its natural term. All France was weary of its rule; and public opinion, though extending pardon on account of its late recovery of courage and moderation, still could not forget its pusillanimity, its betrayal of the liberty and lives of the whole nation to tyrants, its crimes, the mutual slaughter of its members — its reign, in short, of three years, uniting in that small space more than three centuries of any history could present of guilt, anarchy, and suffering. In these three eventful years, the convention had isolated itself, its opinions, and its interests from France, which it certainly could no longer be said to represent. The higher classes, or such of them as survived, abhorred it as regicide; those of common and of middling fortune, the bourgeoisie of towns, were averse likewise to the body which decreed the “maximum” and deluged the land with a valueless paper money, and which still screened the terrorists. The lower orders and the speculative democrats who led them held in equal hate the conquerors of Prairial. If the convention were dissolved, in this state of public feeling, the members could not hope for re-election. The administration of the state would pass into other hands, which might not only modify the government, but think fit to punish the Thermidorians themselves. Tallien himself was weighed down with crime; Fouché equally, Carnot too — all heroes and leaders in the convention, but without any supporters whatsoever in the nation. To save themselves, in other words to perpetuate their power, was therefore the first consideration with the convention; and this was no easy matter to accomplish, considering that a share of liberty and of republican organisation was still necessary.

A commission of eleven had been long employed upon a new constitution. They had undertaken the task to satisfy the clamours of the democratic party, at that time uncrushed. They had been chosen, too, amongst the best informed and most honourable members of the convention, those belonging to the committees of government being excluded.<sup>c</sup>

#### DARESTE ON THE CONSTITUTION OF THE YEAR III (1795 A.D.)

The commission of the Eleven, nominated to make organic laws, made in reality a new constitution. The report was read on the 23rd of June, 1795, by Boissy d'Anglas: “An auspicious time has come,” he said, “in which we no longer fight as gladiators for liberty, but in which we can be the founders of that liberty.” Passing in review, according to custom, the events of the past five years, he gave an interpretation that had never been put upon

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them before. He showed the republic, corrupted for some time past by usurpers and scoundrels who had used the Paris commune and the Jacobin club only as their instruments. He called the crude work which had been dignified by the name of the Constitution of 1793 "organised anarchy." He ridiculed the mockery of acceptance obtained by corruption, force, and terror. He declared it impracticable, with its one and absolute assembly, holding from primary assemblies, which was an illusion, and dominating an executive council with no power or dignity. He accused its originators of ignorance and ineptitude, since they had not ruled on the most important points, such as the right of declaring war or proposing peace; also, for having recognised the right of insurrection without establishing any method of repressing sedition. What was really needed was a free constitution which would be the work of common sense. The scheme of the Eleven was definitely accepted the 10th of August after a serious discussion.

The new constitution, unlike its predecessors, bore the impress of experience acquired by six years of revolution. It began by a declaration of rights; but to liberty and equality were added security of personal property. Individual liberty was guaranteed; arbitrary arrest was proscribed. Assurance of justice and a fair trial were promised to everyone under every circumstance. It was ordered that all taxes should be assessed equitably from all citizens according to their ability; this was in condemnation of forced loans. No individual, no group of citizens could hold sovereign power; this condemned the Jacobins. It was recognised that suffrage was the right of every citizen. But two conditions were attached to this right — one year of domicile and the payment of a tax. Later on, that is from the year XII, it was added that every elector must know how to read and write and prove his knowledge of his profession. Those who had served in one or two campaigns since the establishment of the republic were exempted from the tax.

The legislative body (and this was the greatest change) was to be composed of two chambers. One of 500 members, hence called the council of the Five Hundred, the other of 250, to be called the council of Ancients because every member had to be at least forty years of age, whereas thirty years sufficed for the other. The two councils were to be elected in the same way, which would exclude the monarchical idea of a life senatorship and the aristocratic idea of a hereditary peerage. They had equal rights, with this exception — that the Five Hundred alone could propose laws, propositions which had then to be submitted to the formality of three readings.

The Eleven demanded a strong independent executive power, which should occupy an honoured and brilliant position, but they did not desire a presidency, which would be a disguised return to monarchy, nor a double consulate, which was only a weakened and vicious form of presidency. Neither did they desire that the chief statesmen should be elected directly by the country. That would give them too much power. So they established a directory of five members, named by the legislative body and renewable by one-fifth of its members every year; the presidency being quarterly and alternative. To this body was given the duty of watching over the interior and exterior safety of the republic; of proposing war; of carrying on the same when it had been voted by a decree of the legislative body; of disposing of the armed forces; negotiating treaties (subject to ratification); of promulgating and executing laws.

Yet the Directory would only be the deliberative part of the government. Action would rest with the ministers it chose. The ministers, who were to act, did not form a council, held no deliberations, and did not communicate

with the legislative body. They were responsible, but individually, and to the Directory. This latter was answerable to the legislative body, by which it could be brought to judgment under specified forms. However, as it was strongly desired not to return to a tyranny such as had been the committee of public safety, the Directory was not allowed the initiative of law-making, nor the authority to judge authors of plots otherwise than by the ordinary forms. None of its members could command an army. Finally the treasury was confided to five independent commissioners named by the councils.

It was necessary to reconstruct the departmental administration. A return was made to the custom of elective directors for each department, in number limited to five, adding to these a commissioner named by government. It was a simple reform, already demanded by Condorcet.

The high court of justice was reconstituted and at each session consisted of judges that the court of cassation named from its own numbers. Every possible guarantee was granted to individual liberty.

The constitution would need remodelling. In this case it was necessary that the changes should be proposed by the council of Ancients and accepted by the Five Hundred consulted thrice at a three years' interval. The primary assembly then named an assembly of revision, composed of two members from each department. These latter, acting in prescribed form, and keeping strictly to the object in view, prepared new articles for the constitution.

Many additional articles went to confirm the liberty of the press, without any censorship: writers being liable to action only when there was a direct violation of law. Individual liberty of conscience with regard to religion was guaranteed; every sect being equally protected and none salaried; liberty in all professions, in commerce, industry, the arts; inviolability of property, dispossession taking place only with due formality and with proper indemnity; prohibition of associations or corporations opposed to public order; prohibition for any society to have correspondence with other societies, or to admit the public to its meetings, to purge its membership; the maintenance of the right of petition, but in virtue of individual, not collective right; prohibition of tumultuous assemblies armed or not armed, with rules for dispersing them; the institution of a particular dress for the legislative body and public officials.

Finally, two important points were regulated: first, the most recent law with regard to émigrés was final and was not to be modified; secondly, the sale of national property already made was not to be questioned, at least suits for reclaiming property could result only in a pecuniary indemnity. These stipulations were made with the object of assuring stability for the fresh state of affairs created by the Revolution, and to hinder a reversal of fortunes.

Such was the constitution of the year III, a work of conciliation wrought by experience, and incontestably superior to its predecessors. It represented the institutions of '89 and '91 amended and made practicable. Doubtless there can be seen in it inevitable marks of private interests, of passion, and some essential vices, that were not long in manifesting themselves.<sup>1</sup> The illusory responsibility of the directors, the irresponsibility of the ministers, the permanence of the assemblies, created enormous and unforeseen difficulties. However, the constitution of '95, accepted with less enthusiasm than the preceding ones because it was the third or fourth, and because faith in such charters was dead, was appreciated by enlightened minds.<sup>2</sup>

[<sup>1</sup> Duruy *k* says that the constitution, "hoping to escape a dictatorship and form a moderate republic, achieved only a republic of weakness and anarchy."] ]



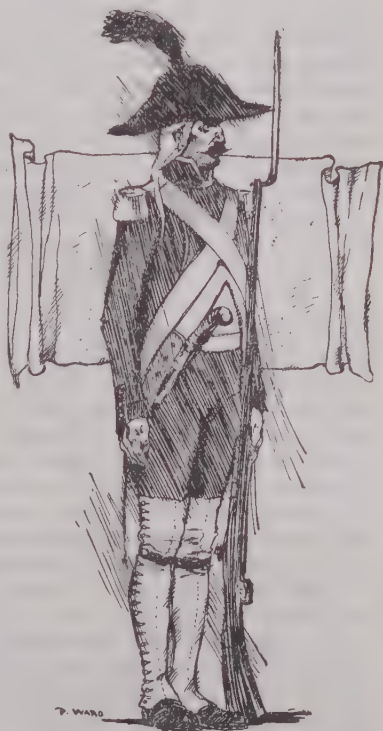
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## THE 13TH VENDÉMIAIRE (OCT. 5TH, 1795)

Such was the directorial constitution, which was voted without difficulty by the convention. It was, however, far from reassuring the leading members, or the majority of the assembly, who could not mistake in the public the universal symptoms of their unpopularity. The form of government being now in discussion, it was of course free to all to entertain opinions thereon.

There remained a strong party in the capital whose rallying point was war to the terrorists and hatred to the convention. Many were monarchically inclined, and the ancient royalists, raising their heads, began to intrigue and make partisans. The convention made use of the pretext to pass a decree that only one-third of their number should be immediately re-elected, the remaining two-thirds to subsist, one-half to be renewed in eighteen months, the other at a more distant period; moreover, that the convention was itself to make choice of the two-thirds destined to be of the new legislature. This was, in fact, to constitute and secure the majority. Never was a more gross and dictatorial act committed. The Parisian citizens were indignant. They united in their sections, declaimed with all the fury of Jacobins, though in a very different sense, against this new tyranny. Petitions were drawn up, and the boldest remonstrances sent to the convention.

The convention, however, though it could look for support to no rank of citizens, was highly popular with the army, which it had sent to victory, and which had been disciplined to fear and to obey it. The tactics of the convention, therefore, were to bring the army to its aid. A camp was formed in the plain of Sablons, near Paris. In order to give some colour to their usurpation, they ordered the new constitution and the additional decrees to be submitted to all the primary assemblies of France, and also the armies. This was no small flattery to the latter. The new constitution and its additional decrees were voted with acclamation by the army. The sections, or primary assemblies of the capital, approved the constitution; but unanimously rejected the decrees perpetuating the two-thirds of the convention. In the provinces, however, the importance of the decrees was not perceived; the opinions and enlightened views of the capital were slow in reaching them. And although it was notorious that the anti-terrorist party was even stronger in the provinces than in Paris; yet the constitution, including the decrees, was declared to have the assent of the primary assemblies almost unanimously. The directorial constitution and the decrees were declared law, and the new system of government was to commence in November.



A FRENCH INFANTRYMAN, CLOSE OF  
THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

The rage of the Parisians against the convention now knew no bounds. They met, declaimed, petitioned, and those attached to the Bourbon cause were active in stirring the flame. The Bourbonists did infinite harm ; for absolute power, an aristocracy with feudal privileges, and all the ills of the ancient régime, were associated with the name. The army and the terrorists, and the extreme revolutionists, rallied to the convention ; and the sections, or Parisian citizens, were weighed down by the obloquy incident to their royalist opinions, which did not really form one hundredth part of their general feeling.

As the convention resumed its usurpation, and even proposed to name the Directory, without waiting for the new legislature, the sections proceeded to form their electoral assembly, which they might take as a general council. It had been convoked at as late a day as possible. The sections anticipated it, and named each their elector, who met at the then Théâtre Français, now the Odéon. The convention ordered a column of troops to march and disperse the meeting. It had taken place, however, and had separated ere the troops arrived. Thus menaced, the committee of government thought fit to accept the offers of the old popular leaders, the terrorists, who, smothering their griefs, offered their aid against the sections. These men were armed and mustered ; but a sufficient proof of how fallen was the party, was found in the fact that their number did not exceed 1,500, whilst the national guard of the sections counted 40,000 citizens.

The arming of the terrorists occasioned fresh alarms. The sections met. That of Lepelletier, forming the central and wealthy commercial quarter, declared itself in permanence and in insurrection. The example was imitated ; and a civil war was declared betwixt the convention, which sought to perpetuate its dictatorial authority, and the Parisians resolved to contest it. The assembly again summoned the army from its camp to menace and disarm the section Lepelletier. General Menou accordingly led a strong force, which he posted in the rue Vivienne, and thence summoned the insurgent section. It presented itself in battle array to Menou, who begged of it to disperse. The citizens refused. The general, disliking to attack the inhabitants, was glad to enter into a compromise. Menou retired to his camp, while the section Lepelletier continued to occupy its hall.

The foregoing scene took place on the 12th Vendémiaire (the 4th of October) ; the sections were of course emboldened by their success, and made preparations for attacking the convention on the morrow. The assembly in turn took its measures, exclaimed against the weakness of Menou, and looked round for an officer to succeed him. Barras was appointed. But aware of his inability to meet a force of 40,000 national guards with merely 5,000 soldiers, he in turn looked round for some officer more skilled and energetic than himself.

His sagacity found this officer in Bonaparte, then in Paris, and disengaged ; who gladly accepted the task, having been from the commencement of his career attached to the extreme democratic party, which he admired for its energy, and pardoned for its terrorism. The plan instantly pursued by Bonaparte was to make use of the arm familiar to him, the artillery ; to stand on the defensive, occupying every avenue to the palace of the convention ; and thus with concentrated forces to repel the attack of the citizens. These on their side mustered in their sections, formed in columns, and marched to overwhelm the convention and its small number of defenders. The sections, however, were without any eminent leader. Their only hope was in simultaneous and combined attacks ; unless, indeed, they adopted the

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plan later recommended by Thiers, and followed with such success in July, 1830.<sup>1</sup>

The plan could not be worse organised. A great many of the sectionaries quitted their ranks for want of ammunition, which had not been provided. At length, those of the north side of the river advanced to the church of St. Roch, occupied it, and prepared to penetrate by the rue du Dauphin to the Tuileries. Here Bonaparte in person—there was no attack elsewhere to distract him—received the assailants with a determined fire of grape, that soon routed them;<sup>2</sup> he pursued them in the rue St. Honoré, which he equally swept with cannon. Those of the fugitives who did not shrink to their homes hurried to the other side of the river, to join the sections of the faubourg St. Germain in their attack, which had not yet been made. When they did appear, menacing the Pont Royal, Bonaparte was here also to receive them, where his cannon, meeting with no impediment along open quays, long streets, and an unencumbered bridge, worked tenfold havoc, and not only succeeded in routing, but in disheartening the sections. Thus fell the cause of the citizens and national guard before the will of the convention, supported by the army and a few of the democrats. The sections were disarmed, the anarchists humbled, the Bourbonists obliged to fly. The convention, resolving itself, with most glaring absurdity, into an electoral assembly, fixed upon two-thirds of its body, which were to constitute the majority of the new legislature, declared its session terminated on the 26th of October, 1795 (4th Brumaire, year IV), and called this act “a dissolution.”<sup>c</sup>

#### DURUY'S RÉSUMÉ OF THE PRINCIPAL CREATIONS OF THE CONVENTION

The imperious necessities of the strife had not allowed the assemblies to realise all their projected reforms. They had however at least prepared immense quantities of materials for the succeeding generation to utilise. Meanwhile, in the midst of commotions and victories, the convention, to strengthen the unity of France, had prepared a uniform code; established national education; created normal and polytechnical schools, normal and primary central schools (*lycées*), schools of medicine, chairs of living languages, a bureau of longitudes, a conservatory of music, the Institute, the museum of natural history, and fixed the uniformity of weights and measures (the metrical system). By the reckless issuing of assignats (44,000,000,000) it had demolished public wealth, and by the “maximum law” it had destroyed commerce; but by the sale of the national lands, which comprised a third of the territory, it had opened up to cultivation by the new proprietors immense domains till then unproductive. By the creation of ledgers of the public debt it had prepared for better days a renewed confidence in the

[<sup>1</sup> “There was a manœuvre much more prudent for the sections than that of exposing their force in deep columns to the fire of Bonaparte’s cannon. This was to form barricades in the streets, to invest the assembly and its troops in the Tuileries, to get possession of the surrounding houses, and to open from every window and aperture a murderous fire on the supporters of the convention, slaying them one by one and reducing them by famine. But the sectionaries only thought of a *coup-de-main*; and hoped by a single charge to make their way, and to force the gates of the palace.”—THIERS.<sup>m</sup>]

[<sup>2</sup> “‘It is false,’ says Napoleon, ‘that we fired first with blank charge; it had been a waste of life to do that.’ Most false: the firing was with sharp and sharpest shot: to all men it was plain that there was no sport; the rabbets and plinths of St. Roch Church shew splintered by it to this hour. — Singular: in old Broglie’s time, six years ago, this Whiff of Grapeshot was promised; but it could not be given then; could not have profited then. Now, however, the time is come for it, and the man; and behold, you have it; and the thing we specifically call ‘French Revolution’ is blown into space by it, and become a thing that was!’ — CARLYLE.<sup>b</sup>]



credit of the state. The invention of the telegraph allowed of the rapid transmission of orders from the central government to the frontiers; and the establishment of museums awakened a taste for the arts. The convention desired, moreover, that the infirm and the orphans should be cared for by the state; and the last decree of these terrible legislators was for the abolition of capital punishment after a general peace should be established.<sup>s</sup>

After the convention had promulgated, in solemn form, the union of Belgium with France, and its subdivision into departments, it resolved to terminate its long and tempestuous career by a signal homage to humanity. It decreed that the punishment of death should be abolished in the French Republic from the period of general peace; it changed the name of the place de la Révolution to that of place de la Concorde; and it pronounced an amnesty for all acts having reference to the Revolution, save for the revolt of the 13th Vendémiaire. This was setting at liberty the men of all parties, except Lemaitre, against whom alone of all the conspirators of Vendémiaire sufficient proofs to warrant condemnation existed. All the prisons were ordered to be thrown open. At length, two hours and a half after midday of the 4th Brumaire, year IV (26th of October, 1795), the president of the convention delivered these words: "The national convention declares that its mission is fulfilled, and its session terminated." Cries enthusiastically repeated of "Long live the Republic!" accompanied and followed these last words.

Thus closed the protracted and memorable session of the national convention. The constituent assembly had found the old feudal organisation to destroy and a new organisation to construct: the task of the legislative assembly had been to essay this new organisation, burdened with the king left as a component part of the constitution. After an experiment of several months, it ascertained and proclaimed the incompatibility of the king with the new institutions, and his confederacy with coalesced Europe; it suspended the king and the constitution, and abdicated its functions. The convention, therefore, on its convocation, encountered a dethroned king, an abrogated constitution, war declared against Europe, and, as resources in the emergency, an administration utterly subverted, a paper-money greatly depreciated, and antiquated forms of regiments, hollow and emasculated skeletons. Thus, it was not liberty the convention had to assert in presence of an enfeebled and contemned throne; it was liberty it had to defend against all Europe—a task of very different import. Undaunted in the crisis, it proclaimed the republic in the teeth of the hostile armies; it immolated the king to render its contest irrevocable; eventually it arrogated all authority, and resolved itself into a dictatorship. Within its own pale, voices arose to invoke humanity when it would hear only of energy; it stifled them.

Speedily this dictatorship, which it had assumed over France in the exigency of general peril, twelve members assumed over it, for the like reason and in aggravated exigency. From the Alps to the ocean, from the Pyrenees to the Rhine, those twelve dictators seized upon all, men and things, and commenced with the nations of Europe the greatest and most terrible struggle recorded in history. In order to remain supreme directors of this mighty undertaking, they smote all parties successively; and, according to the condition of human weakness, they exhibited their qualities in their extremes. Those qualities were fortitude and energy; the excess was cruelty. They shed torrents of blood, until, become useless through victory and odious by the abuse of power, they succumbed. The convention thereupon resumed the dictatorship, and began by degrees to relax the springs of its redoubtable

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administration. Tranquillised regarding its safety by victory, it listened to the voice of humanity, and yielded to its spirit of regeneration. During a year it was actuated by the desire of devising and establishing whatever was good and great in a community; but factions, crushed beneath a merciless authority, revived under a government of clemency and forbearance. Two factions, in which were amalgamated, in infinite shades, the friends and enemies of the Revolution, attacked it in turn. It vanquished the first in Germinal and Prairial, the second in Vendémiaire, and to the last day manifested a heroic courage amidst dangers. Finally, it framed a republican constitution, and, after a strife of three years, with Europe, with factions, and with itself, bleeding and mutilated, it abdicated, and transferred France to the Directory.

It has left behind it terrible reminiscences; but for its exculpation it has one—one single fact to allege, and all reproaches sink before that stupendous fact—it saved France from foreign invasion! The preceding assemblies had left France in peril and hazard, it bequeathed France saved and victorious to the Directory and the empire. If the emigration had succeeded in subduing France in 1793, no trace had remained of the labours of the constituent assembly, or of the benefits resulting from the Revolution; instead of those admirable civil institutions—of those magnificent achievements which signalled the constituent, the convention, the Directory, the consulate, and the empire—France would have been a prey to such sanguinary and degrading anarchy as was later deplored beyond the Pyrenees. By repelling the aggression of the kingly conspiracy against the republic, the convention secured to the revolution an uninterrupted action of thirty years on the area of France, and afforded to its works time for consolidation, and for acquiring that force which enables them to defy the impotent wrath of the inveterate foes of humanity. To the men who call themselves with pride “patriots of 1780,” the convention will always justly reply, “You had provoked the struggle; it is I who sustained and terminated it.”<sup>m</sup>





## CHAPTER XIV

### THE DIRECTORY: NAPOLEON IN ITALY

[1795-1797 A.D.]

This mingled tale of great national convulsions and pitiless executions — of a total upheaving of new elements, and a total displacement of the old, with heroism, patriotism, and the loftiest aspirations combined with folly and charlatanism of the wildest kind — is now coming to an end. Napoleon Bonaparte is about to lay his hand on the Revolution, and guide it into the path he desires. The history of France condenses itself for the next twenty years into the life of one man, and the same thing may almost be said of the history of the whole of Europe. — WHITE.<sup>b</sup>

It might have been hoped that the overthrow and punishment of the leading terrorists would produce a return to legality, to order, and to a respect of the representative system. Extreme parties were wearied, decimated, and worn out. The republic was victorious, and had no more to fear from foreign enemies. Now was the moment to establish liberty on a firm basis. The convention, dissolved, would have been replaced by a majority of new men, unstained by the crimes of the Revolution, with the page of experience opened before them, warning them alike of the excesses of royal and of popular tyrants.

But no: the convention, chosen by the nation, dared not trust the nation. Its majority could not hope for re-election; and the past crimes of its members thus forced it to cling to power in self-defence. The republicans made a bugbear of royalism, in order to serve as a pretext for their arbitrary measures; just as royalism makes the same use of republicanism when it has the upper hand. Offering then the pretext of this groundless fear, the old members of the convention perpetuated their power, which thus became a veritable tyranny and dictatorship. It was still more a tyranny, because supported by no party or class whatsoever. The royalists, the moderate, the extreme republicans — all disowned them. The higher classes and the middle classes



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they had been obliged to slaughter on the eve of usurpation; and they were very soon assailed by a conspiracy of democrats. Thus deserted by all parties, the majority of the new legislature represented but one interest—that of themselves, the regicides; and had but one aim—their own impunity and continuance in power. It was impossible that their authority, thus baseless, could endure: they leaned for support on the military, which became their janissaries. And the military were obedient, until there arose a general of reputation and ambition, capable of taking the lead, and of representing the military interest. As soon as such a personage appeared, the dictatorial tyranny fell before him, and their usurpation gave way to his. The party of the regicides was superseded by that of the soldiers.

On the 27th of October, 1795, the 500 self-elected conventionalists united themselves, according to their decree, to the 250 newly elected members. These last were for the most part moderate men, distinguished by their information and probity, and strangers to revolutionary excess. Their old colleagues instantly stigmatised them as royalists, ere they opened their mouths. Amongst the married members above forty years of age, a ballot took place; 250 were thus chosen to form the upper chamber, or council of Ancients. The next important step was the choice of the five members of the executive Directory. In this, too, the conventionalists had provided for the maintenance of their system and influence: being the majority, they had entered into a private compact to nominate none save those who had voted the death of Louis XVI, the shibboleth of their party. Accordingly, the choice fell upon Barras, Rewbell, Larévellère-Lépeaux, Letourneur, and Sieyès. The last, either from dislike to his colleagues, or in pique that his plan of government had not been adopted, refused the office; and Carnot was chosen in his stead. The newly elected deputies proposed Cambacérès, who had voted for the imprisonment, not the death, of Louis; but the majority did not consider him sufficiently staunch.

It required an inordinate measure of either courage or ambition to accept the office of government at such a moment. The legislature, and of course its executive, could reckon on the support of no party. The discomfited citizens were indignant; the patriots not reconciled. The five directors, in repairing to the palace of the Luxembourg, which had been assigned them, “found there not a single article of furniture. The porters lent them a rickety table, a sheet of paper, and an ink-bottle, to enable them to despatch the first message announcing their accession. There was not a sou in the treasury. Each night were printed the assignats requisite for the service of the morrow; and they were issued whilst yet moist from the presses of the republic. The greatest uncertainty prevailed as to the provisioning of the capital; and for some days the people had received but a few ounces of bread and some rice each.”<sup>c</sup>

#### FINANCIAL CONDITION OF FRANCE

The financial situation was frightful. Twenty-nine billions of assignats had been issued of which ten had been retired, and nineteen remained in circulation, although on account of the great number of counterfeits it was impossible to know the exact figure. The assignats lost in value from a hundred to a hundred and fifty to one. As a result no more purveyors could be found, officials tendered their resignations, and soldiers deserted, through having no means of living. The postmasters threatened to stop their service. To feed the armies of Paris, the lack of money was supplied by fabricating

assignats in proportion to their needs. The convention, upon the report of the commission of the Five, decided to decree an extraordinary war tax, payable partly in cash, which was equal to twenty times the land tax, and ten times more than the license tax. The Directory demanded the council's authorisation to issue immediately three fresh billions of assignats, equivalent to twenty or thirty millions of écus, and to place the orders for supplies in the neighbouring departments of Paris.

Bankruptcy was inevitable. In reality, it had already taken place, owing to the enormous depreciation of paper. It had even been declared implicitly, the day whereon the convention had reduced the value of the assignats to about a fifth, by submitting them to a variable scale in proportion to the dates of the issue. Only they were always buoyed up by the illusion that the paper would rise again, and that they could liquidate it under less unfavourable conditions. They had therefore sought to find employment for it with which some advantage was connected.

These illusions were no longer possible. The inability of selling the national property was proved. There was too large a quantity of it. The buyers were scarce, and stigmatised by public opinion. Confiscations became more odious, as they multiplied, and the calculations of Cambon less and less practicable. It was, then, only a question of knowing if bankruptcy were definitely decreed, or still put off in the hope attenuating it.

It was also a question of giving up the issue of assignats, which, moreover, brought in almost nothing. The hard cash which the Terror had caused to disappear, would reappear when liberty was restored to individual transactions, when the last traces of the unnatural currency were suppressed, and the state began once more to pay in silver.<sup>d</sup>

#### SOCIAL MANNERS UNDER THE DIRECTORY

The moral tone of France seemed to be ruined. This was, says the duchess d'Abrantès,<sup>e</sup> according to many men of worth, the period of a real republic; but it was also, according to others, the most deplorable epoch, calculated to excite the utmost compassion for poor France fallen into so abject a condition after the violent paroxysms which had brought her within a step of ruin.

And, strangely, while affairs were taking this turn, the arts were growing popular and science seemed to be on the highroad towards perfection. The republican mania had not limited itself to a desire for a republic. The partisans of this state of things, seeing such a Utopia to be incapable of realisation, stopped at insisting upon the revival of the patriotic gods and of civic functions. They dined in the open, which is annoying when windy, and in the street, which at all times is dirty. But as all dined together in Sparta, it was essential that all should dine together in Paris; with some rejoicings at evading the Spartan broth. The streets were overrun with young men in real *sansculottes* and a little tunic, a cloak, or perhaps an ample toga. Artists and authors spoke and dreamed only of things republican. Men were to be seen dressed in Grecian style and gravely promenading in their white togas trimmed with red, and, halting by one of the Louvre gates, they would there discourse on important state affairs. They never laughed, rested the chin in the hand, saluted with a shake of the head, in short, strove their utmost to play the Roman; even the young men did this to the best of their power. It must not be thought that these were but two or three of the hot-headed and young; there were at least three hundred of them.<sup>f</sup>

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## TYRANNIES OF THE DIRECTORY

Formed of regicides, and supported by a self-created majority of the same party, the hatred and persecution, not only of royalism but even of moderate republicanism, was in fact imposed on the Directory. A law passed immediately previous to its election, not only banishing the wives of the émigrés, but excluding even their relatives from all functions. It also excluded those who had favoured the insurrection of the sections, or who had shared in the similar reaction which had taken place in the south.

It was in enforcing their unjust laws that the Directory and the conventionalists first found their measures opposed by the little knot of the newly elected deputies. These men, stigmatised as royalists, and certainly beginning to despair of seeing liberty established in France under a republic, represented the wisdom, the moderate and just wishes of the nation. Their names, Thibaudeau, Dupont de Nemours, Barbé Marbois, Matthew Dumas, Le Brun, Portalis, Boissy d'Anglas, Lanjuinais, became all more or less celebrated. We have the testimony of Thibaudeau *g*—whose every page wears the character of honesty and veracity—that the members most suspected of royalism, Boissy himself, were, on the contrary, true to the established system, and that the outcry of the conventionalists was but a pretext. These last, to mark their suspicions, and cast obloquy on their new antagonists, proposed and decreed a kind of legislative *fête* in honour of the 21st of January, the anniversary of the death of Louis. The members were obliged to swear hatred to royalty. Dupont, as he repeated this, added “hatred to all kinds of tyranny,” an allusion that the conventionalist majority took immediately to themselves, and forced Dupont to unsay it. The Directory itself showed more generosity than the party from which it sprang. It contained two weak men—Larévellière-Lépeaux, a Girondist, and a dreamer; and Letourneur, a cipher. Barras took the lead, especially in domestic affairs. He was a Dantonist: a profligate republican, and, as such, averse to Carnot, who was a puritanical patriot, and one of Robespierre's terrorist committee.

Barras, however, from his birth and superior knowledge of life, necessarily held the directorial court, and thus assumed the chief influence. He had served in India, where he had learned to love magnificence; and, under his direction, the Luxembourg soon presented the appearance of a palace, by the richness of its decorations, crowds of suitors in the day, and gay assemblies of both sexes at night.

Barras re-established the old machinery of despotism—a minister of police, with the usual concomitants. By these means he hoped to discover the machinations of the different parties, and anticipate their explosion by acts of vigour; and he succeeded. To this he added what was called a constitutional guard, being a faithful corps of troops at the immediate service of the Directory. Thus, under the specious outside of liberty, not only tyranny, but those secondary props and pillars which support it, were carefully set up by the government.

Despite its hatred and hostility to royalists and moderates, the Directory was nevertheless first assailed by a democrat conspiracy. Gracchus Babœuf declared that the Revolution wanted yet one thing to its perfection, *viz.*, an agrarian law. All the anarchists rallied to the utterings of such flattering doctrines—Drouet, Santerre, Rossignol, and the surviving herd of the lower revolutionists. The directors closed the club of the Panthéon. But this merely inspired the members to form a more secret and organised plan,



tending to the great purpose of insurrection. Barras, however, ferreted them, by agents of his new police, through all their holes and conciliabules; and as their project grew ripe, he enveloped and took the greater number in one net.

The trial of Babeuf lasted for a long time, and was remarkable for the insolence and mad audacity of the accused. Gracchus Babeuf and one of his brother scribblers were condemned to death, a judgment which they endeavoured to anticipate by suicide. Six or seven were transported, the rest acquitted.

But we must now quit the struggle of parties, to paint the rising fortunes of the warrior who was destined to swallow them up. The history of France becomes for a long and glorious period identified with the life of Napoleon Bonaparte.<sup>c</sup>

#### THE ORIGIN AND RISE OF NAPOLEON

Napoleon Bonaparte, born at Ajaccio on the 15th of August, 1769,<sup>1</sup> was the son of Carlo Bonaparte whose family came from Italy, and of Letitia Ramolino. The Bonapartes of Pèrouse became extinct in 1397; those of San Miniato at the end of the sixteenth century. We also come across some at Florence. The Corsican branch originally resided at Sarzana in the territory of Genoa, and in 1610 passed into Corsica where it remained in obscurity until Napoleon appeared. Napoleon gave a lively account of the genealogies made for him after his coronation and of the importunities of an old relative, an abbot of San Miniato, on the subject of one Father Bonaventura Bonaparte, a capuchin of Bologna and long since beatified, but for whom it had been impossible to obtain canonisation owing to the enormous expense which that would have required. "The pope will not refuse it to you," said the good abbot, "if you ask him; and if it has to be paid for, that will now be but a trifle to you." Napoleon signed himself Buonaparte<sup>2</sup> until the day on which he assumed command of the army of Italy. His father, a judge at Ajaccio and a deputy for the Corsican nobility in 1779, died in 1785; his mother died at Rome in 1839. They had eight children: Napoleon was the second. The five sons were Joseph, Napoleon, Lucien, Louis, Jerome, the three daughters, Elisa, Pauline, Caroline. Admitted to the military school at Brienne in 1779, he passed five years later to the military school of Paris, on the recommendation of his professors, one of whom, the history master, had made this remark concerning him: "He will go far if circumstances favour him." The following year he obtained the rank of lieutenant in the artillery regiment of La Fère. His first garrison was Grenoble, then Valence. He at first showed himself to be a strong partisan of the Revolution, and when, in 1793, Paoli would have given Corsica to the

[<sup>1</sup> The accepted opinion is that Napoleon was born at Ajaccio on August 15th, 1769. This opinion rests indeed on the positive statement of Joseph Bonaparte, but it is certain from documents that on January 7th, 1768, Madame Letitia bore a son at Corte, who was baptised by the name of Napoléone. And even in legal documents we find contradictory statements about the time and place of birth, not only of Napoleon, but also of Joseph. All difficulties disappear at once if we suppose that Napoleon and Napoléone were one and the same, and that Joseph was really the second son, whom the parents found it convenient to pass off as the first born. This they may have found convenient when, in 1779, they gained admission for a son to the military school of Brienne. A son born in 1768 would at that date be inadmissible, as being above ten years of age. Thus it is conceivable that Napoleon was introduced by a fraud to that military career which changed the face of the world. Nevertheless it is certain from Lucien's memoir that of such a fraud nothing was known to the younger members of the family, who regarded Joseph as without doubt the eldest. — SEELEY.]

[<sup>2</sup> The spelling "Bonaparte" also occurs in early Italian forms of the name.]

[1793-1796 A.D.]

English, young Bonaparte went with the expedition directed against this old friend of his family. It was not successful; he and his were obliged to fly, and took refuge at Marseilles where his mother and sisters lived in very straitened circumstances.<sup>1</sup>

When the army of the convention attacked Toulon, which had been surrendered to the Anglo-Spanish fleet, the people's representatives made him the commander of a battalion and charged him with the direction of the siege artillery. His general, Cartaux, very brave but very incapable, required nothing of him save to make a breach through which he might pass with his grenadiers. Bonaparte maintained that it was not with the town that they had to concern themselves but with the ships; that to threaten to cut off the latter from their retreat would force them to fly. He showed the general and the representatives a point at the southern extremity of the roadstead from whence it would be possible to bombard the fleet. "It is there that Toulon stands," he said. Dugommier had superseded Cartaux. He understood Bonaparte's plan and approved it. The fort of Éguillette was carried and the English hastened to abandon Toulon, which they had been unable to save and which they set on fire. Bonaparte, appointed brigadier-general as a reward, went to command the artillery of the army of Italy. The day of the 9th Thermidor arrested his fortune.<sup>2</sup> He was placed on the inactive list; the revolt of the section on the 13th Vendémiaire removed him from it, as we have seen, with éclat. Carnot gave him command of the army of the Alps with which Schérer, or rather Masséna, had gained the glorious but barren victory of Loano (23rd and 24th of November, 1795). He was then only twenty-seven.<sup>3</sup>

His marriage (March 9th, 1796) with the widow of General Beauharnais, happening simultaneously with the appointment, gives some foundation to the rumour that the interests of her friends, combined with his own, procured for him the command of an army of activity. Josephine, much older than Napoleon, was a



JOSEPHINE, FIRST WIFE OF NAPOLEON I  
(1763-1814)

[<sup>1</sup> The European war was just breaking out, and at Paris everything was in confusion; otherwise he would probably have been tried by court-martial and shot. A rebel in Corsica, a deserter in France, what was he to do? He went to Paris. The government, attacked by all Europe, could not dispense with the few officers whom the emigration had left. On August 30th, 1792, his name was restored to the army list, with the rank of captain, a commission dated back to the 6th of February, and arrears of pay. He was saved from the most desperate condition to which he was ever in his whole life reduced.<sup>b</sup>]

[<sup>2</sup> Probably the connection of Bonaparte with the Robespierres was closer than Bonaparte himself at a later time liked to have it thought.<sup>b</sup>]

creole, of engaging person, and seems to have inspired him with a sincere passion.

In the commencement of the war the Netherlands principally had attracted the attention of the forces of the French. These conquered, and being secure from hostilities on the lower Rhine by reason of peace with Prussia, and on the side of the Pyrenees by that with Spain, they bent their efforts first to the invasion of Germany by the upper Rhine. The campaign of 1795 had in this quarter not been attended with success; whilst on the Mediterranean a partial victory, in which the counsels of Bonaparte had no small share, had shown Austria to be far more vulnerable in that quarter. Whilst Moreau, a cautious rather than an active general, was sent to replace Pichegru on the

Rhine, Bonaparte was despatched to the Alps, to realise and execute the projects of conquest which he had first suggested.<sup>c</sup>

The fourth year of the Revolutionary War was opening. The peculiar characteristic of that war is that, having been for France, at the commencement, a national war of liberation on the grandest scale, it changed its character and became an equally unprecedented national war of conquest.<sup>b</sup>

Political were joined with strategic motives. In Italy, the French were opposed by an alliance betwixt Austria and Piedmont, which it might be possible to break. True it was, the king of the latter country had cause of inveterate enmity against France, which had robbed him of Savoy, a large and important part of his dominions. But "could we defeat the Austrians," argued the statesmen of the Directory, "we might recompense the king of Sardinia by giving him the Milanese in lieu of



ALEXANDER BERTHIER  
(1753-1815)

Savoy." According to this plan, Bonaparte was recommended to penetrate into the Milanese, if possible separate the allies, and exert his utmost efforts against the Austrians. These political views harmonised completely with his military plans, which were, not to brave and carry the obvious passes of the Italian Alps, blocked by fortresses and defended by well-known positions, but, in the language of war, to turn them.<sup>c</sup>

#### BONAPARTE'S CAMPAIGN IN ITALY (1796-1797 A.D.)

Carnot's plan for the campaign of 1796 was bold and scientific. Jourdan and Moreau, two generals already celebrated, each of them having with him from 70,000 to 80,000 men, were to penetrate into Germany, the first by the valley of the Main, the second by that of the Neckar, with the object of reaching the basin of the Danube and descending thence on the hereditary states which Bonaparte's 38,000 men would menace by way of Italy. Thus Moreau in the centre and Jourdan and Bonaparte on the two wings, were about to effect a movement in advance, feed the French armies from the



[1796 A.D.]

hostile countries, and converge if possible on the road to Vienna. But the three armies were divided; Bonaparte from Moreau by the mass of the Italian Alps; Moreau from Jourdan by the Alps of Franconia. This plan, excellent if successful, might have troublesome consequences in case of reverse.

When Bonaparte joined the army of the Alps the generals Masséna, Augereau, Serrurier, Laharpe, Berthier, already rendered illustrious by important services, received the new-comer with a bad grace. He assembled them together, unfolded his plans; and, on leaving the council, Masséna said to Augereau: "We have found our master." On the soldiers Bonaparte sprung one of those magnificent proclamations which electrified men's minds:

"SOLDIERS:

"You are ill-fed and almost naked; the government owes you much, but can do nothing for you; your patience and courage do you honour but procure you neither glory nor advantage. I shall now lead you into one of the most fertile plains in the world; there you will find great cities and rich provinces; there you will find honour, glory, and riches. Soldiers of Italy, would you be found lacking in courage?"

The army was in cantonments on the southern slope of the Alps and Apennines, where during four years it had been painfully struggling against the Sardinian and Austrian troops. The first were at Ceva; the second were established more to the east on either side of the Apennines, in the valley of the Bormida and the river of Genoa, towards Voltri. Beaulieu was in command of them and spoke of making short work. He would not take off his boots, he said to the king of Sardinia, till he was at Lyons. Bonaparte had 38,000 men against 60,000. Nevertheless he resolved to take the offensive, and did so boldly, that he might gain the more thereby. Instead of wearing out his forces amid barren rocks where no great blows could be struck, he repeated and improved on the manœuvre which had led to the fall of the camp of Saorge in 1794, and which, followed by Masséna in 1795, had also won for Schérer the victory of Loano. He turned the Alps in order to cross the mountains at the lowest point of the chain towards the sources of the Bormida at the defile of Montenotte whilst Beaulieu waited for him on the sea shore by Voltri, and by this skilful movement he placed himself in a position fronting the weakest point of Austrian Piedmont.<sup>2</sup>

#### BATTLE OF MONTENOTTE AND CONQUEST OF PIEDMONT (1796 A.D.)

Now Beaulieu divided his force, attacked the column in front to check its progress, and compress it, whilst he assailed it from the gorge of the Alps to take it in flank and cut it. Betwixt the Austrian divisions of the left and centre, destined to execute both these projects, there was none but a circuitous communication; the mountains lay between them: and the French general was thus enabled, by amusing and keeping the show of fighting one, to unite sufficient numbers to crush the other.<sup>1</sup> He instantly aimed at the centre, and abandoned all idea of marching further to Genoa.

The Alps, at that early season still covered with snow, offered few gorges where it was possible to pass them: on this Bonaparte had calculated in his adventurous march. That of Montenotte was one of these passes; but as yet uncertain of the dispositions of Beaulieu, and whether it might not behove him to continue his march towards Genoa and the pass of the Bochetta,

[<sup>1</sup> This, the first of Bonaparte's campaigns, has been compared to his last, as in 1815 he tried to separate Blücher and Wellington, hoping to overcome them in turn, so now with more success he attacked first the Austrians under Beaulieu, and then the Sardinians under Colla.<sup>2</sup>]

the French general had occupied it by a detachment of nearly 1,200 men. Argenteau, according to the orders of Beaulieu, led the Austrian centre, about 18,000 strong, to Montenotte on the 11th of April. A small body first arrived, before which Rampon retreated to a redoubt, and against which he defended it with desperate bravery. Aware, by a quick instinct, that the safety of the whole army depended on his preventing the Austrians from pursuing down the Alps simultaneously with Beaulieu's front attack, and before the French were prepared, Rampon made his men swear to perish rather than yield the redoubt. They succeeded in keeping possession of it till the night, when Bonaparte made dispositions for transporting his whole army from the shore to the summit of the Alps, leaving Beaulieu with merely the shadow of an antagonist, whilst he totally crushed Argenteau and the centre. The night of the 11th and the morning of the 12th was

rainy; mists covered the hills; and Argenteau was not a little surprised to see a strong division issue from them to attack him. The combat was sharp: the Austrians imagined that Rampon with some reinforcement was their only antagonist; but as the mist cleared, the whole French army appeared around: Masséna advancing almost in their rear, and Bonaparte himself on a lofty summit directing the motions of his troops. There was no hope but in flight, which the attack soon rendered disorderly and murderous: the Austrian centre, broken and routed, abandoned its cannon and a number of prisoners, and fled to Dego.

Such a partial victory was important far less in itself than in its consequences, and these were to be snatched by an active hand. The Austrian centre, rallied at Dego, was to be annihilated, and its position occupied, ere Beaulieu could arrive to its aid; whilst the Sardinians under Colli, already advanced to Millesimo, were at the same time to be repulsed,



PIERRE FRANÇOIS CHARLES AUGEREAU  
(1757-1816)

and thus a complete disjunction effected betwixt the allied enemies. The very day of the victory of Montenotte, Bonaparte pushed on to the pursuit. Dividing his army into two, the greater portion, under Augereau, attacked the Sardinians at Millesimo on the 13th; whilst Masséna approached Dego, and prepared to carry it on the morrow. At Millesimo the Sardinians were driven in at the first onset; but Provera, commanding a body of Austrians destined to be the link betwixt Colli and Argenteau, made a stubborn resistance, and at length took possession of an old castle called Cosseria, on the top of a hill, whence it was found impossible to force him. The assault was attempted, but in vain; Provera killed almost as many French in defending Cosseria as the latter had killed of Austrians at Montenotte: but his valour could not repair the original error of Beaulieu.

The Sardinians, making every effort on the 14th, could not disengage Provera, who was without provisions, and surrendered at length on observing Colli obliged to retreat. On the same day the position of Argenteau at

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Dego, defended by the beaten troops of Montenotte, was forced, and the town taken possession of by the French. Beaulieu had not yet time to appear, when a stray body of Austrians, 6,000 strong, returning from vain attempts at impracticable and now useless movements, stumbled upon Dego, forced the French posts, and drove them out. This was disheartening to an army which had fought incessantly for three days, and was now reposing after a second victory: the greater part, indeed, were slumbering, overpowered with fatigue and wine. Masséna and Laharpe, however, succeeded in rallying a certain number to resist this new enemy; but it was not without effort and loss equal to those made in the first attacks, that the re-conquest was achieved.

These victories of a week had effected the separation of the Austrian and Sardinian armies, had cost them 10,000 men and 40 pieces of cannon, and had opened all Italy to the French, by giving them the possession of the Alps and Apennines. Bonaparte now marched to crush the Sardinian army altogether, and menace Turin, in order, according to the plans of the Directory, to force that court to abandon the alliance of Austria. Turning to the left then, and leaving Beaulieu behind, the French pursued Colli to his entrenched camp at Ceva, which the latter, not thinking tenable, abandoned, and retired to Mondovi. Colli still held firm, in expectation that Beaulieu would exert himself, hurry to his aid, and make some attempt to repair their mutual disasters. But the Austrian already trembled for Milan; and, abandoning his ally, was meditating to provide for the safety of the latter town, not of Turin. Colli was, in fact, left to shift for himself in Piedmont, as the duke of York had been in Flanders. Nevertheless, the Sardinian general did all that a brave man and a skilful general might: vanquished at Mondovi, he made a gallant retreat. Nevertheless it behoved the king of Sardinia to make peace with the conqueror, whom he was unable longer to resist. Bonaparte required the surrender of all the important fortresses of the kingdom; Turin, and one or two others, alone excepted. Thus the passes of the Alps were opened to the French. Free passage was at the same time to be allowed their troops across Piedmont. In short, the monarch and his little realm, merely allowed to exist, were completely at the mercy of the conquerors. Ere the end of April all this had been effected. Said Bonaparte, in a simple proclamation, where facts spoke sufficiently the language of triumph:

“SOLDIERS :

“In fifteen days you have won 6 victories, taken 21 stand of colours, 55 pieces of cannon, the greater part of the fortresses and territory of Piedmont. You have made 15,000 prisoners, slain or wounded upwards of 10,000 men, and have raised yourselves to an equality with the armies of either Holland or the Rhine.” After continuing in the same strain, he thus terminates: “There are yet some of you, it is said, whose ardour flags, and who propose returning to the summits of the Apennines and Alps. No, I cannot believe this. The conquerors of Montenotte, of Millesimo, of Dego and Mondovi, burn to carry yet further the glory of the French people!”

The plans of Bonaparte, instead of turning back to the Alps, which he had passed, had already far outshot even Milan. The day on which the armistice was signed, he wrote to the Directory: “I shall chase Beaulieu over the Po, follow him, and occupy Lombardy; before a month I hope to be on the mountains of the Tyrol, to communicate with the army of the Rhine, and, in concert with it, carry the war into Bavaria.” The Directory in return, or rather Carnot, its war organ, applauded the zeal of the young general, directing him to drive the Austrians into the Tyrol; and then, in



lieu of following them, to divide the army, leave half in Lombardy under Kellermann, and march with the rest southward against Rome and Naples.<sup>1</sup> The letter, at the same time, reminded Bonaparte that he was to consult the commission of the Directory on all important occasions. This latter hint, as well as the proposal of dividing the army, stirred the temper of the young general. He replied sharply that nothing great or decisive could be effected except by one commander, and by him, moreover, uncontrolled. "Break the unity of military thought, and you lose Italy. Kellermann is a more experienced and a better officer than I. But together we could do nought but blunder."

#### INVASION OF THE MILANESE: THE BRIDGE OF LODI

In the meantime Bonaparte, having achieved the conquest of Piedmont, now entered upon that of the Milanese.<sup>2</sup> The army of Beaulieu, though diminished by defeat, was still of force capable to defend a country bounded and intersected by so many rivers. Immediately betwixt the French and Milan ran both the Ticino and the Po. Bonaparte, in his negotiations with the court of Turin, had insisted on having Valenza, on which was a bridge over the Po. He had done so in order to deceive Beaulieu into the belief that he intended to pass there.

The Austrian was caught in the snare; posted his army at the confluence of the two rivers, and prepared to dispute the passage. Instead, however, of their crossing both streams in following a straight line upon Milan a circuit on the right bank of the Po would bring the French to Piacenza, farther down the stream than where the Ticino meets it. By crossing there, in lieu of Valenza, the latter stream was altogether avoided, and Beaulieu's retreat threatened to be cut off. Bonaparte, to effect this, undertook a forced march of thirty-six hours to Piacenza, which he reached on the 7th of May. With the aid of what boats he could seize, a bridge was thrown over the Po, and the army passed on the 9th. It did not hesitate to attack the nearest Austrian division, which was routed, and fled to Pizzighettone on the Adda. No river or line of defence now intervened betwixt the French and Milan. Beaulieu, anticipated and foiled in his project of defending the bridge of Valenza on the Po, hurried to a place himself behind the Adda, the next river eastward of Milan. The French general instantly resolved to force this line of defence ere the Austrians had time to strengthen it. Until this was achieved he deferred taking possession of

<sup>1</sup> Some of the advice contained in this letter of Carnot is not a little characteristic: "Let the republican troops remain in the Milanese and levy contributions. You will arrive there just in harvest. Manage so that the army of Italy will not need to draw anything from home." And again, "If the pope should make offers of peace, demand first of all that he put up public prayers for the prosperity and success of the French Republic. Some of his fine monuments, his statues, pictures, medals, books, his silver madonnas, and even his church bells, may defray the expenses of our visit." Thus we see that two kinds of spoliation attributed to Bonaparte originated in the orders of the Directory.

<sup>2</sup> Upon receipt of the intelligence of that campaign of fifteen days, of that rapid succession of victories, followed by so advantageous a treaty, France was astonished; Italy, degraded by alien masters and filled with an ardent desire for independence, was profoundly agitated; and all those decrepit sovereignties that had joined the coalition trembled, whilst preparing for resistance. It was a dangerous enterprise to advance with thirty thousand men into a country regarded as the sepulchre of the French, leaving Piedmont and Genoa in a state of doubtful neutrality in the rear, and faced by the Austrian power, flanked by Rome and Naples, full of fanatical hatred against "the atheists and robbers of France." But none of these states possessed troops; allies might be found amongst the people, a victory over the Austrians would cancel hostilities. Bonaparte resumed his march by way of Alessandria. — LAVALLÉE.]

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Milan. Pizzighettone, the nearest town that contained a bridge over the Adda, was too well garrisoned and defended. Bonaparte pressed on to the next bridge, tracing upwards the course of the river. This was at Lodi.

Beaulieu had made good his retreat thus far. Half of his army, however, he had been obliged to send by a circuitous direction, in order to throw a garrison into the castle of Milan. This half the French general hoped to intercept, if he could succeed in routing the remainder, about 12,000 men, which Beaulieu kept with himself at Lodi. To drive the advanced guard of this body from Lodi and beyond the Adda was an easy task. But to dispossess them of the bridge was an attempt so rash that the Austrians considered it impossible. Otherwise they would have destroyed the bridge, or at least an arch of it. But it was now too late for this, as the French cannon were instantly ordered to play upon it. Beaulieu, on his side of the bridge, raked it with thirty cannon. On either side the shower of grape-shot was dreadful; but the French were covered by the walls and houses of Lodi, whilst the Austrians were exposed. Their general, in consequence, drew them out of reach of shot; thus trusting the defence of the bridge to the formidable battery alone.

Seeing this, Bonaparte formed his stoutest grenadiers in column, and prepared to cross, whilst the cavalry menaced to pass by a ford at no great distance. At a word the column rushed on the bridge. Its front was shattered, almost ere it was formed, by the shower of shot. It even hesitated, till the generals placed themselves at its head, and cheered it on; whilst the light troops, dropping down the wooden buttresses of the bridge, passed underneath to distract the enemy. The first fire of the battery was the chief obstacle; that withstood, the French rushed on the Austrian guns, and bayoneted the cannoneers. The cavalry followed, and had time to form and charge ere the main line of the tardy Austrians could come up. These withstood the assault for but a few minutes. They gave way and fled, leaving behind their artillery, colours, and some thousand prisoners. Thus was completed the rout of Beaulieu, the shattered remains of whose army retired towards the Tyrol and the provinces of Venice.

The victory of Lodi was won on the 10th of May. On the 15th, Bonaparte made his triumphant entry into Milan, where a large portion of republicans and personal admirers welcomed the hero. Uncertain, however, as to the political fate of the country, and already less a Jacobin from the eminence he had obtained, he kept a prudent reserve, not showing the same haste to revolutionise that he had shown to conquer.<sup>c</sup>

He had already granted an armistice to the duke of Parma on payment of two millions, as well as horses, grain, and twenty pictures for the museum of the Louvre in Paris. He concluded a similar treaty with the duke of



JEAN VICTOR MOREAU

(1761-1813)

Modena; he levied twenty millions upon Lombardy, sending ten to the Directory and one to Moreau, to enable him to take the field. It was quite a new departure for a general to support not only his army but his government: moreover the ministers were beginning to feel alarm at this young man who governed conquered provinces according to his own liking; who signed treaties with nations and princes, leaving the throne to one, promising independence to another, and who, in fact, displayed the most extraordinary talent for leading men. An attempt was made to balk him in his plan of campaign; he sent in his resignation. The government dared not accept it. From that time dates his influence over the government, as over the army; he was master of the operations of war and of peace; the people and the soldiers already treated him as a leader.<sup>j</sup>

Seven or eight days appeared to Bonaparte a sufficient period of repose for himself and his army after their fatigues and combats. Milan, too, where money, good cheer, and admiration awaited them, might prove enervating to their valour. On the 24th, therefore, he resumed his march eastward, and reached Lodi, when tidings of a general revolt, which had awaited but the signal of his departure, reached him. He instantly hurried back to Milan; there the insurrection had been put down. At Pavia, on the contrary, it had been successful. With not more than 1,000 men, the general marched against a city of 30,000 inhabitants, where, moreover, the insurgents had got possession of the citadel, and disarmed the French garrison. With the artillery, his sovereign arm against the populace, Bonaparte battered down the gates, entered, and swept the streets with grape-shot, rendering himself master of Pavia. He rewarded his successful band by several hours of pillage, which the soldiers effectually employed, principally in the goldsmiths' shops and the great pawnbroking establishment. The officers left in command of the garrison, who had delivered the citadel, he condemned to be shot; and thus having done summary justice by the insurrection, the general rejoined his army.

He now entered the Venetian states, little respecting the neutrality of that government. As the Austrians had traversed them, Bonaparte resolved to take the same liberty, without, however, if possible, exciting the enmity of Venice, which he by turns menaced and cajoled.<sup>1</sup> Beaulieu, reinforced, had retired behind the Mincio, a river which runs from the Lake of Garda to Mantua, and determined to defend its passage. He had taken possession of Peschiera, a fortress on the river, where it issues from the lake, despite the Venetians, and posting his troops along the stream, his centre at Borghetto, he awaited the French. But the confidence of the Austrians was gone; the hardest enterprise was no longer rash, when undertaken by the French against them. After some manœuvring, Bonaparte, on the 30th of May, attacked Borghetto, where there was a bridge over the Mincio. Beaulieu took care to destroy an arch; but, in despite of this, the French crossed chin deep in the river, beat their enemies on the opposite side, and re-established the bridge.

The Austrians now retired into the gorges of the Tyrol, Mantua being the only town of Italy where the imperial eagle still floated. It was an almost impregnable place, completely surrounded by a marsh or lake, traversable merely by raised roads or causeways. Famine, however, might

[<sup>1</sup> The Venetian aristocracy, decrepit but still wealthy, and able to command 12,000 men and 20 vessels, did not like Austria, who surrounded it on all sides, but the French it held in detestation on account of its Revolution; it assumed an attitude of disarmed neutrality that brought about its ruin, and found itself at the mercy now of the Austrians, now of the French.]



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reduce it, and Bonaparte formed the siege. To take up a position, so as to protect this siege, was the next important point; for the Austrians merely waited for reinforcements to re-issue from the Tyrol, and again strike a blow for Lombardy. The Adige formed the best line of defence, being deep, rapid, and of short course. Verona and Legnago were its keys and bridges. Venice was most reluctant to yield them; but by half menace, half cajolery, Bonaparte obtained possession, and garrisoned them.

Thus, in the commencement of June, was the third act of the military drama of 1796 completed. He first annihilated Piedmont, and next he grasped the Milanese. In that just concluded, he set foot upon the Adige, and bade defiance to the last efforts of Austria. Pausing there, Bonaparte, forbidden by the Directory to engage his army in the Tyrol, marched with a strong division across the Po, to terrify southern Italy into submission.<sup>c</sup>

In spite of so much success, the situation of the French was becoming complicated with a multitude of obstacles; besides Piedmont and the state of Genoa, where bands of brigands were massacring their isolated soldiery, besides Parma and Modena, whose ill will was undoubted, they had the English at their backs, masters of Leghorn and Corsica: upon their right flank Rome and Naples, who were arming; in their midst Venice in a state of wrath, for it had been forced to feed the French troops, three of its strongholds were occupied, and ideas of independence were being propagated in its towns; finally, 50,000 Austrians, detached from the armies of the Rhine, were on the march with the aged Wurmser, to gather together the remains of Beaulieu's army, raise the siege of Mantua, and reconquer Italy. It was necessary to check actively all the movements and hostile intentions. Bonaparte left 15,000 men before Mantua, 20,000 upon the Adige, and with seven or eight thousand marched upon the peninsula to force Naples into quiescence, ransom the pope, and drive the English from Leghorn. The Neapolitan court hastened to surrender, withdrew its troops from the coalition, and closed its ports to the English. Genoa, when threatened, gave all the required sureties (June 5th). Bonaparte traversed Reggio, Modena, and Bologna, enlightened and energetic towns, anxious for liberty, which received him with enthusiasm. Ferrara yielded without resistance. Pope Pius VI, a good but weak prelate, who had expressed himself with vehemence upon the subject of the Revolution, was terrified; he requested an armistice (June 2nd), and was astonished at receiving it with tokens of respect, but in consideration of the surrender of the legations of Bologna, Ferrara, and the citadel of Ancona, a contribution of twenty-one millions, one hundred pictures, and five hundred manuscripts. Bonaparte then sent off a division to Tuscany, which entered Leghorn, garrisoned it, and distributed arms and ammunition in Corsica, by which means the inhabitants of that island were enabled to drive out the English. Lastly, after having forced Piedmont by threats into a state of peace, he returned to Mantua.<sup>i</sup>

While all these glorious feats had been achieved with an army of 38,000 men, Moreau and Jourdan, on the Rhine, had 126,000 at their disposal; and the Austrians, under the archduke Charles, 110,000. Moreau was an able general; but he had not reached that grand unity of plan which inspired Bonaparte. He was also under the control of Carnot, an able minister, but one who pedantically endeavoured to regulate from his cabinet the march of armies in the field. In war, as in medicine and other arts, there is always some new nostrum considered sovereign for the time. Carnot's maxim was to turn and force the wings of an enemy's army; which to do more effectually on the Rhine, he divided the French force, giving one-half to Moreau, the other to

Jourdan, keeping them far apart. It was committing the same blunder, though on a much larger scale, as that which had proved fatal to Beaulieu. The archduke Charles, however, failed to take any advantage of the separation of his foes, until necessity inspired him with boldness and invention.

In June, the Austrian court drafted 30,000 men from the army of the Rhine, under Wurmser, in order to rally the relics of Beaulieu's troops, and defend, or rather regain, Italy. Weakened by this, the archduke thought fit to retreat. An advantage won by Moreau, who followed and pressed him, precipitated his retreat to the Danube. Here, however, in the strong defiles that guard the dominions of Austria, the archduke made a stand, and, not imitating, but rivalling, the new tactics of Bonaparte, he concentrated his force, bore it rapidly upon Jourdan, whom he thus overwhelmed and defeated. Moreau, deprived of the support of his colleague, was obliged to retreat on his side through the Black Forest; a manœuvre which he effected with such skill, firmness, and trifling loss, as to earn fame equal to that which a victory would have given. To the archduke Charles truly belonged the glory of the campaign in Germany.<sup>c</sup>

The young archduke was indebted to the absurdity of the French plan for a brilliant conception, which he realised with prudence; but, like Moreau, he lacked that ardour, that audacity if you will, which might have rendered the blunder of the French government fatal to its armies. Conceive what would have happened if on either side had been engaged the impetuous genius which had annihilated three armies beyond the Alps! If the 70,000 men of Moreau, at the moment they debouched from Kehl, or if the imperials, at the moment they quitted the Danube to wheel on Jourdan, had been conducted with the vigour and promptitude exhibited in the Italian campaign, assuredly the war would have been terminated most disastrously for one of the two powers.

The campaign endowed the young archduke with a resplendent fame in Europe. In France, a grateful fame was engendered towards Moreau, for having led back in safety the army compromised in Bavaria. The greatest anxiety had been felt respecting that army, especially from the time when, Jourdan being repelled, the bridge of Kehl menaced, and the communications through Swabia intercepted by a multitude of detached corps, nothing was known of its operations or its fate. But when, after an interval of poignant disquietude, it was seen debouching into the valley of the Rhine in so perfect an attitude, men were enchanted with the general who had so auspiciously redeemed it. His retreat was extolled as a masterpiece of art, and straightway compared to that of the Ten Thousand. None ventured, indeed, to oppose it to the brilliant triumphs of the army of Italy; but as there are always many whom superior genius and high fortune mortify, and whom less shining merit rather gratify, all such declared for Moreau, vaunted his consummate prudence and ability, and esteemed it preferable to the electric hardihood of young Bonaparte. From this period, Moreau had for partisans all who prefer secondary to transcendent talents; and, it must be confessed, in a republic we almost pardon enemies of genius, when we see how that genius can become culprit towards the liberty which has quickened, fostered, and raised it to the pinnacle of glory.<sup>d</sup>

#### BONAPARTE CRUSHES WURMSER

Whilst 150,000 French thus manœuvred to and fro betwixt the Rhine and the Danube to very little purpose, 40,000 under Bonaparte were deciding the fate of Europe. Wurmser rallied the scattered and disheartened bands of

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Beaulieu. His fresh troops, with the relics of the Italian army, formed an army of more than 60,000 men; and with these the Austrians issued from the Tyrol. Wurmser seemed full of confidence; so much so, that whilst he advanced in person southwards down the Adige, occupying both banks to drive the French before him and relieve Mantua, he despatched 20,000 men under Quasdanowitch to march round the Lake of Garda, and cut off the retreat of the French.

General Bonaparte, engaged in pressing the siege of Mantua, was here for the first time caught slumbering on his past good fortune. He was tied, in fact, to the conquest of Mantua, which he could not bring himself to abandon; and hence the Austrians were allowed to burst upon him. His projected line of defence on the Adige was useless; for Wurmser's chief force came down in the pass betwixt it and the lake. Here Masséna was driven from his positions: Quasdanowitch did as much by Gueux on the other side of the lake. Tidings of both reverses reached Bonaparte on the 30th of July, and shook him for the time. He was not accustomed to defensive warfare; his spirit and genius were only called forth when he attacked. His first impulse was to call a council of war; an unusual act of condescension. All counselled retreat save Augereau;<sup>1</sup> and his appeared but blind ardour. In his meditations of the night, Bonaparte's imagination kindled with a plan of assuming the offensive, and of rapidly attacking each division of the enemy separately. On the morrow all was active. The besieging army was instantly ordered to abandon Mantua, destroy its artillery, and rally with all the scattered corps to the southern extremity of the lake westward of the Mincio.

When this was effected, Bonaparte marched to repulse Quasdanowitch, impending from the western shore of the Lake of Garda. Fortunately Wurmser allowed him time for this operation, by an idle march which he made to provision Mantua. Whilst the Austrian general was thus enjoying the sight of cannon destroyed, and other signs of a siege abandoned, the French were driving back Quasdanowitch, routing one of his corps, and intimidating the rest to inaction and retreat. Bonaparte then hurried back—he scarcely quitted horseback for many days—to face the Austrians advancing from the Adige. They came to join bands with Quasdanowitch, and drove Masséna at first from Lonato. Bonaparte in person arrived from his expedition to support Masséna along the road from Brescia. As he halted in their presence, the Austrians advanced their wings to envelope him, as well as with their right to reach as near as possible to Quasdanowitch. The French general allowed them to extend, till, seizing the moment, he rushed with his whole force upon their centre, broke through it, scattered one half, and intercepted the other, which, pursued with unrelenting activity by Junot, laid down its arms at last. Such was the combat of Lonato, fought on the 3rd of August.

Lonato is a short distance southward of Desenzano, which forms the point of the lake. Still farther south, in a direct line, is Castiglione, where certain heights formed a favourable position of defence. Thither then Bonaparte transferred his quarters to resist Wurmser; who, returning from Mantua, had rallied the divisions beaten at Lonato, and prepared to take his revenge. Both generals spent the 4th in mustering and preparing to try the fortunes

[<sup>1</sup> On this occasion we find the young commander's resource and courage failing him. He called councils of war, and declared in favour of retreating across the Po. When Augereau resisted this determination, he left the room declaring that he would have nothing to do with the matter. and, when Augereau asked who was to give orders, answered, "You!" The desperate course was rewarded with success.<sup>a</sup>]



of a battle on the following day at Castiglione. Bonaparte had ridden to Lonato to hasten the march of his rear, when a straggling body of Austrians, beaten on the 3rd, and wandering ever since in search of the main army, presented itself, and commanded the French general to surrender. Bonaparte had but 1,000 men. Assuming a bold countenance, however, he received the officer sent to summon him, in the midst of a numerous staff, and, feigning anger at the demand, replied: "Return, and tell your officer that you have found here the commander-in-chief of the French, who gives him eight minutes to surrender. He is surrounded by our division, and has nothing to hope." The astonished Austrian delivered the message, and corroborated the assertion that Bonaparte himself was there. The commander accordingly abandoned all thoughts of resistance, and, with upwards of three thousand men, surrendered to a body not one-third its number.

On the next day, the 5th, was fought the battle of Castiglione. Bonaparte, to render it decisive, had despatched orders to the corps of Serrurier, which had been engaged in the siege of Mantua, and which in its retreat from thence had not yet joined the main army, to take a circuitous route, so as to reach the left of the Austrians at a certain hour. It was in these calculations of time that Bonaparte excelled. Now the cannon of Serrurier were heard simultaneously with those of the French right wing, which advanced to the attack. The left held back, bringing the line into a semicircular form, which was also assumed by the Austrians as they pressed on. The latter, however, forming the outer circle, tended to spread as they advanced; the French concentrated as they retired. The Austrian line soon became still more weakened on the right by the necessity of drafting some of the detachments to oppose Serrurier's corps. The French suddenly ceased to retire, and began to attack. The Austrian right was driven in, at the same time that their left was thrown into disorder by Serrurier; and Wurmser, narrowly escaping capture himself, was obliged to give orders for retreat.

Thus did the fatuity of the Austrian general, in parcelling out his noble army, deliver it up to be beaten in detail by Bonaparte.<sup>1</sup> Wurmser now saw himself worsted; but he resolved at least to avoid the fate of Beaulieu, and to preserve his force from total discomfiture. He therefore retreated into the Tyrol in as good order as was possible with troops who had lost all confidence, and who began to believe, with some reason, that the French were invincible. Whilst the conquerors reposed for the remainder of August, resuming the siege of Mantua, the court of Vienna reinforced Wurmser, the cabinet acting on the same false plan as its generals, in making petty consecutive and divided efforts, instead of a grand and overwhelming one. In the beginning of September, Wurmser was again about to assume the offensive. Leaving Davidowich in the gorges of the Tyrol, either to defend them or to advance down the Adige, according to the force opposed to him, the Austrian general descended the valley of the Brenta, taking a circuitous route towards Verona and Mantua. If he divided his force this time, it was so widely that Bonaparte would be obliged, he thought, to imitate his example.

The French commander left Wurmser to pursue his distant route, attacked Davidowich, defeated him at Roveredo, and annihilated his division in the defile of Colliano. He then, instead of returning by Verona and the Adige, to face Wurmser, marched straight after him down the Brenta, not only to attack but to cut off from him all retreat. This was hazardous; for Wurmser might in the meantime fling himself on Verona, where there was little to

[<sup>1</sup> In this six days' campaign 30,000 men overthrew 60,000 and killed or captured 20,000, with 66 guns and 20 standards.]

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oppose him: but Bonaparte depended on his celerity; he hurried on, without provision, without horses, himself sharing the rations of the soldier, and thus reached the rear of Wurmser at Bassano. The Austrian was obliged to recall his troops, and a battle took place which proved the last blow to this new army and general. The latter, cut off from home, fled south to Vicenza, from thence to Legnago, where he forced the passage of the Adige. The French in vain endeavoured to intercept equally his retreat to Mantua. In this they failed, and Wurmser succeeded in throwing himself into that fortress with 15,000 troops, the relics of his army.<sup>1</sup>

## POLITICAL CHANGES IN ITALY

To form the siege anew was all that was left to Bonaparte. Had the army of the Rhine been equally victorious, he might have passed the Tyrol to act in concert with it; but Jourdan was then beaten, and Moreau in retreat. The army of Italy was too weak to make such an attempt by itself. A respite, therefore, was allowed to general and soldiers. The former spent it in reorganising the friendly countries of Italy. How these were to be treated, what steps were to be taken, what hopes held forth, was an early and important point of consideration. With respect to Piedmont, we have seen that the love of propagating and extending revolution had been sacrificed to expediency. Milan demanded equal reserve; it being yet uncertain whether it was to be ceded back to Austria, or given to Piedmont as the price of a firm alliance with France. The same motives did not apply to the countries south of the Po. Modena and Reggio (the town which Bonaparte declared most ripe for liberty) rose and expelled their sovereign, uniting with Ferrara and Bologna. They formed under French protection the Cispadane Republic, and Bonaparte's correspondence tells the care he took that aristocratic influence should not be altogether crushed and excluded. This indicates the change that had already taken place in his political sentiments. Josephine, his spouse, had, at the same time, joined him in Italy, and was received with almost regal honours in each city. Her circle at Milan might have been called a court, from its brilliancy; and exactions, it is said, were not spared to support her magnificence. All this had a very anti-republican effect on the young commander. The year 1796, however, left him leisure for nought but glory. Personal ambition had not time to blend with it, and conquest had not yet sounded the hour when the generous fame of this warrior was to be sullied by political *macchiavellianism*.<sup>c</sup>

Now, Venice, Rome, Naples began taking up arms; Genoa and Piedmont were not to be depended upon: Austria, with the help of the victories of the archduke Charles, was about to bring a fresh army into Italy. "We must have troops," wrote Bonaparte, "or Italy is lost." The Directory, unable to send him reinforcements, at least attempted to aid him with negotiations. Three treaties of peace were signed with Piedmont, Genoa, and Naples, which secured the neutrality of these states, the passage of the French troops into Italy, and the closing of the principal ports to the English (October). By means of threats and promises, the Directory prevented Rome and Venice from declaring themselves hostile; it authorised, as we have seen, the formation of the estates of the duke of Modena, who had violated the armistice, into the Cispadane Republic; it promised the Milanese the creation of a Lombard republic; finally, it signed a treaty of alliance with Spain, which was a

[<sup>1</sup> Thus was Wurmser's army overthrown a second time; it had lost 22,000 men and 75 guns, and the remainder was blockaded in Mantua with its general. *J*]

renewing of the Family Compact, and whereby the two states mutually gave each other the assistance of 24,000 men and 40 vessels (August 18th). England grew alarmed. Her financial condition was distressing; half the ports of Europe were closed to her. Ireland threatened a revolt, which France prepared to serve as England had helped that in La Vendée. Pitt seemed to yield to the wishes of the English, and sent a plenipotentiary to Paris October 22nd, but he was merely desirous of gaining time.

The indefatigable Austria had again composed an army. Russia undertaking to provide for the tranquillity of Galicia, the imperial forces engaged in occupying the Polish provinces were sent to the Adriatic, and the marshal Alvinzi was appointed to the command of the new army, rallying the remains of Wurmser's and Beaulieu's routed divisions. A large body of this army, led by Davidowich, was to descend from the Tyrol, between the Lake of Garda and the Adige, Wurmser's first route, while the main force advanced straight over the Brenta towards the Adige. Unwilling again to raise the siege of Mantua, Bonaparte had few and inferior forces to oppose both the menaced points. Vaubois, however, was ordered to resist Davidowich, whilst the French commander-in-chief marched against Alvinzi for the purpose of giving him a severe check, and then rushing with his wonted celerity to crush Davidowich altogether in concert with Vaubois. He in consequence attacked Alvinzi the 6th of November on the Brenta, and had the advantage, but it was trifling. Immediately after, a despatch arrived that Vaubois had been driven back from the gorges of the Tyrol, and that he might not be able long to defend the position of Rivoli, the only obstacle betwixt Davidowich and Verona. This was dangerous. Unable to master the army before him, he was menaced with another in his rear. Bonaparte instantly retreated to the latter town, left his army there, and hurried in person to Rivoli, where he excited by his presence the courage of the soldiers, and rebuked two regiments which had fled in the last affair. He ordered it to be inscribed upon their colours that they no longer formed part of the army of Italy.

#### THE DEFEAT OF CALDIERO; THE VICTORY OF ARCOLA

He then hastened back to Verona, within a few leagues of which the Austrians had penetrated, Alvinzi taking a skilful and strong position on the heights of Caldiero. At daybreak, on the 12th of November, the French attacked Alvinzi with their wonted ardour, and endeavoured to drive him from Caldiero; the attempt was vain; they were worsted; and attributing their defeat to the rain and sleet, they were obliged to retire to Verona. Here for a day's space Bonaparte was stricken with despondency: he was, indeed, in a critical situation; the fruit of all his victories about to be ravished from him, through the fault, as he felt, of the Directory, who refused him reinforcements, whilst the Austrian army had been re-completed four times. He had asked but two regiments, and even they had not appeared. He vented his rage in a despatch, in which he despaired, he said, of preventing Alvinzi from relieving Mantua.

It was always in one of his dark fits of despite rather than despondency that the bright idea of retrieval and of re-seizing victory was struck forth, like lightning from the cloud of night. Bonaparte conceived a plan: his troops were ordered under arms at nightfall on the 14th; it was not for attack, however—they were ordered to evacuate Verona on the side remote from the enemy, leaving merely a force to guard the walls. Having issued from the town, they marched all night southwards along the Adige



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till they reached Ronco, where, to their astonishment, a bridge was instantly thrown over the river, and the army soon found itself on the same side as the Austrians, and in their rear. Around Ronco extends a marsh impenetrable to troops, except by two causeways which diverge from it, one to Verona by the side of the Adige, another to the Austrian rear at Villanova, by the side of a rivulet called the Alpone. If the movement of Bonaparte escaped the attention of Alvinzi, the French might fall unexpectedly on the Austrian rear, and rout it; if it were, on the contrary, perceived, his small army, not exceeding 13,000 men, according to his own account, which at Caldiero had found itself unequal to cope with its enemies in the open field, could here be assailed but by the two causeways, where, as in a defile, courage must prevail over numbers: moreover, he was between Alvinzi and Mantua.

The Austrian, as it proved, was not to be taken by surprise; his hussars swept along the causeways: moreover, it had been overlooked by Bonaparte that the causeway leading to the Austrian rear crossed the Alpone by a bridge at Arcola, a village but a short distance from Ronco. The Austrians had possession of this bridge, and guarded it with cannon: to carry it was indispensably requisite to the projects of the French. Augereau led his brigade to the attack; but the Croatian soldiers and their two guns were more formidable than the legions and the parks that defended Lodi. Augereau was beaten back; the Austrians now came up in force, issued from the bridge of Arcola, and attacked their enemies on both causeways: but the best grenadiers here carried the day, and the Austrians were beaten back. Augereau made another attempt upon the bridge in vain.

Bonaparte himself then came up, threw himself among the soldiers, seized a flag, and bore it at their head upon the little bridge; but the fire was now more dreadful, and more than one gallant officer fell in covering the adventurous general with his body. Every effort was fruitless: the column was driven back by the shower of grape, and Bonaparte himself, borne with the flying throng far back off the causeway, sank knee-deep in the marsh, and barely escaped being taken. The cry of his danger brought back the French like a tide against the bridge, that held like a rock, and dashed back its invaders. The Croats behaved most gallantly. Had Davidowich and his Tyrolese done as much at Rivoli on the same day, the French would have been driven behind the Mincio.

All hope of surprising Alvinzi was now lost; but that general, instead of directing his efforts against Verona, persisted imprudently in following Bonaparte into the marshes of Ronco and Arcola. The second day was occupied in attempts of this kind, which the French, secure on the narrow causeway of opposing man to man, and making their cannon enfilade the long columns of the advancing enemy, always succeeded in repelling. The second day was, therefore, one of continued failures and losses to Alvinzi; and these were so great that on the third day Bonaparte found himself strong enough to leave both marsh and causeway, and advance into the firm plain. The bridge of Arcola was no longer important, a bridge having been thrown over the Adige below Alpone.

On the 17th, then, the third day of Arcola, was fought the decisive battle in the plain beyond the village. Bonaparte turned and surprised the enemy's left, not only by a strong division from Legnago, but by a small body of his guides, who, with trumpets sounding and arms clashing, menaced a formidable attack. Yet it cannot be said that on this third day manœuvres did much; the French showed in fact more mettle and obstinacy than the

Austrians, and beat them from the field. Alvinzi lost 18,000 men [12,000 slain and 6,000 captured], abandoned the field, and, like his predecessor, regained the Austrian Alps.

Bonaparte had thus decidedly defeated five successive armies, driven Beaulieu from Piedmont, beaten him at Montenotte, Millesimo, and Mondovi; again surprised him at the passage of the Po, and at Lodi decided the fate of the Milanese. Wurmser then took the command, was beaten at Lonato and Castiglione, and left the rest of northern Italy at the mercy of the French: reinforced, he made another invasion; his lieutenant beaten at Roveredo, himself worsted on the Brenta, he took refuge in Mantua. Then came Alvinzi with a fresh army; it perished on the causeways and in the fields of Arcola. But Alvinzi rallied another army; now the best born youths of Vienna flocked to fill its ranks, bearing standards worked by the hands of the empress, and uniting all the strength that enthusiasm and activity could furnish. This new army was divided, as usual, into two: one, under Alvinzi, was to descend the old route from the Tyrol, betwixt the Adige and the lake, the other by a circuit down the Brenta to relieve Mantua. The pope had this time promised to take up arms, and to send an army to co-operate with those of the emperor. The only difference betwixt the present plan of Alvinzi and the last was that then his chief force took the circuit against Verona, whereas now his chief force came from the Tyrol. Bonaparte only hesitated until he could be certain of this, and then he concentrated the mass of his army on the plain of Rivoli.

Here Alvinzi attacked him on the 14th of January, 1797. The lofty plain of Rivoli, high above the Adige, is a kind of intermediate step betwixt the river and the Alpine Montebaldo. The Austrian infantry had clambered the latter, and menaced his left; whilst the artillery was obliged to wind up a steep and narrow path from the river ere it could attack. The position was strong; but Alvinzi determined to remedy this by attacking on all sides, even in the rear. His advance from the mountain against the French right was at first successful.<sup>c</sup>

#### THE BATTLE OF RIVOLI AND DESTRUCTION OF THE AUSTRIANS

The small French army thus found itself escaladed from the front, closely pressed on its right and left, and cut off in the rear. Happily Masséna now arrived; thus Bonaparte now had 16,000 combatants and 60 cannon against 40,000 men, who were unable to make use of their artillery or their cavalry, and a third of whom were engaged in extraneous operations; he paid no attention either to the corps on the left bank, whose fire was merely innocuous, or to the soldiers of Lusignan, whom he pointed out in the distance to his men, saying, "Those are ours." He directed his most strenuous efforts upon the Incanale column, at the moment it was about to deploy on the plateau; it was attacked on each side by the infantry, charged in front by the cavalry, riddled with the fire of the artillery, which was directed upon the deep defile where more than 12,000 men were concentrated; all were overthrown, slain, or captured. Then Bonaparte bore down upon the Alvinzi columns, disbanded for the pursuit of his left wing; they were charged, routed, and forced over the precipices. Finally he turned, fired grape-shot upon Lusignan, flung him upon Rey's reserve, and forced him to lay down his arms.

Alvinzi retired in the greatest disorder by the narrow path leading to the heights of Corona; it was now possible to accomplish his ruin. Bonaparte,

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however, then learned that Provera had surprised the passage from the Adige at Anghiari and was marching to relieve Wurmser in Mantua; he immediately left the task of putting an end to Alvinzi with Joubert and Rey, and made for Mantua with Masséna's division. This indefatigable corps had fought before Verona on January 13th, had marched all night to reach Rivoli, had just fought during the entire day of January 14th, and was now about to march all night and all the next day to engage before Mantua on January 16th; never had the much-vaunted activity of the Roman warriors achieved such wonders. Provera had reached Mantua, but there found fifteen hundred men, who repulsed all his attacks, though Wurmser debouched from the stronghold to aid him. But Bonaparte arrived and forced Wurmser to retreat into the fortress. Provera found himself surrounded, overthrown, and defeated by the three divisions; he surrendered with 6,000 men. The same day, Joubert devoted himself to the pursuit of Alvinzi upon the heights of Corona, turned both his flanks, cut off his line of retreat, and drew him into a veritable whirlpool wherein he was overwhelmed. Five thousand Austrians surrendered, 3,000 were slain, the remainder threw themselves into the Adige or fled to Roveredo and Calliano, harassed and pursued by Joubert, who only halted on reaching Lavis. The French once more took possession of their former positions, from Trent by Bassano, as far as Treviso.

Such then were the battles of Rivoli, La Favorita, and Corona, which cost the Austrians 24,000 prisoners, 12,000 slain, 60 guns, 24 standards, and of which Mantua was the last acquired trophy. Wurmser, reduced to the last extremities of famine, capitulated to the French (February 2nd, 1797), with 13,000 prisoners and 350 guns.<sup>j</sup>

#### A REVIEW OF THE CAMPAIGN

Let us here pause, to observe that one general opinion regards German courage as phlegmatic, but durable and obstinate; whilst that of the French is considered impetuous in onset, but apt to evaporate. These battles seem to afford contrary conclusions: the Germans began spiritedly and triumphantly, and flagged as the struggle lasted; whilst the French seemed to increase in ardour and obstinacy. The days of Arcola and Castiglione, even more than Rivoli, bear witness to this.

Thus terminated the first campaign of Bonaparte; the most brilliant in modern history, considering the armies and the empire conquered, and the unequal numbers with which this was achieved. Soldiers and general covered themselves with glory, especially the latter, to whose military genius (skill is no longer the word), indomitable courage, and inexhaustible resources of mind, supplying the want of all others, complete success was due. Nor could it be said that the enemy was despicable; the Austrians could neither be compared to the rude Gauls of Cæsar's time, nor to the effeminate Persians of Alexander's. To the last they displayed the honourable courage of the soldier, and were, in their late attempts especially, gallantly led and ably commanded. That such a career of victory should have marked out the winner to deserve a crown is not wonderful.

Not tarrying even to receive the sword of Wurmser, Bonaparte had joined the legions marching to chastise Rome for its late demonstration. At Imola, the papal force, exhorted by priests, made a respectable stand, but was of course routed; when imperial Austria was driven from the field, the pontiff could hope nought, save from submission. Bonaparte proved generous.



Despite the exhortations of the Directory to crush the high priest of superstition, the French commander granted terms to the pope at Tolentino: deprived him, indeed, of the legations and Ancona; took from him a contribution, and more works of art; but still allowed him an ample political existence. Bonaparte, untainted by the bigotry of Jacobinism, which his high renown had set him far above, refused to gratify the Directory at the price of exciting a religious war. He even showed tolerance to the French emigrant priests, and ordered the Italian convents to nourish them.

#### THE INVASION OF AUSTRIA

Although defeated in Italy, where her eagles met the standards of Bonaparte, Austria was still triumphant over the French in Germany, and had driven them back over the Rhine. Some fresh success, a decisive advance, was requisite, in order to humble the imperial court and reduce it to sue for peace. Neither the Directory nor Bonaparte had yet extended their ambition to universal conquest. They had no longer any rancour against the humbled Austria. Their political hatred was now concentrated against England—a hatred born of national rivalry, and of the inability to strike a blow or inflict a wound. Already the Directory had succeeded in inducing Spain to form an offensive alliance. With the fleet of that country, of her own, and of Holland united, France hoped to dispute the empire of the sea. In this she but sacrificed the colonies and mariners of those unfortunate countries. England most dreaded the defection of Austria. Her defeat being foreseen, Lord Malmesbury was nevertheless despatched to Paris to propose a negotiation, by which France was to recover her colonies in return for Flanders being again ceded to Austria. The attempt was vain, except as a manifestation of a wish for peace; for Austria prized Flanders as the most troublesome of its possessions, and most difficult to defend. The Directory, aware that another victory would place Austria at its feet, and, calculating on this victory from the elation of the Italian army and the despondency of its foe, would hearken to no overture from Great Britain. Bernadotte was despatched with 30,000 troops of the army of the Rhine to reinforce Bonaparte; whilst Hoche, returned from a baffled expedition against Ireland, superseded Pichegru on the lower Rhine.

Ere leaving Italy behind, to pass the Alps of Tyrol and Friuli, it was requisite to be assured of the neutrality of Venice. This neutrality it was promised, but found difficult to keep. The principles of the French were ever more hostile to aristocracy than to royalty; and though Bonaparte had tempered these in the republics of his institution, still the Cispadane and the embryo one of Milan teemed, as usual, with Jacobins and preachers of revolution. The Venetian cities of the mainland, ruled by the severe government of the state, from which even their nobles were excluded, adopted these new maxims of liberty. Those, especially, that adjoined the Milanese meditated an insurrection. The Venetians raised troops of Slavonians and of the peasant population, who were bigots, and as disinclined to the French as the townsmen were favourable to them. Thus two extreme parties were armed against each other. The government, in its defence, employed one whose zeal it was unable to temper, or prevent from confounding the French with their proselytes and admirers.

The French army marched ere the insurrection burst forth. The object of this was to appear spontaneous, and not to trouble their allies with acting either as defenders or police. Bonaparte crossed the Alps early in

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March.<sup>1</sup> The archduke Charles was now his opponent; but, as usual, the promised reinforcements had not arrived in time. The principal stand made by the Austrians was on the banks of the Tagliamento. The French forced the passage after a sharp action, drove back their enemies, occupied town after town, and, in little more than a fortnight's space, arrived within four and twenty leagues of Vienna. But to advance upon that capital, without the co-operation of the armies of the Rhine, would not have been wise. Their advance had been promised, and did actually take place in some time; but a despatch from the Directory had informed Bonaparte not to expect their support. Jealousy of his glory, or perhaps the dissensions then breaking forth in the Directory itself, occasioned this: and the French general, accordingly, wrote to the archduke Charles, proposing peace. After a considerable delay, the Austrian court replied by sending negotiators, who signed a preliminary treaty, or armistice, at Leoben, a town in Styria, on the 18th of April.<sup>c</sup>

Fear overtook Vienna where, within the memory of man, no enemy had ever come by way of Italy. The Austrian envoys wished to discuss the conditions for their recognition of the republic. Napoleon refused. "The French Republic has no need to be acknowledged," he told them; "her position in Europe is that of the sun on the horizon. Blind is he who cannot see it."

Austria ceded Belgium, a concession which had long been agreed upon. She also ceded the Rhine provinces, but these on condition of an indemnity. The restitution of Lombardy was asked as this indemnity; but that Bonaparte refused, proposing a part of the Venetian territory, for he had made up his mind to punish or sacrifice Venice. This offer was accepted. Bonaparte made peace in his own name with hardly a thought of the Directory, whom he accused of having badly seconded him, and of having through jealousy retarded the operations of the Rhine armies. He also complained of Moreau's tardiness. This was the first germ of the misunderstanding between them.

While these negotiations were still in progress the news reached Bonaparte that the inhabitants of Bergamo, Verona, and other towns in the Venetian territory had risen against the French, and were in a state of insurrection. Horrible excesses had been committed; many French, even the sick in the hospitals, had been murdered, and hundreds thrown into prison. Filled with a righteous fury, Bonaparte vowed the total annihilation of the ancient sovereignty of the Queen of the Adriatic, and declared war against Venice.

[<sup>1</sup> Bonaparte returned to the Adige, to execute the boldest march whereof history makes mention. After having once passed the Alps to enter Italy, he now prepared to cross them a second time, to throw himself beyond the Drave and the Mur, into the valley of the Danube, and to advance on Vienna. No French army had ever appeared in sight of that capital. In the accomplishment of so mighty an undertaking he had to defy appalling dangers. He left Italy in his rear—Italy, absorbed in terror and admiration, it is true, but still impressed with the belief that the French could not hold it long. The governments of Genoa, Tuscany, Naples, Rome, Turin, and Venice, irritated at the spectacle of the Revolution planted on their confines in the Cispadane and Lombardy, would probably rise in hostilities on tidings of the first reverse. In the uncertainty of the result, the Italian patriots remained quietly observant, to avoid compromising themselves. The army of Bonaparte was much inferior in strength to what it ought to have been, considering the vast hazards his plan involved. The divisions of Delmas and Bernadotte, recently arrived from the Rhine, did not comprise above 20,000 men; the old army of Italy contained upwards of 40,000, which, with the Lombard troops, might make about 70,000 in all. But it would be necessary to leave 20,000 at least in Italy, 15,000 or 18,000 in guard of the Tyrol, and thus 30,000 or thereabouts would be left to march on Vienna—an incredible temerity!—THIERS.]

## THE OVERTHROW OF VENICE

Bonaparte nourished the most hostile feelings against Venice. The republic hampered him, resisted his advice, his threats, and opposed him by an invincible passive resistance, and had allowed the Austrians to pass through its territory almost as they pleased. It was powerful enough to check Bonaparte for a while, to become a rallying-point at some time to the Italians. The aide-de-camp Junot, with all the bluntness of a soldier, conveyed a letter to the senate, which was dated the 9th of April, 1797, in which Bonaparte threatened them with war if the peasants were not disarmed, and if some hundreds of people arrested and imprisoned in the mines were not immediately set at liberty.

On the 17th, Easter Monday, four hundred French were massacred at Verona. This massacre was called the "Veronese Easter." The Slavonians and the insurgent peasants, knowing they were supported by the Austrians of Laudon, gave themselves over to every excess in revenge, killing even the sick in the hospitals. The Venetian authorities, either through complicity or impotency, did nothing. General Balland, who commanded the citadel, shut himself up inside it and threw shells into the town. Kilmaine hastened from Milan but was obliged to fight his way into Verona. He punished the town by levying an enormous tax upon it and ordered the peasants to be put to the sword.

Bonaparte encountered at Gratz two Venetian envoys, bearers of so-called explanations, in answer to Junot's letter. He was still in ignorance of the latest events. He spoke to them in the most violent language, and declared that if their government was incapable of disarming its subjects, he undertook to disarm them himself. "I have made peace," he said; "I have eighty thousand men, I will go and destroy your mines. I will be a second Attila for Venice. I will have no inquisition nor golden book—those are institutions of a barbarous epoch. Your government is too old, it must fall. I will no longer negotiate, I will dictate." On the 2nd of May, upon hearing of the scenes which had taken place in Verona, he published a declaration of war against the republic, and announced that the Venetian government had ceased to exist. He knew that the Directory was opposed to the idea of declaring war against Venice, and his own powers only extended to repulsing hostilities already commenced. But such considerations no longer stopped him. His arrangements with Austria demanded the sacrifice, or at least the remodelling, of the Venetian territory. The massacres of Verona, although punished, became for him a *casus belli*.

Venice was not without means of resistance, with her port and fortified lagunes, and the sea was open, as the French did not possess one man-of-war in the Adriatic. But Napoleon counted upon the terror of his name and of his victories. He also counted upon the faint-heartedness of a government which had shut itself up for two centuries in continued abstinence from action and had allowed all the activity of political life to die in its midst. This aristocracy had neglected or disdained Bonaparte's early threats, believing he would quickly exhaust his resources. His victorious return, his power, and the brilliancy of his victories struck the nobles dumb.

The grand council which, a few months earlier, had repulsed as an insult the idea of modifying the constitution, voted this modification almost unanimously and decided it should take place at the will of the general. The grand council then abdicated. Insurrections rose in other towns, the principles of the French Revolution were employed; that is to say, convents



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were suppressed, feudal rights were abolished, and national domains were created.

Bonaparte had gone to Milan. There on the 16th of May he signed a treaty with the agents of the fallen government, by which he laid tributes and requisitions on their country, took possession of the greater part of its navy and arsenals, and reserved to himself the right of effecting the territorial changes which he might judge necessary to his policy. He had this treaty ratified by the new municipality, which submitted to it.

Whilst it was his fixed intention to despoil the republic before handing it over to the Austrians, he spoke to the Venetians of the glory of Italy and of his wish to render her free and independent of foreigners. He spoke of the friendship and unity of the two republics and he imposed the same language on his agents. An analogous revolution took place at Genoa also under pressure from France. The patriots or democrats, supported by the French agent Faypoult and then by Bonaparte himself, forced the aristocratic party to abdicate and change the form of the government.<sup>d</sup>





## CHAPTER XV

### THE RISE OF NAPOLEON

[1797-1798 A.D.]

WHILST the army of Italy was immortalising itself by humbling the first power of the continent, the five directors of France could not vindicate for themselves the least share of its fame.<sup>1</sup> They continued to hold their footing, indeed, as sovereigns, on the narrow pedestal of their immediate party, the conventionalists and regicides. They relied on the army, too, as auxiliaries; but they soon found that public opinion was irrevocably averse to their persons and their maxims; and that, with liberty of election still left to the country, they could never be friends with or stand before its representation.

The newly chosen third of the legislative body, all allowed to be re-elected, had, from the first, formed an opposition, together with the most respectable of the conventionalists; and it was evident, when the eighteen months, the interval fixed by the constitution for the re-election of another third, should elapse, a majority would be found against the old conventionalists. This was insufferable in their eyes; and they used every means to provide against it. Their principal weapon was the declaration that their opponents were royalists at heart, and consequently traitors to the constitution, and that they themselves were the only genuine republicans.

[<sup>1</sup> Yet the Directory, although still the object of ruthless obloquy at home, inspired the European powers with a profound dread. "The half of Europe," wrote Mallet du Pan,<sup>b</sup> to the court of Vienna, "is on its knees before this divan, to purchase the honour of becoming its vassal." Fifteen months of firm and glorious sway had rooted the five directors in power, but had at the same time developed their passions and characters. Men cannot long act in conjunction without experiencing individual distastes or predilections, and without associating conformably to their inclinations. Carnot, Barras, Rewbell, Laréveillière-Lépeaux, and Letourneur were already divided, in accordance with this invariable result. — THIERS.<sup>c</sup>]

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## OBSTACLES OF THE DIRECTORY

No doubt the thorough royalists, the partisans of the house of Bourbon, did rally to this new opposition, did mingle covertly with its councils, and give some truth to the inculcation. It was unwise, at least as yet, of the republican opposition not to repudiate them. "Had I been consulted," said Madame de Staël,<sup>d</sup> "I never would have counselled the establishment of a republic in France. At the same time, when it was established, I certainly would not have counselled its overthrow." But when the second third of the legislative council was re-elected, and thereby a fresh infusion of anti-conventionalists admitted to power, then indeed a royalist party began decidedly to form and to show itself. Thus, in 1797, there were three distinct shades of political opinion — the conventionalists or regicides, the constitutional republicans, and the royalists. The latter composed a very small minority, that looked up to Pichegru as its head; but as it voted and acted with the constitutionalists in opposition to the Directory, the parties became mingled in a great measure, and compounded. They came to form a club, called that of Clichy, in which the plan of parliamentary conduct was discussed and arranged; and, as is generally the case, the extreme opinions soon gave a colour to the entire association.

"In civil dissensions, men always come to adopt the opinions of which they are accused." Thus the conventionalists accusing all their enemies, that is, the majority of the nation, of being royalist, the latter accepted the reproach; and public opinion, in despite and despair at seeing the name of republic monopolised by a faction, did turn towards monarchy. This, however, was but a tendency, a prospect, a last resource, kept in reserve.

When the second third of the legislative body was re-elected in 1797 the conventionalists became the minority. And here instantly appeared the mortal defect of the system. The legislature held one opinion, the executive another; and the constitution had provided no means for restoring harmony. Anarchy, in fact, became once more probable. In every successive phase and scene of the Revolution, the same fact recurs of a rational majority overpowered by a factious minority. Three of the directors — Barras, Rewbell, and Larévellière-Lépeaux — were cordially united in upholding the interest of what they called the "revolution," by which they meant the permanence of the conventionalists and of the old revolutionary laws. Carnot differed from them in being attached solely to liberty and the republic, in not insisting on the predominance of any faction, and in admitting the necessity of stooping to the constitutional majority in all short of royalism. Carnot took the honest view of the question; and, despite his old career with the terrorists, he was looked up to by the constitutional party. Letourneur followed Carnot's opinions. The period had now arrived for one of the directors to go out. The lot unfortunately fell, or was made to fall, on Letourneur; and thus, although Barthélemy was elected by the councils to replace him, Barras, Rewbell, and Larévellière-Lépeaux still had the majority in the executive.

Barras presented the singular union of a furious Jacobin with the manners and despotic habits of an ancient noble.<sup>1</sup> He resembled his friend Danton, coated with court varnish. Rewbell was a pragmatic lawyer, endued with the obstinacy of dullness; Larévellière-Lépeaux a visionary, who aspired to form a sect called the Theophilanthropists. This scheme of becoming a prophet gave a certain vigour to a mind naturally puerile,

[<sup>1</sup> Thibaudeau likens him to a "prince badly reared."]



and led Larévellière-Lépeaux from the moderation natural to him (for he had been a Girondist) to adopt extreme Jacobinism. He could not pardon the constitutionalists their tolerance of priests and temples. Such was the trio destined to tread out the last shadow of liberty in France, and to prepare the way for military despotism.

The session, which commenced in April, 1797, after the election of the second third of the legislature, was marked by mistrust and odium towards the Directory, which was not only mortified in its political views by the return of the émigrés, the re-establishment of priests, and by the severe animadversion passed upon the conduct of its emissaries in the colonies; but was also shorn of power, and controlled in the management of the revenue. The opposition, obedient to the club of Clichy, in many instances lost sight of both prudence and moderation; many members displaying, too soon and too openly, the wish to undo the whole work of the Revolution. This alarmed the vanity as well as the interests of the nation, and served to rally the democratic party out of doors to the Directory.

One motive of the Clichians was especially ill advised; it was that of accusing the generals of the armies of Italy and the Rhine — Bonaparte and Hoche — of divers arbitrary and illegal acts; the levying and disposing of funds; but more especially the destruction by Bonaparte of the old republics of Venice and Genoa. The gravity of this latter accusation almost excused its temerity; but its unfortunate effect was to outrage the armies, and to attach their fidelity to the directorial cause. Bonaparte had the means in his hands of taking instant vengeance. He had seized on the papers of the count d'Entraigues, containing strong traces, if not proofs, of Pichegru's being in correspondence with the Bourbons. Pichegru was the president of the Five Hundred, and one of the leaders of the club of Clichy. Bonaparte thus supplied the Directory with a pretext for the blow meditated. Hoche shared in the sentiment of his brother general; and, under pretence of drafting troops to Brittany for his Irish expedition, he brought divisions of his army to menace the capital and support the Directory.

"The government," says Thibaudeau,<sup>e</sup> "had two ways of crushing the royalists — either by violence and the interference of the armies, or by uniting itself with the constitutionalists. The first destroyed the republic, and rendered liberty impossible; the latter might have saved both." Divers attempts were made to reconcile the Directory — that is, Barras, Rewbell, and Larévellière-Lépeaux — with the constitutionalists; for Carnot, though not their personal friend, agreed with their maxims. Madame de Staël exercised her influence to bring about this reconciliation, of which a change of ministry was to be the seal. Talleyrand, whom she recommended as foreign minister, was indeed appointed as one of a ministry by no means in harmony with the majority of the legislature.

#### THE AFFAIR OF THE 18TH FRUCTIDOR (SEPTEMBER 4TH)

All legal means of deciding the differences were thus set aside, and amicable terms rejected. The troops of Hoche gathered round the capital, and even approached within the distance of twelve leagues prescribed by law. The constitutionalist deputies remonstrated: the royalists were half indignant, half frightened. Another combat or civil war became inevitable in the metropolis; and each party mustered its forces. The legislative majority principally relied on the national guard, suppressed and mutilated after the

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affair of Vendémiaire, but which they hoped to reorganise in a short time. The immediate guard of the assemblies was another force, small indeed, but sufficient to rally the honest and moderate citizens, as well as the anti-Jacobin youths of Paris, provided the latter had yet recovered courage from their defeat on the day of the sections. The Directory, on the other hand, relied on the army — upon Hoche and upon Bonaparte; for as to the populace, this class at length became disgusted, and reckless of political events, since they had found defeat possible, and victory of small advantage. In the language of the day, *le peuple avait donné sa démission*, the mob had sent in its resignation.

Both Bonaparte and Hoche answered characteristically the call of the Directory. Hoche implicated himself, and pledged his wife's fortune, to support what he considered to be the republican cause. Bonaparte incited his army to assemble, to deliberate; and drew up the most furious and jacobinical petitions.<sup>1</sup> With these he forwarded his lieutenant Augereau, to serve the Directory in a *coup de main*; thus superseding Hoche, whilst the money promised by Bonaparte never arrived. Already the ambition of this man, born of victory, and nurtured to some growth by the great legislative duties which the reorganisation of conquered Italy imposed upon him, began to show itself in jealousy of all other power. He was willing to aid the Directory to crush their opponents, who were his enemies, but neither to make them independent nor himself their slave.

The Directory and the legislative majority were now in the respective positions in which the Revolution had placed all its parties; that is, in a state of savage hostility — not open civil war, but that of tigers or of Indians, which consisted in lying in wait, and springing unawares on the foe. On the 18th Fructidor (the 4th of September, 1797) the blow was struck. Under pretence of a review, troops were brought to the capital, and placed at the disposal of Augereau.<sup>2</sup>

During the night, the Tuileries were invested with 12,000 men, and 40 guns, and the gates stormed by Augereau's troops. A certain number of deputies were assembled in the chamber of the Five Hundred. A general officer came and requested them to leave; they declined, and Ramel, the officer in command of the guard of the legislative body, disobeyed an order from Augereau, enjoining him to evacuate the Tuileries. But the soldiers under Ramel's command seemed to hesitate and muttered amongst themselves, "We refuse to fight for Louis XVIII." For the soldier, as for the multitude who do not understand gradations, the struggle was only between the Revolution and the Old Régime.

Augereau entered with his staff, augmented by the most violent revolutionaries of the suburbs, Santerre, Rossignol, etc., amidst cries of "Long live the Republic!" He arrested Ramel, whose men made no attempt to protect him, sent him captive to the Temple, with those deputies discovered in the Tuileries. During this time the Directory guard arrested Barthélemy, one of the opposing directors, in the Luxembourg, by order of the "triumvirate." Carnot escaped through the gardens and it was impossible to lay hands on him. He succeeded in leaving France and took refuge in Germany.

A number of members of the council of the Ancients had assembled that

[<sup>1</sup> His letters were furious: "Have the émigrés arrested," he wrote to the Directory, "destroy the influence of the foreigners. If you have need of force, call out the troops. Order the destruction of the presses of the journalists, bought up by England and more sanguinary than ever Marat was." He added the imperious advice to repress with severity the club of Clichy and to allow the existence of only five or six good newspapers, and those constitutional.<sup>f</sup>]

morning in their chamber from whence they were expelled by the soldiery. Thirty of them returned to the Tuileries to endeavour to gain re-entrance to their chamber. This deed of valour secured them marks of respect during their progress through the streets, but the populace gave them no assistance and they were driven back by the troops. They then gathered together in the abode of their president Lafond-Ladébat. There the constables arrested them, and from thence they were taken to the Temple. Eighty-five members of the Five Hundred, assembled in a neighbouring house, dispersed; many were captured in their own houses. Whilst the opposing members of the council were making this honourable impotent attempt at resistance, the members of the party favourable to the Directory met upon the invitation of the "triumvirs," those of the Five Hundred at the Odéon, those of the Ancients at the School of Medicine. There were amongst them not only Mountainists, but ancient Girondins, who, like Larévellière-Lépeaux, believed they would save the republic. The Directory sent them a message, informing them of those measures which, it is said, it had been forced to take "for the salvation of the country and the preservation of the constitution."

A proclamation from the Directory to the nation detailed the facts of the conspiracy which would have ruined the republic, if the Directory had waited one day longer. Herein were unjust imputations mingled with real facts which did not at all demonstrate the imminent peril affirmed by the Directory. As for the treason of Pichegru, which the Directory denounced according to the document transmitted by Bernadotte, if the Directory had contented themselves with bringing this culprit and his accomplices to justice, they would have secured Carnot, and all the republicans with him, and the majority of the two councils would have yielded without a *coup d'état*.<sup>b</sup>

It has been said that "it cost but a single cannon-shot and that charged merely with powder to annihilate the republic, which from this fatal night ceased to exist."

The minority of the two councils now assembled approved, of course, of the violence offered to the constitution, both in the persons of deputies and directors; and by a decree declared the elections of one-half the departments of France annulled. Seventy of the most distinguished deputies were condemned to transportation; a sentence which, considering the climate of Cayenne, and the ill usage experienced on their voyage, was almost tantamount to death. Nor did the successful dictators make the least difference betwixt royalists and constitutionalists. Barbé-Marbois, Portalis, Tronson du Coudray, Carnot, Pastoret, were condemned to the same penalty as Pichegru or Delarue. The prisoners were conveyed to the Temple, where they occupied the apartments of the unfortunate Louis and his queen. The circumstance must have smitten the hearts of those amongst them who, like Bourdon, had been in the convention, and had voted the deaths of their sovereigns.

The new dictators were not content with decimating the legislature; they formed another list of proscription, composed of the editors and writers in forty-eight journals. They were condemned to transportation. Thus were the representatives both of the nation and of public opinion sacrificed to the regicide faction, who declared, in the language of Robespierre and Marat, that it was done for the sake of liberty and for the safety of the Revolution!

The old terrorists' laws were now again put in action; those against émigrés and their relatives were enforced; and the unfortunate priests, who had flocked home on the permission of the late legislature, were now trans-



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ported to Cayenne for having trusted to it. The "rump" of the convention (for the remaining members of the council corresponded precisely to this term) now endowed the directors with despotic power, gave them liberty to stop all journals and suppress all political societies. In many cases their mandate was a judgment that superseded the necessity of trial. But indeed, after having seized and condemned the majority of the legislature, all sanction was needless for a supreme authority already usurped. In all their acts the Directory now showed themselves worthy of their origin and of the means by which they were upheld. By a stroke of the pen they cancelled two-thirds of the national debt. Their statesman, Sieyès, proposed to complete the work of the Revolution, by a law of exile against all who were noble, even against females nobly born, except they espoused a plebeian. Barras, however, resisted this, which struck at himself. Their foreign policy was equally frantic. They broke off the conference at Lille, in which Lord Malmesbury, on the part of England, offered every fair condition of peace, and endeavoured to act the same part by the negotiation with Austria.<sup>7</sup>

#### THE DIRECTORY AND ITS GENERALS

The Directory, however, felt gratified with the manner in which events had proceeded. The only cause of disquietude existed in the silence of General Bonaparte, who had not written for a long interval, nor sent the promised remittance. Augereau hastily composed epistles to General Bonaparte and his friends in the army, for the purpose of describing the event in the most favourable colours.

Already discontented with Moreau, the Directory had resolved to recall him, when it received a communication from him which caused a very deep sensation. Moreau had seized, after the passage of the Rhine, the papers of General Klinglin, and found amongst them the whole correspondence between Pichegru and the prince of Condé. He had kept this correspondence secret; but he decided upon imparting it to the government immediately subsequent to the 18th Fructidor. It was the general impression, with regard to his behaviour in this instance, that he loved not the republic sufficiently to expose the treachery of his friend, and yet was too lukewarm a friend to retain the secret to the end. His political character was here exhibited in its real light, that is to say, as weak, vacillating and uncertain. The Directory summoned him to Paris to render an account of his conduct. On examining the correspondence it found a full confirmation of all it had otherwise learned respecting Pichegru. It likewise discovered proof of Moreau's own fidelity to the republic; but it rewarded his supineness and procrastination by depriving him of his command and leaving him destitute of employment at Paris.

#### THE DEATH OF HOCHÉ

Hoché, still at the head of his army of the Sambre and Meuse, had undergone during the whole of the past month the most anxious solicitude. To recompense his attachment, the Directory united the two great armies of the Sambre and Meuse and the Rhine into one, and appointed him its generalissimo. It was the most extensive command in the republic.

Unfortunately the health of the young general prevented him from enjoying the triumph of the Directory and this testimony of regard on the part of the government. He at length took to his bed on the 17th of September, and

expired on the 18th amidst the most distressing agonies. The whole army was in the deepest consternation, for it adored its young general. The mournful intelligence spread with rapidity and struck with affliction all true republicans, who placed the greatest hopes in the talents and patriotism of Hoche. The report of poison immediately circulated. The Directory instituted magnificent obsequies to his memory.

Thus closed one of the fairest and most interesting existences that adorned the Revolution. This time at least it was not by the scaffold. Hoche was only in his twenty-ninth year. As a private soldier in the French guards, a few months had sufficed to perfect his education. To the physical courage of the warrior, he added an energetic character, a superior intelligence, an accurate knowledge of men, an excellent capacity for political emergencies, and, moreover, the inspiring impulse of enthusiasm. This with him amounted to a passion, ardent and uncontrollable, which proved perhaps the predisposing cause of his death. The peculiar circumstances of his career increased the interest his manifold qualities excited. He had always met with untoward accidents to arrest his fortune. Conqueror at Weissenburg and ready to enter upon a glorious scene of action, he was suddenly thrown into a dungeon; released from imprisonment to prosecute the harassing warfare of La Vendée, he on that unpropitious stage played an ever-memorable part, and at the moment he was about to execute his great project on Ireland, a tempest and failures in his combinations again defeated his expectations; removed to the army of the Sambre and Meuse, he gained an important victory at its head, and once more had his progress suspended by the preliminaries of Leoben; lastly, in command of the army of Germany, with Europe still disposed for war, he had a vast future before him when he was struck amidst his dazzling prospects, and hurried to the grave by a disease of forty-eight hours' virulence.

If, however, a cherished memory can compensate the loss of life, he might be well content to surrender his, even thus prematurely. A series of splendid victories, an arduous pacification, a universality of talent, a probity without stain, the belief general amongst republicans that he would have curbed the conqueror of Rivoli and the Pyramids, that his ambition would have remained republican and formed an insuperable obstacle to the imperious pride that aspired to a throne; in a word lofty deeds, noble inspirations, a youth of the fairest promise — these are what constitute his renown. And assuredly it is great enough! Let us not pity him then for dying young. It will always redound more to the glory of Hoche, Kléber, and Desaix, that they did not live to be marshals.<sup>1</sup> They all bore the distinction of citizens and freemen to the tomb, and were not reduced like Moreau to become a fugitive in foreign armies.<sup>c</sup>

#### MARTIN ON THE MEANING OF HOCHÉ'S DEATH

The friends of Hoche have been divided in opinion as to whether a crime was in question in his death. The family always believed so. Who was the guilty person? Was there a guilty person? The truth will never be known.

What were the ideas of Hoche at the time of his death? His whole conduct attests that he remained to the end an impassioned republican. "A

[<sup>1</sup> To these should be added the name of Marceau, who was killed in protecting the retreat of Jourdan near Alterkirchen in 1796. He was only 27, and the Austrians took part in rendering his body military honours.]

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monarch," he wrote "would be forced to create a nobility and the resurrection of that nobility would cause a new revolution. We must have a government which will consecrate the principle of equality — that government can be only a republic." He no longer had the Mountainist exaggeration of his first youth: he understood the necessity for a wisely organised government and desired the maintenance of the constitution of the year III modified by the substitution of a president for the five directors as in America. While tolerant of all beliefs, he was of the religion of Rousseau, as were most of the great men of the Revolution. His faith in the God of justice and goodness is attested both by his intimate correspondence with his wife and friends and by invocation which terminates the speech he pronounced before the army of the West on the occasion of the festival celebrated in honour of the first victories of the army of Italy. "God, who watches over the destinies of this empire, who hast directed our swords in the fight that man whom thou hast created should be free: let not any dominion prevail to govern him! Root out the factions from the midst of the republic and protect our holy laws!"

If we would appreciate Hoche and Bonaparte at their true moral value we must compare what each has said of the other. Whilst Hoche was wearing himself out in his painful and dreary mission of the west, Bonaparte in Italy was winning the dazzling triumphs which Hoche felt himself capable of equalling. Many minds, otherwise great and noble, would have been soured by such a comparison, but Hoche entirely forgets himself to express in letters of a touching generosity his enthusiasm for a rival's glory: he defends with passion "*ce brave jeune homme*," against those who venture to accuse him of ambition! Napoleon at St. Helena has spoken of Hoche whose memory haunts him: he refers to him as a kind of inferior Bonaparte of a challenging ambition, "who dreamed of seizing the government by force and who would have obliged him to crush him by disputing with the supreme power or who would have come to terms, because he loved money and pleasures!" Hoche would have come to terms, that is, sold himself for money! — such words reveal in him who has said them how small a soul could be associated with great genius!

The death of Hoche was the greatest misfortune which could have befallen the republic and France. What might have been the future of that country if Bonaparte had disappeared instead of Hoche? In the state in which France at that time was it was inevitable that she should pass under military supremacy. But how different the conditions might have been! The good sense and disinterestedness of Hoche might have greatly tempered the dangers and abuses of that supremacy and France might have gradually returned to a regulated liberty by peaceful ways. Providence has been harsh toward France. She lost the man who might have helped her to salvation; she remained in the hands of him who was to ruin her!<sup>h</sup>

#### BONAPARTE'S POLITICS

Bonaparte held, as we have seen, something like a monarch's court in Italy, waiting till the tardy diplomacy of Austria could make up its mind to accept peace at a disadvantage. At the different stages of victory he had parcelled out Italy, according to the probabilities of the hour, into Cispadane, Transpadane, Emilian, and other republics; but time rendered his projects, like his ambition, more vast; whilst the subjugation of Venice changed altogether the views which had dictated the preliminaries of



Leoben. By these Austria, in recompense for the Netherlands, was to receive the Venetian provinces to the Oglio, including Mantua. Venice, neutral, was only to be robbed; but Venice, now in distress, was not only to be robbed, but murdered. Bonaparte proposed to make the Adige the boundary of Austria, giving her, in lieu of Mantua, Venice itself; thus sacrificing, with the apathy of a barbarian, the oldest republic in Europe the only link of the kind left betwixt classic and modern times. But what was base in Bonaparte to sacrifice was still more base of Austria to accept — Austria, in whose behalf the hapless Venice had armed. It showed that in diplomacy the monarchy of old lineage and the upstart republic were equally selfish and Macchiavellian.

Westward of the Adige, Bonaparte amalgamated the Transpadane and Cispadane republics into one, which he called the Cisalpine. To complete its territory he took the Valtelline from the Grisons; whilst, to give this French colony (for it was no other) a friendly seaport, he revolutionised Genoa, which he made the capital of a Ligurian republic. The Directory insisted on the Cisalpine being organised in imitation of the French; which was completely effected, Bonaparte naming the five directors — who thus based their rights, as did Barras and Larévellière-Lépeaux, not on the people but on the soldiery. It must, however, be confessed that the general in all things thought to correct the narrow prejudices of the regicides. He was tolerant to priests and nobles, and chided the Genoese for proposing to imitate the bigotry of the French revolutionary laws. His opinion of Jacobinism in the Directory is sufficiently evinced by his impatience at finding his friend and secretary signing his surname Fauvelet, in lieu of his territorial title, De Bourrienne. A decree had so ordered it. "Sign as usual," ordered Bonaparte, "and never mind the lawyers."

He was strangely impeded in completing the negotiations for peace begun at Leoben. Austria hoped to profit by the royalist reaction which the *coup d'état* of Fructidor marred — one reason for the general's supporting the Directory; but that body threw equal obstacles in his way, and bade him demand the Isonzo as a limit, in lieu of the Adige. He determined to disobey.<sup>g</sup>

On September 27th, began a fresh diplomatic duel, this time between Bonaparte and the astute Austrian diplomatist Cobenzl. According to Cobenzl's account of Napoleon's conduct at these meetings there is apparently good ground for believing the story of the breaking of the porcelain vase, for he complains that Bonaparte drank "glass after glass of brandy," and declared himself "the equal of any king in the world."

#### THE PEACE OF CAMPO-FORMIO

The meetings between Bonaparte and Cobenzl, the Austrian plenipotentiary, took place at Udine in Friuli. Hoche was no more; Bonaparte altered his tone towards the French government. He had, however, received a telegram on the 29th of September, written by Larévellière-Lépeaux in the name of the Directory, which does much honour to that director and cancels many of his faults. "The whole question," said Larévellière-Lépeaux, "reduces itself to whether or not we want to deliver up Italy to Austria. Now the French government ought not to do this, and it will not." And he proposed, as an ultimatum, that Italy should be free as far as the Isonzo, that is including the whole of Venetia. He protested against the shame of forsaking Venice. "It would be an inexcusable baseness, whose consequences," he

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added, "would be worse than the most unfavourable chance of war." Certainly, if the war was to be continued, it was better for French interest, as well as for French honour, to fight so as to assure Italy's independence, instead of risking mishaps in Egypt, when France was not even mistress of the seas. Bonaparte absolutely ignored this despatch.

On the 10th of October he informed the Directory that the peace would be signed on the following evening or negotiations would be broken off. He did not once mention the ultimatum sent to him by the Directory.

On Bonaparte's definite refusal to give back Mantua, Cobenzl declared that the emperor was prepared to go to any length rather than to consent to such a peace. Bonaparte rose, and seizing a porcelain vase from a stand said, "Very well, let it be war then! Before the autumn is over I shall have shattered your monarchy as I smash this piece of porcelain." He went out and sent to inform the archduke Charles that hostilities would recommence in twenty-four hours. Cobenzl, terrified, sent after him to his headquarters, to tell him that his ultimatum was accepted. Bonaparte had counted upon this when acting the scene of anger. The treaty was signed on the following day (October 17th, 1797) at Campo-Formio, near Udine.<sup>b</sup>

France kept the boundary of the Rhine and Mainz subject to the ratification of the empire. The Cisalpine Republic had the boundary of the Adige. This republic was composed of Milan and Lombardy, of what had lately formed the Cispadane Republic, the territories of Bergamo, Brescia, and Mantua; Bonaparte soon afterwards added the Valtelline, taken from the Grisons. Austria received not only Friuli, Istria, and the Boccho di Cattaro as stipulated at Leoben, but also Venice and the Venetian territory as far as the Adige and the Po. France took for herself several Venetian establishments in Albania and the Ionian Islands. A special article stipulated the release of La Fayette who was taken from the prison of Olmütz with Maubourg and Pusy. Such was the celebrated Treaty of Campo-Formio which was so much vaunted; and deservedly so, since it gave France peace on the continent, now become so necessary, and secured her the Rhine frontier. From the Italian point of view it was less satisfactory. The ancient republic of Venice paid the whole cost. Bonaparte had sacrificed her to risky or interested schemes. Venetian patriots, comparing the lot of their country to that of Poland, were untiring in their imprecations on the man who had abandoned them.

By seizing the navy and arsenals of Venice under diverse pretexts, such as that of indemnifying himself for sums due and not paid; by joining the Venetian vessels to those of Admiral Brueys, which were summoned from Toulon, and thus establishing at Corfu a squadron ready for war, he meant to secure a maritime position and a naval force which would permit France to dominate the Adriatic and perhaps the Mediterranean. He meditated occupying Malta and dreamed of detaching Egypt from the Ottoman Empire—projects which he expressed with a vague reserve, for they seemed chimerical; and yet he was to realise them.

The Treaty of Campo-Formio caused universal joy in Paris. The public, weary of the warlike ardour of the Directory, had but one voice to acclaim the disinterestedness of the young general who seemed to be renouncing the glory of a fresh campaign. The Directory, though displeased at the contempt shown for its instructions, dared not refuse ratification for fear of raising the whole public and the army of Italy against it. In giving that ratification, it nominated Bonaparte plenipotentiary at Rastatt and general-in-chief of the "army of England." Bonaparte left Berthier at Milan with

30,000 men who were to remain there until the general peace. He passed through Switzerland, where he was accorded the most brilliant reception, and presented himself at Rastatt, where was the congress of the empire. He did not stay there longer than was necessary to exchange ratifications of Campo-Formio with Cobenzl and to make sure of the acquisition of Mainz; he left Bonnier and Treilhard, who had been given to him as colleagues, to adjust the prolonged difficulties which arose in regard to the princes of the empire.<sup>f</sup>

#### NAPOLÉON IN PARIS

Bonaparte left Rastatt, traversed France incognito, and arrived at Paris on the evening of the 15th Frimaire, year VI (the 5th of December, 1797). He proceeded straightway to seclude himself in a small house he had purchased in the rue Chantereine. This singular man, in whom pride was so paramount a quality, had all a woman's art in keeping out of sight. At the surrender of Mantua, he evaded the honour of personally superintending Wurmser's evacuation; now at Paris, he sought to hide himself in an obscure dwelling. He affected, in his language, dress, and habits, a simplicity which struck the imaginations of men, and the more profoundly from the effect of contrast.

The Directory forthwith determined to prepare a triumphal festival for the formal presentation of the Treaty of Campo-Formio. It was appointed to be celebrated, not in the hall of audience, but in the great court of the Luxembourg. Everything was disposed to render this solemnity one of the most imposing of the Revolution.

The day selected for the ceremony was the 10th of December, 1797. The Directory, the public functionaries, and the spectators were all in their places awaiting with impatience the illustrious mortal whom few amongst them had yet seen. He appeared at length, accompanied by M. Talleyrand, who was deputed to present him; for it was the diplomatist to whom the immediate homage was tendered. All beholders were struck by the attenuated frame, the pallid yet Roman countenance, the bright and flashing eye, of the young hero. An extraordinary emotion thrilled through the assembly. A thousand acclamations burst forth as he advanced upon the arena. "Long live the Republic!" "Long live Bonaparte!" were the cries which resounded from all sides. When they subsided, M. de Talleyrand raised his voice, and, in a judicious and concise speech, affected to refer the glory of the general, not to himself but to the Revolution, to the armies, to the great nation, in fine. Everybody said and repeated that the young general was devoid of ambition, for great was the apprehension of the contrary. When M. de Talleyrand had ceased, Bonaparte spoke in a firm tone the disjointed sentences which follow :

#### "CITIZENS:

"The French people, to be free, had kings to combat. To obtain a constitution founded on reason, they had eighteen centuries of prejudices to overcome. The constitution of the year III and you have triumphed over these obstacles. Religion, feudality, royalty, have successively during twenty centuries governed Europe; but from the peace you have just concluded dates the era of representative governments. You have succeeded in organising the great nation, whose vast territory is circumscribed only because nature herself has assigned it bounds. You have done more. The two fairest regions of Europe, formerly so celebrated for the arts, the sciences, the great men to whom they gave birth, behold with the loftiest hopes the genius of liberty arise from the ashes of their ancestors. They are two pedestals on which the fates will plant two powerful nations. I have the honour to present to you the treaty signed at Campo-Formio, and ratified by his majesty the emperor. Peace guarantees the liberty, prosperity, and glory of the republic. When the happiness of the French people shall repose on better organic laws, all Europe will become free."



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Following the new impulse given to the public mind, Barras offered fresh laurels to Bonaparte, and invited him to gather them in England. After these three harangues, Chénier's hymn was chanted in chorus, with the accompaniment of a magnificent orchestra. Two generals next advanced, ushered by the minister-at-war: they were the brave Joubert, the hero of the Tyrol, and Andréossy, one of the most distinguished officers of the artillery.

Aloft, and fluttering in the breeze, they carried with them a resplendent flag, consecrated by the Directory to the army of Italy at the close of the campaign: the new oriflamme of the republic. It was studded with numberless characters embossed in gold, and those characters bore the following mementos:

The army of Italy has made 150,000 prisoners; it has captured 166 standards, 550 pieces of siege artillery, 600 pieces of field artillery, 5 bridge equipages, 9 ships of the line, 12 frigates, 12 corvettes, 18 galleys. Armistices with the kings of Sardinia and Naples, the pope, the dukes of Parma and Modena. Preliminaries of Leoben. Convention of Montebello with the republic of Genoa. Treaties of peace of Tolentino and Campo-Formio. Liberty given to the people of Bologna, Ferrara, Modena, Massa-Carrara, Romagna, Lombardy, Brescia, Bergamo, Mantua, Cremona, a part of the district of Verona, Chiavenna, Bormio, and the Valtelline; to the people of Genoa and of the imperial fiefs, to the people of the departments of Coreyra, the Ægean Sea, and Ithaca. Transmitted to Paris the masterpieces of Michelangelo, Guercino, Titian, Paul Veronese, Correggio, Albani, Carracci, Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci, etc. Triumphed in eighteen pitched battles: Montenotte, Millesimo, Mondovi, Lodi, Borghetto, Lonato, Castiglione, Roveredo, Bassano, San Giorgio, Fontenaviva, Caldiero, Arcola, Rivoli, La Favorita, the Tagliamento, Tarwis, Neumarkt. Fought 67 engagements.

After the speeches were concluded, the generals advanced to receive the embrace of the president of the Directory. At the moment Bonaparte was clasped to the bosom of Barras, the four other directors, impelled as it were by an involuntary impulse, threw themselves into the arms of the general. Tumultuous acclamations rent the air; the people outside, clustered in the adjoining streets, re-echoed the shouts; the cannon boomed, the music played; all brains were in a delirium, a whirl of intoxication. Thus it was that France cast herself headlong into the arms of an extraordinary man!

The triumphal reception accorded by the Directory to General Bonaparte was followed by a series of splendid entertainments given in his honour by the directors, the members of the councils, and the ministers. Amidst all these pomps, he preserved his simplicity, being affable though austere, seeming almost insensible to pleasure, and ever seeking out the gifted and the celebrated to converse apart of the art or science which they illustrated.

The information of the young general scarcely exceeded that of an officer recently emerged from the military college. Yet with the inspiration of genius he was able to discourse upon topics the most strange to him, and to throw out those occasional bold, but original suggestions which are often the mere impertinences of ignorance, but which, coming from superior minds and expressed in their emphatic style, create illusions and deceive even professors themselves. This facility of treating all subjects was observed with surprise. The journals, which sought with avidity the minutest details regarding his person and movements, reporting daily in what house he had dined and what disposition he had shown, whether he was sad or cheerful, made special observation that when dining with François (de Neufchâteau) he had talked of mathematics with Lagrange and Laplace, of metaphysics with Sieyès, of poetry with Chénier, of legislation and law with Daunou.

He had dazzled masses by his glory; he now began to conquer, one by one, the principal men in France by personal intercourse. Admiration,

previously excessive, became almost infatuation after he had been seen. Everything about him, even to those marks of a foreign origin which time had not yet effaced in him, contributed to effect. Singularity always adds to the prestige of genius, especially in France, where, with the greatest uniformity of manners, oddity is strangely idolised. Bonaparte affected to shun the crowd and hide himself from the public gaze. He sometimes even resented extravagant proofs of enthusiasm.

Madame de Staël, who adored, as she had reason, grandeur, genius, and glory, evinced a lively impatience to encounter Bonaparte and pour forth her homage. To his imperious character, disposed to repress undue assumptions, it was offensive that she seemed to transgress the female province; he found her too spiritual and of too exalted aspirations; he detected perhaps her independence peering through her admiration; at all events he was cold repellent, unjust to her. She asked him one day, somewhat abruptly, who in his estimation was the greatest woman; he answered harshly, "she who has borne the most children." Thus was laid the foundation of that mutual antipathy which entailed on her such unmerited sufferings, and incited him to acts of petty and brutal tyranny. Meanwhile he seldom appeared abroad, but lived secluded in his modest house in the rue Chantereine, the name of which had been changed, the department of Paris having ordered it to be called the rue de la Victoire.

He saw only a few men of learning, Monge, Laplace, Lagrange, and Berthollet; a few generals, Desaix, Kléber, Caffarelli; certain artists, and particularly the celebrated actor, Talma, for whom he ever after manifested a strong predilection. When he left his residence it was usually in a plain vehicle; if he visited the theatre he sat shrouded in a grated box, and appeared to partake of none of the glittering and dissipated tastes of his wife. Nevertheless he exhibited the warmest affection for her; he was enthralled by that enchanting grace which, in private life as on the throne, never forsook Madame Beauharnais, and with her supplied the place of beauty.

A seat having become vacant in the Institute by the banishment of Carnot, it was at once offered to him. He accepted it with alacrity, appeared on the day of his reception between Lagrange and Laplace, and ever after wore on public occasions the costume of a member of the Institute, affecting to conceal the warrior under the garb of science.

The Directory was far from evincing any of the fears it experienced. It received numerous reports from its spies, who frequented taverns and public places to hear the language used respecting Bonaparte; and, according to them, he was soon to place himself at the head of affairs, overturn an enfeebled government, and thus save France from the royalists and Jacobins. The Directory, feigning an excess of candour, showed him these reports, and professed to treat them with contempt, as if it believed the general wholly incapable of ambition. The general, equally dissembling on his part, expressed his gratitude for this frankness, and gave assurances he was worthy of the confidence reposed in him. But, notwithstanding, an indelible distrust prevailed on both sides.

He would not even appear to connect himself with the Directory; he preferred to remain aloof, the speculation of all parties, neither allied nor embroiled with any. The attitude of a censor was one agreeable to his ambition. The part is an easy one to play with regard to a government assailed by factions on opposite sides, and constantly exposed to the risk of dissolution; and it is advantageous, because it attracts all malcontents.

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He was too young to be a director ; it was requisite to be forty years old, and he was not thirty. A dispensation of age was indeed spoken of, but that involved a concession which would alarm the republicans, give rise to a prodigious outcry, and certainly not repay the annoyances it would occasion. Besides, to take part as a fifth unit in the government, to have simply his vote in the Directory, to weary himself in struggles with councils still independent, offered no attractions to him ; the odium of provoking a breach of the laws was not worth incurring for such a result. France had yet a powerful enemy to encounter, England ; and, though Bonaparte was covered with glory, the most advisable course for him was to go forth and reap fresh laurels, leaving the government to exhaust itself in its painful struggle with contending parties.

#### THE PROJECT AGAINST ENGLAND AND EGYPT

On the same day the Treaty of Campo-Formio was ratified at Paris, the Directory, designing to arouse the public mind against England, created an army styled that of England, and gave the command of it to Bonaparte. The government was quite sincere in its intention to take the shortest course with England, and make a descent on her shores. It was not imagined that the British people, with all their patriotism, not having then an adequate land-army, could resist the redoubtable warriors of Italy and the Rhine, and especially the genius of the hero of Castiglione, Arcola, and Rivoli. The hope was still entertained that a breeze would ultimately scatter the English squadron blockading the roads of Cadiz, and that the Spanish fleet might then be able to sail out and join the French. As to the Dutch fleet, which was likewise expected to strengthen the French navy, it had recently suffered a severe check off Texel, and its shattered remains were driven back into the ports of Holland. But the combined French and Spanish squadrons would suffice to cover the passage of a flotilla, and protect the transport of sixty or eighty thousand men into England. To carry out all these designs, some fresh means for raising money were to be devised. From fifteen to twenty millions of subscriptions were at once obtained. At the same time, the Directory levelled against England not only its preparations, but its rigours too. A law existed interdicting the import of English goods ; the executive was now armed with authority to make domiciliary visits for the purpose of discovering them, which it caused to be put into force throughout the whole of France on the same day and at the same hour (4th of January, 1798).

Bonaparte seemed to abet this great movement and to give himself to it ; but, at heart, he was indisposed towards the enterprise. To land sixty thousand men in England, march on London and occupy it was not in his opinion the chief difficulty. But he felt conscious that to conquer the country and retain possession of it was impossible ; it might be ravaged, plundered of much of its wealth, thrown back, annihilated, for half a century ; still the invading army must be eventually sacrificed, and he its leader might have to return almost in solitude, after executing a mere barbarous incursion. Later, with a power more gigantic, a greater experience of his means, and an intense personal exasperation against England, he seriously thought of engaging her on her own soil and hazarding his fortune against hers ; but at present he had other ideas and other designs.

He turned therefore to a project of another kind, one equally stupendous but more original in design, more productive in its results, more consonant with the temper of his imagination, and above all more prompt of execution.



He had often directed his eyes to Egypt, as the intermediary station France ought to hold between Europe and Asia, in order to monopolise the commerce of the Levant, and possibly that of India. This idea had riveted itself in his imagination and now almost wholly engrossed him. Dim visions of some vast future floated in his fancy. To plunge into those countries of early enlightenment and glory, where Alexander and Mohammed had overthrown and founded empires, to make his name famous in their regions, and have it wafted back to France resounding with the echoes of Asia, formed the phantasmagoria of a delicious reverie.

#### FRANCE AND HER JUNIOR REPUBLICS

Whilst the republic was thus concentrating all its resources for an attack on England, it had still important interests to arrange on the continent. Its political province was in truth sufficiently ample. It had to treat at Rastatt with the empire, that is to say with the whole extant feudal system, and it had to tutor in their new career three republics, its offspring, to wit, the Batavian, Cisalpine, and Ligurian republics.

The territories occupied by France and the new republics intermingled with those of still feudal Europe, in a manner dangerous to the continuance of peace between the two rival systems. Switzerland, wholly feudal though republican, was enclosed between France, Savoy, now a French province, and the Cisalpine. Piedmont, with which France had contracted an alliance, was enveloped by France, Savoy, the Cisalpine, and the Ligurian. The Cisalpine and the Ligurian republics, again, encompassed the duchies of Parma and Tuscany, and approached near enough to communicate their own excitement to Rome, and even Naples. The Directory, however, had taken the precaution to enjoin upon its agents the strictest reserve, and prohibited them to hold out hopes to the democrats. The intentions of the Directory on the point were sincere and prudent. It desired, doubtless, the progress of the Revolution; but was no longer impelled to accelerate it by arms.

True, all the Italian states were more or less agitated. Arrests were numerous in every city, but the French ministers interposed only by occasional reclamations in favour of individuals unjustly persecuted. In Piedmont, where wholesale incarcerations took place, the intercession of France was often tendered with success. In Tuscany much greater moderation was observed. At Naples a large class of men existed who had embraced the new opinions, against the increase of which a court, equally destitute of morality and sense, strove madly with fetters and punishments. The French ambassador, Trouvé, was loaded with insults. Frenchmen, too, had been assassinated. Even when Bonaparte was in Italy, he had found it difficult to restrain the fury of the court of Naples, and now that the terror of his presence was removed, we may judge of what it was capable. The French government had forces sufficient severely to chastise its offences; but to avoid disturbing the general peace, it instructed Trouvé to observe the utmost forbearance, restrict himself to representations, and endeavour to reclaim it to the dictates of reason.

#### THE POPE DEPOSED (FEBRUARY, 1798)

The government, however, tottering nearest to its ruin was the papal. Not that it took no pains to defend itself, for it likewise made multitudinous arrests; but an aged pontiff with his spirit quenched, and a few feeble

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incompetent cardinals, could with difficulty struggle against the evils of the times. Already, at the instigation of the Cisalpines, the march of Ancona had revolted and formed itself into a republic. Thence the democrats preached rebellion throughout the whole Roman state. The French artists studying at Rome encouraged them by exhortations ; but Joseph Bonaparte laboured to restrain them.

They assembled on the 28th of December to commence a revolt. Dispersed by the papal dragoons they sought refuge within the jurisdiction of the French ambassador, under the porticoes of the Corsini palace which he inhabited. Joseph hastened to the scene accompanied by some French officers and General Duphot, a distinguished young soldier of the army of Italy. He attempted to interpose between the papal troops and the insurgents in the hope of preventing a massacre. But the papal soldiery, paying no respect to the ambassador, fired and killed at his side the unfortunate Duphot. Joseph Bonaparte immediately demanded his passports. They were given to him, and he forthwith took his departure for Tuscany.

Great indignation was manifested in the Cisalpine Republic and by all the Italian patriots against the holy see. The army of Italy demanded with loud shouts to be led against Rome.

Disregarding caution and the inconveniences of a hostile determination, revolutionary zeal prevailed, and the Directory ordered Berthier, who commanded in Italy, to march upon Rome. On the 10th of February, 1798, Berthier arrived in sight of the ancient capital of the world, which the French army had not yet visited. The pope shut himself in the Vatican, and Berthier, introduced by the gate of the People, was escorted to the Capitol, like some old Roman triumpher. The democrats, at the summit of their wishes, assembled in the Campo Vaccino, where the vestiges of the

ancient Forum are perceptible, and, surrounded by a stupid populace, ready to applaud any novelty, proclaimed the Roman Republic. The pontiff, treated with all the attentions due to his age and office, was abstracted from the Vatican during the night and conducted into Tuscany, where he found an asylum in a convent. The people of Rome seemed to regret but indifferently the loss of this ruler, who had nevertheless reigned over them upwards of twenty years.

Unfortunately, excesses, not against persons but against property, sullied the entry of the French into the ancient metropolis of the world. There was no longer at the head of the army that stern and inflexible chief, who, less from virtue than an abhorrence of disorder, had so severely punished



JOSEPH BONAPARTE  
(1768-1844)

plunderers. Bonaparte alone could have bridled cupidity in a country so stocked with riches. Berthier had departed for Paris, and Masséna succeeded him. This general, to whom France owes everlasting gratitude for saving it at Zurich from inevitable ruin, was accused of having set the first example. It was one at all events that found numerous imitators. Palaces, convents, superb collections were mercilessly rifled. Jews, in the train of the army, purchased for insignificant sums magnificent objects recklessly abandoned to them by the depredators. The waste was as revolting as the pillage itself. The soldiers and subalterns were in the most horrible destitution; and they naturally felt indignant at the spectacle of their leaders indecently gorging themselves with spoil and tarnishing the glory of the French name, without any relief or advantage to the army. The Directory recalled him and despatched to Rome a commission, composed of four upright and enlightened individuals, to organise the new republic.

#### SWITZERLAND REORGANISED (1797-1798 A.D.)

It might seem that Switzerland, the ancient land of liberty, famed for its primitive and pastoral manners, had nothing to learn from France and could have no cause for change. On the contrary, feudalism, which is simply a military hierarchy, prevailed with regard to those republics, and there were communities dependent on other communities, as a vassal on his suzerain, and groaning beneath a yoke of iron. In all the several governments, aristocracy had gradually engrossed the whole of the powers. In every part of Europe Swiss might be found forcibly banished from their country, or seeking in voluntary exile protection from aristocratic outrage. Furthermore, the thirteen cantons, disunited and not seldom opposed to each other, no longer possessed any force, and were quite incapable of defending their independence. Switzerland therefore was nothing now but a romantic recollection and a picturesque region; politically, she presented but one unbroken chain of petty and humiliating tyrannies.

Thus, we may conceive the effect likely to be produced within it by the example of the French Revolution. At Zurich, Bâle, and Geneva, especially, great excitement has been manifested. In the latter city indeed sanguinary tumults had occurred. Although feeling it incumbent to propitiate Germany, Piedmont, Parma, Tuscany, and Naples, the Directory recognised no necessity for the same deference towards Switzerland, and was moreover greatly tempted to promote the establishment of an analogous government in a country justly deemed the military key of Europe. Here also, as in the instance of Rome, the Directory was drawn from its prescribed policy by an irresistible seduction. To replace the Alps in friendly hands constituted a motive equally persuasive with that which incited to the demolition of the papacy.

Consequently, on the 28th of December, 1797, the Directory proclaimed that it took the Vaudois under the protection of France. This sufficed as a signal of insurrection to the Vaudois. The bailiffs of Bern, whose oppression had been long execrated, were expelled, though without ill-treatment; trees of liberty were everywhere reared, and in a few days Vaud constituted itself into the Lemanic Republic. The Directory hastened to recognise it, and authorised General Ménard to occupy it, signifying to the canton of Bern that its independence was guaranteed by France.

In the interim the Bernese aristocrats had collected an army. Brune, who was intrusted with the French command, held some conferences at Pay-erne, but they proved fruitless, and on the 2nd of March the French troops



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moved forward. General Schawembourg, with the division brought from the Rhine, occupied Soleure. Brune, with the Italian division, seized on Fribourg. General d'Erlach, who commanded the Bernese troops, retired. The Bernese troops believed themselves betrayed, and murdered their officers.

Nevertheless there remained with Erlach some of those battalions, distinguished in all the armies of Europe for their discipline and bravery, and a certain number of determined peasants. On the 5th of March, Brune on the Fribourg road, and Schawembourg on that of Soleure, simultaneously attacked the positions of the Swiss army. The Swiss found themselves obliged to retreat, and fell back in disorder on Bern. The French encountered in front of the city a multitude of infatuated and desperate mountaineers. Even women and old men rushed headlong on their bayonets. The soldiers were reluctantly compelled to exterminate these pitiable zealots who sacrificed their lives so uselessly. Bern was eventually entered. The denizens of the Swiss mountains sustained their ancient reputation for valour, but exhibited all the blind and irrational ferocity of an Andalusian horde. They perpetrated a fresh massacre of officers, and assassinated the unfortunate Erlach.

The capture of Bern decided the submission of all the great Swiss cantons. Brune, called, as had befallen so many French generals, to be the founder of a republic, proposed to incorporate the French part of Switzerland, the Lake of Geneva, Vaud, a portion of the canton of Bern, and Valais, into a single republic to be called the Rhodanic. But the Swiss patriots had desired a revolution chiefly in the hope of obtaining two principal advantages: the abolition of all jurisdictions of one people over another, and national unity. They longed to witness the extirpation of all domestic tyrannies, and to mould the whole into a general commonwealth by the institution of a central government. They prevailed that a single republic, the Helvetic, only should be carved out of the various subdivisions of Switzerland.

On entering Bern, the French seized the exchequer of government, which is a usual proceeding and the least contested right in war. All the public property of a vanquished government belongs to the conqueror. In all these petty states, equally parsimonious and extortionate, there were long-hoarded treasures. Bern possessed a small coffer of its own, which has furnished to all the enemies of France a fruitful subject of calumny. It has been represented to contain thirty millions, whereas it held but eight. France is accused of having engaged in the war merely to seize this fund and apply the proceeds in the Egyptian expedition — as if she could have supposed the authorities of Bern would not have the sense to remove it; or as if it were probable she would make war and risk the consequences of such an invasion to gain eight millions.<sup>1</sup> Such absurdities refute themselves. A contribution to defray the maintenance and pay of the troops was levied on the members of the old oligarchies of Bern, Fribourg, Soleure, and Zurich.

The winter of 1797-1798 was drawing rapidly to a close. Five months

[<sup>1</sup> This is the estimate of Thiers.<sup>c</sup> Daguet,<sup>i</sup> however, says: "Some historians calculate the sums taken from the treasury of Bern at 26,000,000 livres. Lanfrey<sup>j</sup> estimates what was taken at Bern alone at 41,000,000 (16,000,000 in specie and ingots, 7,000,000 in arms and munitions, 18,000,000 in requisitions). The author of the *Mémoires du Maréchal Ney*<sup>k</sup> computes still higher than Lanfrey, namely at 46,000,000, the total of what was taken at Bern in money, wine, corn, and arms. 'Behold a lesson,' he says, 'for the instruction of those who may be tempted to introduce the foreigner into their native country.' As for Rapinat himself, the French commissioner, he set the total of what was taken from Switzerland at only 13,000,000." Dändliker<sup>l</sup> puts the pillage of public money at over 17,000,000 francs, and Viessieux<sup>m</sup> sets it at over 30,000,000 francs.]

only had elapsed since the Treaty of Campo-Formio, but the situation of Europe had greatly changed in the interval. The republican system had made gigantic strides; to the three republics previously founded by France, two others had been added, created within two months. Europe heard with a shudder the continual echo of the words: Batavian Republic, Helvetic Republic, Cisalpine Republic, Ligurian Republic, Roman Republic. Instead of three governments, France had now five to superintend—involving an additional complication of cares and further explanations for foreign powers. The Directory thus found itself impelled insensibly. There is nothing more insatiable than a system; it creeps onward almost alone, expanding and overcoming even in spite of its authors.

#### THE ELECTIONS OF 1798

Whilst so many external objects demanded its attention, the domestic subject of the elections likewise forced itself on the anxious notice of the Directory. Since the 18th Fructidor there remained in the councils only such deputies as the Directory had voluntarily left there, and upon whom it could rely. These were they who had either promoted or acquiesced in the *coup d'état*. But a new opposition was forming, composed no longer of royalists but of patriots. One of Bonaparte's brothers, Lucien, elected by Corsica to the Five Hundred, had planted himself in this constitutional opposition, not from any cause of personal pique, but that he imitated his brother, and assumed the office of censor of the government. It was the attitude which suited a family that aspired to take a position apart. Lucien was a man of ability, and endowed with an eminent talent for the tribune. He there produced considerable effect, recommended as he was by the glory of his brother. Joseph too, since his retreat from Rome, had returned to Paris, where he maintained a large establishment, and dispensed a generous hospitality to generals, deputies, and distinguished men. The two brothers, Joseph and Lucien, were thus in a capacity to effect many things, which propriety and his studied reserve prohibited to the general.<sup>c</sup>

#### THE EXPEDITION TO EGYPT

Meanwhile Napoleon had proposed his Egyptian schemes to the Directory, which had received them with enthusiasm. The expedition was instantly set on foot. Bonaparte reached Toulon on the morning of the 9th of May and immediately reviewed his new army recruited almost entirely from the invincible soldiers of the army of Italy. In a vigorous address he recalled to them the wretched state he had found them in when, two years before, he had put himself at their head, and also the measure of comfort they had enjoyed under his command. Then he pointed out the riches of Italy with which his subordinates had gorged themselves. Now he promised that each man on his return would possess means enough to buy eight acres of land. At this shameless appeal to their cupidity, the soldiers replied with the cry, "Long live the immortal republic!" repeated a thousand times, as if to guarantee that they were ready to fight again for an idea. This address, which is of incontestible authenticity, appeared in all the leading journals of the time. The Directory, disgusted with the general's plain speaking, ordered its suppression. The public papers published a more dignified address, one in which there was none of that incitement to greed, so artfully introduced to obliterate the moral tone and destroy the belief in generous impulses.

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The squadron, under the command of Admiral Brueys, with the convoy in its charge, set sail on the 19th of May. The entire fleet carried about forty thousand soldiers and ten thousand sailors. It sailed direct for Malta, which Bonaparte on his own authority had determined to capture *en route*. The republic was at peace with the knights of this island. But given the intention for war, the pretext comes easily enough to hand, and no difficulty was found in manufacturing one on the spot. The knights of Malta were charged with creating a state of war between themselves and the republic ever since 1793 by harbouring émigrés. On the evening of the 21st Prairial (June 9th) the squadron hove in sight of Malta.

Bonaparte landed some portions of his troops and immediately opened a furious cannonade on the town of Valetta. The knights made but a feeble defence. This conquest of such very questionable morality cost the French army forty-eight hours of attack and three men. This is cheap glory. Napoleon departed on the 19th of June. Eleven days later Alexandria was in sight. On the next day he received the French consul at Alexandria on board his flagship. He learned from him that fourteen English ships had sailed within half a league of the town the day before; that Nelson, who was in command of them, had inquired of the English consul news of the whereabouts of the French fleet, on whose pursuit he was bent since leaving Toulon; and, further, that he had withdrawn in the direction of the Dardanelles. Nelson might return at any time—not a moment must be lost. The disembarkation was carried out in the middle of the night. As soon as he had some few thousand men ashore Bonaparte divided them into three columns, the command of which he gave to Meñou, Bon, and Kléber. He then marched direct upon Alexandria, which surrendered after a defence of a few hours.

Bonaparte had with great foresight taken pains to let the inhabitants know of his firm resolve to respect their property, manners, customs, and religion. He even boasted of having destroyed the power of the pope, the old enemy of the Mussulmans. It was, he said, only against the mameluke, not against the porte and its subjects, that he made war. This proclamation, false in many respects, produced the best results. The French immediately took possession.

Egypt was at that time in the hands of Murad Bey and Ibrahim Bey, who had almost shaken off their dependence on the porte. It was at Cairo that a blow must be struck at the heart of their power. Bonaparte determined to strike precipitately and after having left three thousand men at Alexandria under the command of Kléber, who had been wounded in the forehead by a ball during the attack on that town, he marched on the 6th of July, taking generals Desaix, Lannes, and Murat with him.<sup>n</sup>



JOACHIM MURAT  
(1771-1815)



## SIR WALTER SCOTT'S ACCOUNT OF THE EGYPTIAN EXPEDITION

Their course was up the Nile, and a small flotilla of gunboats ascended the river to protect their right flank, while the infantry traversed a desert of burning sands, at a distance from the stream, and without a drop of water to relieve their tormenting thirst. The army of Italy, accustomed to the enjoyments of that delicious country, were astonished at the desolation they saw around them.

To add to their embarrassment, the enemy began to appear. Mamelukes and Arabs, concealed behind the hillocks of sand, interrupted their march at every opportunity, and woe to the soldier who straggled from the ranks, were it but fifty yards! Some of these horsemen were sure to dash at him, slay him on the spot, and make off before a musket could be discharged at them. At length, however, the audacity of these incursions was checked by a skirmish of some little importance, near a place called Chehrbeis, in which the French asserted their military superiority. An encounter also took place on the river, between the French flotilla and a number of armed vessels belonging to the mamelukes. Victory first inclined to the latter, but at length determined in favour of the French, who took, however, only a single galliot.

Meanwhile, the French were obliged to march with the utmost precaution. The whole plain was now covered with mamelukes, mounted on the finest Arabian horses, and armed with pistols, carbines, and blunderbusses, of the best English workmanship—their plumed turbans waving in the air, and their rich dresses and arms glittering in the sun. The French were soon reconciled to fighting the mamelukes, when they discovered that each of these horsemen carried about him his fortune, and that it not uncommonly amounted to considerable sums in gold. During these alarms, the French love of the ludicrous was not abated by the fatigues or dangers of the journey.

After fourteen days of such marches they arrived within six leagues of Cairo, and beheld at a distance the celebrated Pyramids, but learned, at the same time, that Murad Bey, with twenty-two of his brethren, at the head of their mamelukes, had formed an entrenched camp at a place called Embabeh, with the purpose of covering Cairo and giving battle to the French. On the 21st of July, as the French continued to advance, they saw their enemy in the field, and in full force. A splendid line of cavalry, under Murad and the other beys, displayed the whole strength of the mamelukes. Their right rested on the imperfectly entrenched camp, in which lay twenty thousand infantry, defended by forty pieces of cannon. But the infantry were an undisciplined rabble; the guns, wanting carriages, were mounted on clumsy wooden frames; and the fortifications of the camp were but commenced, and presented no formidable opposition. Bonaparte made his dispositions. He extended his line to the right, in such a manner as to keep out of gunshot of the entrenched camp, and have only to encounter the line of cavalry.

Murad Bey saw this movement, and, fully aware of its consequence, prepared to charge with his magnificent body of horse, declaring he would cut the French up like gourds. Bonaparte, as he directed the infantry to form squares to receive them, called out to his men, "From yonder Pyramids twenty centuries behold your actions." The mamelukes advanced with the utmost speed, and corresponding fury, and charged with horrible yells. They disordered one of the French squares of infantry, which would have been sabred in an instant, but that the mass of this fiery militia was a

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little behind the advanced guard. The French had a moment to restore order, and used it. The combat then in some degree resembled that which, nearly twenty years afterwards, took place at Waterloo, the hostile cavalry furiously charging the squares of infantry, and trying, by the most undaunted efforts of courage, to break in upon them at every practicable point, while a tremendous fire of musketry, grape-shot, and shells, crossing in various directions, repaid their audacity. Nothing in war was ever seen more desperate than the exertions of the *mamelukes*. Failing to force their horses through the French squares, individuals were seen to wheel them round, and rein them back on the ranks, that they might disorder them by kicking. As they became frantic with despair, they hurled at the immovable phalanxes, which they could not break, their pistols, their poniards, and their carbines. Those who fell wounded to the ground dragged themselves on, to cut at the legs of the French with their crooked sabres. But their efforts were all in vain.

The *mamelukes*, after the most courageous efforts to accomplish their purpose, were finally beaten off with great slaughter; and as they could not form or act in squadron, their retreat became a confused flight. The greater part attempted to return to their camp, from that sort of instinct, as Napoleon termed it, which leads fugitives to retire in the same direction in which they advanced. By taking this route they placed themselves betwixt the French and the Nile; and the sustained and insupportable fire of the former soon obliged them to plunge into the river, in hopes to escape by swimming to the opposite bank—a desperate effort, in which few succeeded. Their infantry at the same time evacuated their camp without a show of resistance, precipitated themselves into the boats, and endeavoured to cross the Nile. Very many of these also were destroyed. The French soldiers long afterwards occupied themselves in fishing for the drowned *mamelukes*, and failed not to find money and valuables upon all whom they could recover. Murad Bey, with a part of his best *mamelukes*, escaped the slaughter by a more regular movement to the left, and retreated by Gizeh into Upper Egypt.

Thus were in a great measure destroyed the finest cavalry, considered as individual horsemen, that were ever known to exist. “Could I have united the *mameluke* horse to the French infantry,” said Bonaparte, “I should have reckoned myself master of the world.” The destruction of a body hitherto regarded as invincible struck terror, not through Egypt only, but far into Africa and Asia, wherever the Moslem religion prevailed; and the rolling fire of musketry by which the victory was achieved procured for Bonaparte the oriental appellation of “Sultan of fire.”

After this combat, which, to render it more striking to the Parisians, Bonaparte termed the “battle of the Pyramids,” Cairo surrendered without resistance. Lower Egypt was completely in the hands of the French, and thus far the expedition of Bonaparte had been perfectly successful.<sup>p</sup>

#### FRENCH ACCOUNT OF THE BATTLE OF THE NILE<sup>1</sup>

It was just as well that the general had, by his rapid victories, so firmly established himself in Egypt, for on returning to Cairo he learned through an aide-de-camp of General Kléber that all retirement from it was for the moment impossible. The French had just experienced a terrible naval

[<sup>1</sup> A fuller account of this famous conflict will be given from English sources in the history of England.]

disaster. After the disembarkation of Bonaparte's troops, Admiral Brueys had brought up his fleet at the mouth of the Nile along the islet of Abukir. But instead of securing himself in the harbour, he was content to keep his fleet in the roadstead, not thinking that the enemy would dare to push his fleet in between him and the island. This however is what happened. On the evening of the 14th Thermidor (August 1st), Nelson's entire fleet hove in sight. By a daring manœuvre a part of the English ships slipped in between Abukir and the French ships, which were thus taken between two fires. A furious and terrible engagement followed, during the night. Admiral Brueys in the *Orient*, a magnificent ship of one hundred and fifty guns, fought desperately. He was even on the point of taking the *Bellerophon*, one of the chief English ships, with which the *Orient* was engaged hand to hand, when he was cut in two by a shot and his vessel, burning with an inextinguishable fire, was blown up with a fearful noise. It was then a little after 10 o'clock at night.

A division of the French fleet under the command of Vice-Admiral Ville-neuve had not seen the signal to engage. If at this moment he had fallen into line with all his vessels intact, fortune might have decided in favour of the French, as the English fleet was severely mauled. But instead the vice-admiral slipped his cables and sailed into the open. The French were compelled to succumb to numbers. The *Artemis*, the *Franklin*, the *Sovereign People*, and the *Tonnant* fought to the last extremity. The captain of the *Tonnant*, Dupetit-Thouars, cut through both thighs, still urged his men to resist. The battle ended from exhaustion.

All the French ships were taken, sunk, or put out of action. The victor was almost as roughly handled. Nelson, carrying off from seven to eight thousand French seamen as prisoners, was obliged to take refuge in a Neapolitan port to repair his fleet. That victory, so dearly bought, gave him an immense reputation. He was made Baron Nelson of the Nile. This was one of the most decisive results of the Egyptian expedition.

Bonaparte received the news with stoic fortitude. "Perhaps," he said, "the English will compel me to carry out greater undertakings than I contemplated." He confided to one of the savants accompanying him — to Volney in fact — a few of his great projected enterprises. Since Turkey had declared war on the French, it would be at Constantinople, which he would reach through Asia, that he would strike a blow at the English. Once there, he saw himself master of Europe, liberating Poland, holding Russia in check, subduing Austria, and forbidding England to enter the Mediterranean. At that time, and Volney must have known it, Bonaparte's ambition had grown into a mania. Seeing a probability of receiving no reinforcements from France for some time to come, he recruited soldiers in the country itself.

In order to stand well with the inhabitants he adapted himself to their customs, while imposing some of his own on them. He modified their laws, established schools, repaired roads, desert tracks, and canals, besides marrying his soldiers to the young Egyptian women.<sup>1</sup> His soldiers fell easily into

[<sup>1</sup> Compare the similar acts of Alexander the Great in Persia. Crowe says: "He was scrupulous in the distribution of justice — resistless. But he sought to obtain a still stronger hold on their imagination, by passing for a prophet, or heaven-sent conqueror. A similar idea had inspired Robespierre in France: that of Bonaparte proved as unsuccessful, and only served to mark his extravagant ambition, as well as that want or defiance of all principle which characterised his nation and age.

"Madame de Staël called Napoleon a Robespierre on horseback. Never was truth more full and poignant: the utterance of it was more galling than all the despot's decrees of exile in return."]



[1798 A.D.]

the new circumstances ; they led a free and easy life, and, amidst the pleasures offered by the city of Cairo, soon forgot the cares of the mother-country.

Nevertheless a formidable sedition broke out in Cairo (October 21st). General Dupuy was the first victim. A number of Frenchmen perished with him. The suppression was horrible, savage, and merciless. Formed in column, the troops hurled themselves on the rebels and made a veritable butchery of them. Bonaparte gave orders that all armed inhabitants found in the streets should be killed. The insurgents did not delay in a speedy submission, though more than five thousand of their number were lost.

The clemency of the conqueror has been much praised. Here we have a sample of it. For a fixed period, thirty prisoners were executed daily. The intention was to terrify the people. One morning, the French troops led a herd of donkeys heavily laden with sacks on to the place de Caire. There was an enormous crowd present, curious to know what the sacks contained. The soldiers opened them all simultaneously and hundreds of heads rolled out. Neither Fouché nor Carrier had ever conceived such a thing as this. And what had been the crime of these wretches ? A wish to free their country, invaded and down-trodden by the foreigner. It is quite certain that the black inhabitants of the desert would form but an indifferent opinion of European civilisation."

#### THIERS ON THE RESULTS OF THE EGYPTIAN EXPEDITION

The celebrated naval battle of Abukir or the Nile was the most disastrous that the French navy had ever sustained and its military consequences threatened to be most fatal. Tidings of the misfortune rapidly circulated through Egypt, and caused a moment of despair to the army. Bonaparte received the intelligence with imperturbable calmness. "So be it !" he cried ; "we must die here, or issue forth great as the ancients." Bonaparte sought to distract his soldiers by different expeditions, and soon taught them to forget the disaster. At the *fête* of the foundation of the republic, celebrated on the 1st Vendémiaire [September 22nd] he strove to exalt their imagination ; he caused to be engraved on Pompey's pillar the names of the forty soldiers first killed in Egypt. These were the forty who had fallen in the assault of Alexandria. Their names, furnished from the obscure villages of France, were thus associated with the immortality of Pompey and Alexander. He likewise addressed to his army a grand and thrilling allocution, retracing its wondrous history. It ran thus :

"SOLDIERS :

"We celebrate the first day of the year VII of the republic. Five years ago the independence of the French people was menaced ; but you took Toulon ; it was the presage of the ruin of your enemies. A year after you beat the Austrians at Dego. The year subsequent you were on the summit of the Alps. Two years ago you fought against Mantua, and won the famous victory of San Giorgio. Last year you were at the sources of the Drave and the Isonzo, on your return from Germany. Who would then have said that you would this day be on the banks of the Nile, in the centre of the ancient world ? From the English, renowned in arts and commerce, to the hideous and ferocious Bedouin, you attract the eyes of all nations. Soldiers, your destiny is glorious, because you are worthy of what you have done and of the opinion entertained of you. You will die with honour, like the brave men whose names are written on this column, or you will return to your country covered with laurels, and the admiration of the universe. During the five months we have been absent from Europe, we have been the constant object of solicitude to our countrymen. On this day forty millions of citizens celebrate the era of representative governments ; forty millions of citizens think of you ; all say, 'It is to their labours, to their blood, that we owe general peace, tranquillity, the prosperity of commerce, and the blessings of civil liberty.'"



## CHAPTER XVI

### THE COLLAPSE OF THE DIRECTORY

[1798-1799 A.D.]

The cannon of Nelson, which destroyed the French fleet at Abukir, re-echoed from one end of Europe to the other, and everywhere revived the spirit of resistance to the ambition of the republic. That great event not only destroyed the charm of her invincibility, but relieved the allies from the dread arising from the military talents of Napoleon and his terrible Italian army, whom it seemed permanently to sever from Europe. The subjugation of Switzerland and the conquest of Italy were no longer looked upon with mere secret apprehension; they became the subject of loud and impassioned complaint over all Europe; and the allied sovereigns, upon this auspicious event, determined to engage in open preparations for the resumption of hostilities. — ALISON.<sup>b</sup>

THE battle of Abukir robbed the French of all their ascendancy in the Levant, and transferred to England a decisive predominance. The porte solemnly declared war against France, September 4th, 1798, and coalesced with Russia and England. The sultan ordered the formation of an army for the reconquest of Egypt. This event rendered the situation of the French extremely critical. Separated from France, and cut off from succour by the victorious fleets of England, they were exposed to the attacks of all the ferocious hordes of the East. They were but thirty thousand to contend against such perils.

It began to be insinuated that the success of Nelson ought to be the signal for a general rising — that the powers of Europe ought to take advantage of the moment when the most formidable army of France and her greatest captain were imprisoned in Egypt, to march against her and repel within her own confines her soldiers and her principles. Such suggestions soon became rife in all the courts. This was the moment, they were told, to second the court of Naples, to league together against the common enemy,

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to rise all at once upon the rear of the French, and exterminate them from one end of the peninsula to the other. Austria was urged that she ought to seize the moment when the Italian states took the French in rear to attack them in front, and wrest Italy from their possession. The thing would be of easy accomplishment, she was reminded, for Bonaparte and his terrible army were no longer on the Adige. The empire was incited by the remembrance of the territory it had lost, and of the compulsory cession of the limit of the Rhine. Urgent but vain endeavours were made to draw Prussia from her neutrality; and lastly, with Paul of Russia, influences were used to decide him to grant the assistance so long and idly promised by his predecessor Catherine.<sup>c</sup>

The winter of 1798-1799 was spent in preparations; but the court of Naples, elated by the victory and presence of Nelson, could not restrain its enthusiasm until spring, and commenced war by advancing upon Rome in the month of December. The French, few in number, under Championnet, retreated to the mountains behind Soracte. Mack, the Austrian general, commanding the Neapolitans, followed them, and was soon defeated by a soldier of the school of Bonaparte. The Neapolitan army evacuated not only Rome, but fled, without making a stand, back to their own capital. Capua, a town most capable of resistance, and defended by a rapid stream, surrendered without firing a shot; and the royal family abandoned Naples. The lazzaroni, unsupported and uncommanded, held out for several days against the French, and would certainly have succeeded in repelling them altogether, had a prince or general of spirit and authority remained amongst them; but the pusillanimity of the Bourbon race was everywhere alike unredeemed by a single trait of firmness or valour.

Naples now became the Parthenopean Republic, January 23rd, 1799; while, to complete the conquest of Italy, the king of Piedmont, the earliest ally of the French Republic, was hurled from his throne, December 9th, 1798. The Directory despatched an officer to take possession of Turin, and to garrison it. "France," says Thiers,<sup>c</sup> "had the same right to overthrow the court of Piedmont, as the garrison of a fortress has to destroy the buildings that obstruct its defence." In virtue of this martial law, the king was forced to abdicate, and was exiled to Sardinia. In merited retribution, this violence and grasping ambition on the part of France turned out to weaken her power. She had occupied and revolutionised provinces and kingdoms; but had not given them that freedom and independence which enables a land to acquire national feeling, and to defend itself.<sup>1</sup> The very revenues of each country

[<sup>1</sup>Yet the words of Thiers should be borne in mind: "It is an error to reproach the French Directory with the disorders that prevailed in the allied states. No resolution, however strong, could have obviated the outbreak of passions which disturbed them; and as to the exactions, the prohibition of Bonaparte himself had not succeeded to prevent them in the conquered provinces. What a single individual, powerful in genius and vigour and on the spot, could not effect, was much less possible to a government composed of five members and seated at a great distance. Still, the majority of the Directory was animated with the purest zeal to promote the welfare of the new republics, and viewed with lively indignation the insolence and extortions of the generals, and the palpable robberies of the companies. Excepting Barras, who shared in the profits of these companies and was the patron-saint of all the corruptionists at Milan, the four directors denounced in the strongest terms the proceedings in Italy. Larévellière-Lépeaux especially, whose stern probity was shocked by such atrocities, submitted a plan to the Directory which met its approval. He proposed that a commission should continue to direct the Roman government, and restrain the military authority; that an ambassador be sent to Milan to represent the French government and deprive the staff of all influence; that this ambassador be empowered to make the alterations in the Cisalpine constitution which were needful, such as reducing the number of local divisions, of public functionaries, and of members in the two councils; and that this ambassador have for assistant an administrator capable of organising a system of taxation and responsibility. This plan was adopted." <sup>c</sup>]



were swallowed up by the rival spoiliations of general and proconsul. A provincial force could not anywhere be raised or depended on. The army, the diminished army of France alone, was thus scattered over an immense frontier, extending from the north of Holland to the south of Italy, with Switzerland, no longer neutral, in the midst, whose mountains it became now necessary to defend. Bonaparte was absent from the camp; and Moreau was in disgrace, as moderate and monarchically inclined, whilst the talents and vigour of Carnot no longer guided the operations of the Parisian war-office. Nevertheless, the Directory esteemed themselves, as of old, invincible, and meditated nothing less than a march upon Vienna, although a few thousand troops were all that they could collect upon the Rhine. It was now, by their order, that the famous project of the conscription was presented to the legislature, and passed into a law; so careful were these predecessors of Bonaparte in providing the ample materials of military despotism. The convention had

set the example by its requisitions, and its *levée en masse*; but these were temporary expedients to meet a pressing danger.<sup>1</sup> The conscription now voted placed all Frenchmen, from the age of twenty-one to twenty-five, at the disposal of the minister of war. The government instantly put the law in force, to recruit the armies. Jourdan, Bernadotte, Masséna, and Schérer were appointed to commands: this last, whom Bonaparte had superseded as drunken and incapable in 1796, was now reappointed, whilst Moreau was placed in a subordinate station. But such was the will of Barras.

The new coalition sent an army into the field numbering 300,000 men. The fresh troops of the emperor of Russia made one-fourth of this complement, and were commanded by Suvarov, the conqueror of Praga, the suburb of Warsaw. The Russian general was destined to act in Italy, as a theatre where the courage of the Austrians might be damped by the



JEAN BAPTISTE JULES BERNADOTTE

(1764-1844)

memory of recent disasters. Hitherto the neutrality of Switzerland had obliged the tide of war to respect and roll on either side of her rocky barrier. But the French had now usurped the country; and as, by a pedantic rule in the military theory of the day, since disproved, the power that possessed the

[<sup>1</sup> A few months before (the Directory) had become actually bankrupt. The interest on the debt was two hundred and fifty-eight millions; it paid two-thirds in drafts on the national property which lost five-sixths of their nominal value, the other third was consolidated and inscribed in the ledger of the public debt. The Directory brought the general irritation to a climax. By two tyrannical measures a forced and progressive loan of one hundred millions and the law of hostages against the relatives of the émigrés and former (*ci-devant*) nobles; the latter destroyed the security of 150,000 families. The councils in order to meet the attacks of Europe decreed the law of conscription, which constrained all citizens from twenty to twenty-five to render military service and ordered a levy of 200,000 men. — DURY. A incident of this period was a small war with the United States, which resulted in provoking the capture of much French commerce by American vessels. An account of this war will be found in the history of the United States.]

[1799 A.D.]

mountains and the sources of rivers could easily master the plain at their feet, and the streams traversing them, the prime object of the belligerents was to dispute with each other the higher Alps. With this view, Austria collected two armies in the eastern frontier of Switzerland, in the Tyrol, and amongst the Grisons, who had called for their aid; whilst the archduke Charles, with another in Bavaria, menaced at once the upper Rhine and the Swiss frontier on the north. To oppose these armies, Masséna, early in March, invaded the Grison country, and drove the Austrians from the valley of the Rhine, which he occupied from the Lake of Constance to St. Gotthard. Jourdan, at the same time, advanced against the archduke Charles, and posted his army betwixt the Lake of Constance and the Danube.

## FRENCH DISASTERS AND LOSS OF ITALY (1799 A.D.)

Here the first blow was struck. The archduke was more than a match for his old antagonist. He attacked the French, in a weak point of their line, forced it, and compelled Jourdan to retreat. The latter sought to take his revenge at Stockach, March 22nd, 1799. His chief attempt was directed against the archduke's right, and Soult succeeded at first in driving it before him; but, reinforced, it stood its ground. Prince Charles, himself, charged at the head of his cavalry, and after a stubborn contest the French gave way, and suffered a defeat. The army of Jourdan,<sup>1</sup> in consequence, retired behind the Rhine. In Italy, at the same time, Schérer, experienced like success. If the Directory had sought out a commander to act as a foil to Bonaparte on the theatre of that general's exploits, it could not have chosen otherwise. Schérer, instead of passing the Adige, manœuvred with vague intention; was beaten by Kray at Magnano April 5th; and driven back, in a short month's time, to the Oglio and the Adda; where, conscious of his incapacity, he yielded up the command to Moreau. But it was too late for this able general to retrieve the campaign. Suvarov had arrived with his Russians. He forced the passage of the Adda, defeated the French at Cassano April 28th,<sup>2</sup> and, surrounding one of their divisions, compelled it to surrender.

Moreau, however, manœuvred, and took post in the Apennines, to await the coming of Macdonald, who had evacuated Naples and Rome, and was advancing to the aid of his comrades in northern Italy. Macdonald, issuing alone from the mountains, routed the first Austrian corps with which he came in contact, but now found himself on the banks of the Trebbia, in presence of an overwhelming force of Austrians and Russians. Retreat would have been prudent; but Macdonald stood his ground and gave battle to Suvarov. It was renewed for three successive days — the 17th, 18th, and 19th of June; and even the night brought no cessation to the carnage. The Polish legion, under Dombrowski, was here destroyed almost to a man. The French were defeated with great loss [15,000 men], not a general officer escaping without a wound.

## THE 30TH PRAIRIAL

Disasters came thick on every side. In Germany and Italy the French had been routed. Even in Switzerland Masséna had abandoned the line of

[<sup>1</sup> Jourdan was compelled by illness to relinquish his command to Ernouf, and he yielded later to Masséna.]

[<sup>2</sup> "The very same day the court of Vienna stained its honour with an infamous man-hunt. The ministers of France at the congress of Rastatt, where the peace of the empire was being discussed, were assassinated by Austrian hussars." d]

the Rhine. An English and Russian army had made good a descent upon Holland. La Vendée and the Chouans showed symptoms of another insurrection. On the Directory fell the blame of these evil fortunes. Every class joined in execrating it: the royalists in silent indignation. The military attributed to the "lawyers," as they called the directors, the weakness and disorganisation of the armies. The patriots declared, with truth, that the government was as imbecile and powerless abroad as it was violent and tyrannical at home. To submit to dictatorial rule, and yet not find in it energy sufficient to repulse the foreign enemy, was disgraceful and insufferable.

The period arrived for new elections. They were universally democratic; but the Directory dared no longer to cancel them. A powerful majority declared against them in the council of Ancients and of the Five Hundred, no longer constitutional and royalist, as in Fructidor, but constitutional and democratic. The lot for quitting the Directory falling on Rewbell, the noted Sieyès was chosen in his place.<sup>1</sup> Successive attacks now took place against the old members and spirit of the government; Barras, however, being excepted—that flexible politician having made his peace with the opposition. The Directory was deprived of its dictatorial power—of its right of suppressing journals; and public opinion, thus regaining its organ, became trebly powerful. The majority of the legislature determined to force the three directors hostile to it to give in their resignations. A commission was appointed, a report demanded of the state of the nation, and menaces of proceeding to extremes went as far as parliamentary vigour would admit. The old directors, supported by Larévellière-Lépeaux, remained obstinate. They invoked the constitution, and their inviolability thereby decreed; but the answer was prompt and apt. They had violated the constitution to support themselves in Fructidor. On similar grounds of expediency, it might be violated to their prejudice: they were forced to resign. Ducos, Moulins, and Gohier were appointed in their place. The last two were democrats attached to the directorial system, but they became ciphers.<sup>f</sup>

With the dismissal of the directors all the ministers resigned. Thus one saw disappear from the political arena Talleyrand, Schérer, François de Neufchâteau, and Ramel, all the members of the directorial ministry. The change was absolute; Barras alone was left of the old Directory.

This is what is now called the 30th Prairial, a peaceful day, which nevertheless, was a revolution of men and ideas. The populace was so accustomed to changes that it took no notice. What did any movement in the Directory matter to it? Thus one notices a complete progressive degeneration in the energy of the Revolution. Under the convention nothing was done without legislative proscription and the scaffold; on the 9th Thermidor there were more executions of exiles; on the 14th Vendémiaire cannon

[<sup>1</sup> Abbé Sieyès, while envoy of the French Republic, had made a reputation of some importance amongst the statesmen of Europe. In intimate consultation with him, the Russian cabinet, while justifying and declaring its intention of maintaining complete neutrality, had spoken overtly on the little consistency to be found in French politics so incessantly disturbed. How treat with regularity so mobile a system which offered neither stability nor duration? What alliance was to be made with an authority subject to change every three months? Abbé Sieyès acquiesced in these opinions and answered that, like them, he was for unity; monarchy in one form or another appeared to him the system most in keeping with the manners and customs of France. Abbé Sieyès repeated his favourite project, the elevation of a prince of the house of Brunswick to the position of constitutional king of France, or as protector of the nation, a necessary transitional concession to the members of the two councils who in their daily sittings vowed hatred of kings. Such conferences were repeated with much interest several times in Berlin. Full of such ideas, Abbé Sieyès had returned to Paris. — CAPEFIGUE, <sup>h</sup>]



[1799 A.D.]

resounded in the bloody streets of Paris; on the 18th Fructidor there was wholesale transportation and during the 30th Prairial all was carried out by ballot and majority vote. The deterioration of the revolutionary principle is visible here. A new epoch approaches out of the need of strong government. It will succeed and receive the heritage of those small characters who are contending for authority; the 30th Prairial is a preparation for the 18th Brumaire, a formula of constitution is alone needed to end the republic which is wasting away in the arms of the Directory.<sup>h</sup>

A new administration always endeavours to signalise itself by vigour; and the present, possessed of the legislative majority, were not checked by the extravagance of the measures which they proposed. A forced loan, an extension of the conscription law, filled at once the armies and the coffers of the state, whilst the law of hostages, rendering all the nobles of a province answerable for its tranquillity, compelled them to exert themselves to put down insurrection. Barras redoubled his zeal in his peculiar department, the police; he appointed his creature Fouché, to preside over it. To the discernment of Barras, France owes the advancement of Bonaparte, Talleyrand, and Fouché: the three names tell sufficiently his discernment.

## THE BATTLE OF NOVI

The young Joubert, in whom the Directory hoped to raise a rival to Bonaparte, was now commissioned to take the command in Italy against Suvarov. Like the general whom he sought to emulate, his marriage was simultaneous with and accessory to his appointment. "To conquer or perish," was his parting promise to his young bride. He crossed the Alps with reinforcements, rallying the remains of Moreau's and Macdonald's force. But he was still far inferior in number to Suvarov; to whom Mantua, and all the fortresses of southern Italy, had already surrendered. Joubert, however, bent more on acting a heroic part than anxious to defend his country, gave the Russian general battle at Novi.<sup>1</sup> It was fought on the 15th of August with obstinacy and slaughter, but with little skill on either side. Suvarov, with superior forces, attacked on every point. Joubert advanced to the front, to support and encourage his men, when a ball struck him to the heart. His dying word bade his soldiers advance, but in vain. Moreau again resumed the command, and only succeeded in bringing off a defeated and shattered army. Thus Italy was lost in the campaign of a few months.<sup>f</sup>

[<sup>1</sup> The Austro-Russians were sixty thousand strong, the French army not half that number; but it fought for the sacred cause of liberty and for the republic, which doubled its strength; and it threw itself furiously, head down, upon the legions of Austria and Russia. The fight lasted until nearly eleven, and then, crushed, harassed, overwhelmed by numbers, the French were obliged to yield ground, leaving behind some standards and thirty-seven pieces of artillery. They had lost about five thousand men in killed, wounded, and prisoners; the Austro-Russians had lost nearly twenty thousand. Historians, on the strength of the known false calculations of the royalist Jomini, who only attribute to the allied army a loss equal to that of the French, contradict themselves by asserting that the Austro-Russians were so impaired and broken that they were incapable of any movement on the following day. It would very surely have been otherwise had not their losses been much greater; they would not have allowed their enemy to reorganise themselves in the passes of the Alps preparatory to again taking the offensive. The defeat of the French in demoralising the enemy, partook of all the results of a victory. A few more of such successes and the Austro-Russians would have been exterminated.

The death of Joubert did not lessen public grief, it gave events a more gloomy appearance on the surface than was in reality the case. The newest, purest and most popular glories disappeared one after another, carried away by a sort of fatality as if to clear the ground for the appearance of the fated genius of Bonaparte. After Marceau, Hoche; after Hoche, Joubert. And these were they whom it had become a habit to look upon not only as defenders of the nation but of justice, right, and liberty. Joubert had a gorgeous entombment in the hearts of all patriots. — HAMEL.<sup>e</sup>]

## THE FRENCH DEFEAT THE ENGLISH IN HOLLAND

While in upper Italy the soldiers of the French army showed a bold front to the enemy, and in Switzerland General Lecourbe continually harassed the Austrians and beat them in twenty engagements, a signal success was achieved over the English in Holland. The northern army was there commanded by General Brune, a former printer, zealous member of the cordeliers, and a friend of Camille Desmoulins. He had twenty-five thousand men under his orders, including the contingent furnished by the Batavian Republic, all ready to hurl the English into the sea should they disembark.

This opportunity did not fail. Towards the end of August the English under the duke of York disembarked some twenty thousand men, and immediately effected a junction with a Russian army corps under the command of General Hermann. This allied army was about forty thousand strong. Brune fell upon the Anglo-Russians before they had time to collect themselves. After beating them in several successive encounters he administered a sanguinary defeat upon them near Bergen-op-Zoom on the 19th of September. Two thousand prisoners, more than three thousand dead and wounded, twenty-five pieces of artillery and five standards, were the results of that memorable day which cost the French scarcely a thing and which was the prelude to a treaty of which we shall speak later on.

While the republic was inwardly given over to these wretched intrigues, it was again outwardly taking the ascendant which it had lost in a moment, and astounding Europe again with the promptness and importance of its actions. Brune in Holland had, after the battle at Bergen, effected a retrograde movement to draw the enemy into a position so formidable that he could there administer to him an irreparable defeat. The allies fell into the trap. Encouraged by a partial success in an affair of outposts the duke of York advanced on the 6th of October to hurl himself against the trenches at Kastrikum. The fight lasted twelve hours. At the end of the day the Anglo-Russians fled in all directions towards the sea, leaving on the field a multitude of dead and abandoning more than fifteen hundred prisoners, eleven pieces of artillery, all their ammunition and baggage. As Brune had foreseen, it was an irreparable defeat. The allied army, harassed, closely pursued, would have infallibly been hurled into the sea if the duke of York, seeing inevitable ruin ahead, had not asked to capitulate. An agreement was signed at Alkmaar by which the duke of York was compelled to re-embark with all his troops, after restoring all French or Batavian prisoners. Thus ended miserably the expedition upon which England had built such great hopes.<sup>1</sup> General Brune had gained his object without being obliged to exterminate an enemy who begged for mercy. Holland was henceforward purged of all Russian or English troops and the republic had regained all its former prestige.

## RENEWAL OF FRENCH VICTORY

In Italy the affairs of France had not been slow to re-establish themselves. After the death of Joubert and the sanguinary fight at Novi, where,

[<sup>1</sup> The English, however, gained as usual important triumphs on the sea, as will be described in the history of England, the victories including the acquisition of the entire Dutch fleet in the Texel, the capture of a French expedition to Ireland, the capture of Minorca and the blockade of Malta, the death in India of France's friend Tippoo Sahib, and the general control of the waters.]

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conquered, the French had appeared stronger than the conquerors, Moreau had maintained the defensive without trouble. Recalled to Paris at the end of Vendémiaire he had given up the command to Championnet who now found the army of the Alps and that of Italy under his command. Championnet at once took the offensive, and, in a series of engagements of utmost importance from a moral point of view, in a few days brought victory once more to his folds. But where the triumph of French arms was glorious and prodigious of results was in Switzerland. Archduke Charles had received orders from the Aulic council to retire before Masséna and to take again a position on the Rhine. He effected this move with great rapidity. September 18th he was before Mannheim at the head of thirty thousand men. At daybreak he attacked the French trenches with his whole force. The republicans were only five thousand strong, commanded by Laroche and Ney; they were compelled to give way after a frightful combat in which the enemy's losses were three times as heavy as the French. During this time Suvarov, considerably weakened by his disastrous victory at Novi, was advancing towards Switzerland, which the Austrian court had forbidden him to enter, in order to put the army in Helvetia between two fires; Masséna having made the mistake of allowing Archduke Charles to withdraw unassailed. Another Russian army under the command of General Korsakov was operating in the same way in Switzerland. It was necessary that the French should win at all hazards, otherwise the whole of their eastern frontier would be at the mercy of the enemy.

Masséna fully grasped the gravity of the situation. He had an inspiration of genius. Realising the necessity of destroying Korsakov's army before Suvarov could cross the Alps, he turned rapidly to meet it, and accomplished this on the morning of September 25th on the shore of the Linth. The Austro-Russians occupied the town of Zurich which bestrides the two banks of the river. Three Russian regiments which contested the passage of the Linth were completely exterminated. The evening of that first day the French were masters of the entire right shore of the Lake of Zurich. This was a considerable achievement in itself, but victory was incomplete so long as the enemy occupied the town, and it was necessary to dislodge him quickly as Condé's army and a considerable corps of Bavarians were advancing to his assistance.

The battle was resumed on the morrow with redoubled fury. The town of Zurich was enveloped in a circle of fire; hand-to-hand fighting took place in the streets; there was a fearful slaughter. The Russians allowed themselves to be killed with astonishing impassiveness. Korsakov's rout was complete by evening, and the ruins of his army fled in disorder towards the Rhine. Those two bloody days cost the Russians 8,000 in killed, 7,000 in wounded, and 5,000 prisoners—20,000 in all. Moreover they left in French hands 6 standards and about 150 cannon. It was an overwhelming disaster.

And yet all was not over. Suvarov was advancing; Masséna wrote to the Directory: "Suvarov arrives; I am going to conquer him." He conquered him to some purpose. Harassed by the troops of Gudin and Lecourbe, Suvarov's army had already lost heavily when, on the 8th Vendémiaire (September 30th), it debouched into the valley of Muthenthal, where it encountered the main body of the French. The Russians, already worn with fatigue, were overthrown, cut to pieces, and obliged to precipitately gain the banks of the Rhine, after suffering frightful loss. Masséna then thought of meeting Korsakov, who seemed to meditate a fresh offensive move on the



Thur. October 7th one of his divisions met, on the Bussingen side, General Korsakov marching at the head of about twelve thousand men, Russians and Bavarians. The action, opening with extraordinary vigour, was not of long duration. The allies were soon compelled to seek safety in flight after leaving a great number of their men on the field. On the same day General Gazan attacked a large corps of Russians and émigrés commanded by Condé in person, before Constance. Impetuously charged upon, Condé's army recoiled in disorder, and sought refuge in the town, which the republicans entered pell-mell with them. Fighting took place in the streets until ten o'clock at night. Nearly all the émigrés were taken or killed. The prince of Condé and his grandson, the duke d'Enghien, escaped only under cover of night. The enemy's losses in these simultaneous encounters amounted to nearly six thousand men. It was the last act of that great battle of Zurich, which had lasted fifteen days. The results were immense. In that memorable fortnight the Austro-Russians had been entirely destroyed or dispersed,

Helvetia had been freed, the French frontiers entirely disencumbered, and Archduke Charles reduced to impotence. At that battle of Zurich, which immortalised the name of Masséna, numbers of officers destined to give lustre to the imperial régime distinguished themselves — Soult, Mortier, Gudin, Molitor, Oudinot, and the commandant of artillery, Foy, who later on was to engage in yet greater combats.<sup>e</sup>



MAXIMILIEN SÉBASTIEN FOY  
(1775-1825)

These actions took place towards the close of September, whilst Suvarov was forcing the passage of Mount St. Gotthard. He hoped to come on the flank of the French, whilst they were pressed in front; but when Suvarov arrived in the valley, his allies were repulsed, and he himself was in imminent jeopardy. Accustomed to victory,

he was now compelled to retreat, even ere he could fight — and such a retreat! — for which shepherd's tracks over the highest ranges of Alps offered the only passage. Masséna had scarcely need of firing a gun. The march and its privations diminished the army of Suvarov as much as the battle of Zurich had lessened that of Korsakov. Often the Russian soldiers refused to advance through these stupendous and frigid regions; the general would then cause a pit to be dug, fling himself into it, and desire his army to march over his body, and desert in these solitudes the commander that had so often led them to victory. Nor were the French idle: at the Devil's Bridge, which they broke — at Klönthal, and in many a perilous defile, Masséna's lieutenants attacked and slaughtered the discomfited Russians, who lost two-thirds of their numbers on their route from St. Gotthard to the Grisons. The conqueror of Italy, Suvarov, was indignant with the Austrians, who had laid

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a trap, he asserted, for his fair fame. He considered himself betrayed, broke his sword in resentment, and resigned all command in disgust, vowing nevermore to serve with the imperials.

## NAPOLEON IN SYRIA AND EGYPT

In the meanwhile what was Napoleon doing in the East? In the spring the Turks had menaced him with two armies — one from Syria. This, with his usual promptitude, he marched in February to anticipate, crossing the desert, and penetrating without opposition into Syria. Jaffa he took by storm. A part of the garrison had retreated into large habitations, and



MAP TO ILLUSTRATE THE CAMPAIGN IN SYRIA AND EGYPT

prepared for an obstinate defence. The general's aide-de-camp promised them quarter, upon which they laid down their arms. The countenance of Bonaparte fell, on beholding this long train of prisoners. "What should I do with them?" exclaimed he in anger to the aide-de-camp. He had not provisions for his own troops. To retain prisoners was impossible. To set them free was to place so many enemies on his flank. Yet this last should have been nobly resolved on. Bonaparte hesitated. But on the third day the prisoners were marched out, to the number of several thousands, to the beach, and shot in cold blood; some few escaping who swam out to sea. The soldiers made signs of reconciliation to these wretched men, induced them to approach the shore, and there mercilessly shot and slew them. This last act is one of the greatest blots on the character of French soldiers. The general might plead necessity. But here the soldier, of

his free will and caprice, emulated all the atrocities of the Parisian Septembrists.

Immediately after this, the French were checked before the walls of Acre. They formed in vain the siege. The ferocious Jezzar commanded within, and Sir Sidney Smith aided him with cannon, and at need with sailors to work them. The Turkish army, in the meantime advanced, surprised and surrounded Kléber at Mount Tabor; but that general kept them at bay till Bonaparte came to his rescue, surrounded the Moslems in turn, routed and slaughtered them. Acre, despite this victory, was impregnable; after repeated efforts, and the loss of the bravest officers, the French were obliged to retreat. In passing by Jaffa<sup>1</sup> [or Joppa] another instance occurred of Napoleon's placing himself above the common principles of morality. He proposed to administer strong doses of opium to those incurably afflicted with the plague. A system of mercy daily applied to animals he thought might be extended to human life. The surgeons recoiled at a theory of mercy that might be taken for murder. In this instance, as in the more guilty ones of Jaffa and the duke d'Enghien, the influence of the Revolution is seen. Bonaparte was not naturally either a monster, or even a cruel man. But he had started to manhood at a time when the universal mind of France presented a *tabula rasa* of all principle, moral and religious. The great doctrine of expediency had been preached and hallowed by the Revolution, the energy of which was then, and is still, largely admired, and the grand successes of which, as well as its many salutary consequences, were considered if not to hallow its crimes, at least to excuse the principle which generated them.

Returning to Egypt, Bonaparte had to contend with the insurrection of the Arabs, and the discontented projects of his own troops. In July a Turkish army landed at Abukir: the general hastened to attack it. The Moslems showed their wonted valour, repulsed his first effort, till, assaulted again whilst busied in decapitating the slain, they were driven back in disorder. Murat with his cavalry penetrated amongst them, sabred multitudes, and drove the rest into the bay of Abukir. The sea was strewn with turbans. Having thus wiped out the disgrace of Acre, Bonaparte, whose object was not to vegetate in Egypt, prepared to leave his army secretly, and repair to France.<sup>f</sup>

#### TROUBLES OF THE NEW DIRECTORY

Meanwhile, the Revolution of the 30th Prairial had hardly bettered matters. As a natural consequence of liberty the parties were raising their heads. The "law of hostages" had had no other effect than to make recruits for the Chouans. The hopes of the royalists revived. But they had then but a small representation in the councils, and their most prudent leaders continued to be attached to the constitution of the year III, while others were in haste to depart from it; they awaited events. Some believed that a reform of the constitution would lead to a hereditary presidency.

The patriots showed themselves much more enterprising. They organised in the riding-school (*manège*) a society with a president, secretaries, and correspondents. This was the club du Manège. Demands were made for the execution of all the terrorist measures, for the disarmament of the royalists, for arming the national guard with pikes and cannon, for the

[<sup>1</sup> Bonaparte's touching the plague sores of the sick at this place should be remembered, not only as an act of heroism, but as evincing his soldier-like belief in predestination, the only and the singular principle of his creed.]



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impeachment of the old directors or of the generals, and for the most severe laws against emigration. The journals of the party, especially the *Hommes libres*, supported this resurrection of Jacobinism; however, while proposing revolutionary measures, they made the pretence of not departing from the constitution and never re-establishing the guillotine.

Besides the directors, Gohier and Moulins, the patriots had on their side the generals Jourdan, Augereau, Bernadotte, and Marbot the governor of Paris. They also counted on Barras, but he had become Sieyès's man, and deserted them, judging that the future would be different and yielding to the advice of Fouché, to whom Barras caused the ministry of police to be given. He was perfectly fitted for the position, being crafty and subtle, well informed of the secrets of the Jacobins all of whom he knew, and being always ready to betray his friends of yesterday for the sake of those of to-morrow. He already deserved what Bonaparte said of him with reference to his mania for intrigue and for being in everything—that “he walked in everybody's shoes.” Sieyès sanctioned his appointment in order to rid himself of the “patriots,” whom he detested and feared as ungovernable men. He had the courage to tell them of their actions and to crush their absurd proposals in several discourses delivered at the *fêtes* of July 14th, July 28th (9th Thermidor), and August 10th. He stigmatised the time to which were accredited “those disastrous maxims that enlightenment must yield to ignorance, wisdom to folly, reflection to passion; when all those who had served or were capable of serving their country were discredited, outraged, and persecuted, when the most tutelary authority was the most hated because it was authority, when all ideas were confused to such an extent that all those who ought not to be charged with anything were persistently charged with everything.” He vigorously attacked those who thought that “to strengthen a government is an infamy and to destroy is always a glory; who as lawless enemies of all order or even appearance of order wished to govern by shouts and not by laws.” These philippics had all the more success on account of the demonstrated and well-known circumspection of their author.

Sieyès had the riding-school closed. This was done quietly by a simple order of the inspectors of the council of Ancients, the action being based upon the fact that the riding-school belonged to the Tuileries. The patriots expelled from the riding-school at once reorganised their club du Manège in the rue du Bac in another hall called the Temple of Peace. Even there



LUCIEN BONAPARTE  
(1775-1840)

Sieyès pursued them, strengthened by his former success and knowing that he would be supported by a justly alarmed public; for the reappearance of the Jacobins had caused disorders at Amiens, Bordeaux, and Marseilles. On the 13th of August Fouché closed the new club and the directors assumed authority to undertake domiciliary visits in Paris. There was neither opposition nor disorder. The populace proved itself to be tranquillised and indifferent to the invectives which the Jacobin journals heaped upon Sieyès, Barras, and Fouché.

Next the directors, in the absence of a special law, applied to the journalists the penalties prescribed by article 145 of the constitution against the authors and accomplices of plots. They issued warrants of arrest against the printers and editors of thirteen journals and sealed up their presses. The patriot representatives did not fail to cry out that this was a tyranny, that the Directory would not leave the press free because it was meditating a disgraceful peace or a *coup d'état*. However, the sixty-eight accused men were deported to Oléron, and the commission appointed to make a report on the liberty of the press did not make it.

On the 10th of the same month the Directory announced that the domiciliary visits authorised in Paris had been followed by 540 arrests and that the law of hostages would be applied to eighteen departments. On the 13th Jourdan proposed to declare the country in peril: "Our places," he said, "are jeopardised by treason. In the interior a vast royalist conspiracy is entangling the whole republic in its net." The moment had come, according to him, to arouse enthusiasm, to give a new impulse to patriotism. The republicans must rise in a body. For two days this motion filled the assembly of the Five Hundred with tumult and disorder. It was an unfortunate calling forth of the revolutionary traditions.

One incident embittered the discussion. Jourdan announced that Bernadotte had been dismissed from the ministry of war, doubtless because he was a patriot, and he expressed fears of the possibility of a *coup d'état*. The assembly arose: all the members shouted that they were ready to die at their posts. Lucien Bonaparte repeated the watchword which Jourdan had uttered — liberty or death. Augereau after a pretended explanation of the part he had had in Fructidor, when he had crushed a conspiracy, took the oath to defend the councils. The motion concerning the peril of the country was rejected, but the agitation had spread outside the hall and the deputies who had voted it down were hissed upon leaving the hall.<sup>g</sup>

#### NAPOLÉON'S RETURN FROM EGYPT (1799 A.D.)

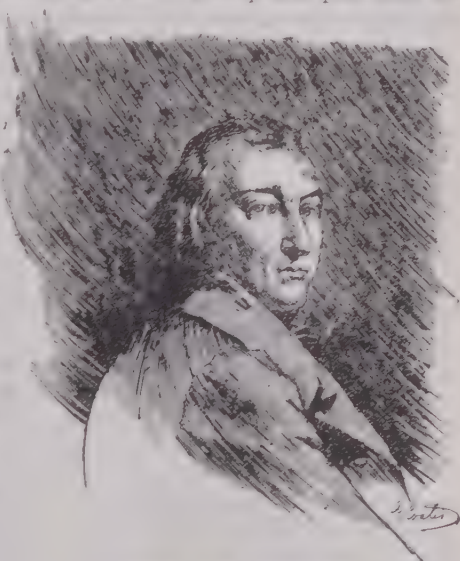
For nearly ten months Bonaparte had received from the Directory only a single despatch which had escaped the hands of the English; but a letter had lately reached him from his brother Joseph, which pressed for his return. On the occasion of an exchange of prisoners, Sidney Smith, who was cruising about near Alexandria, maliciously sent him some newspapers full of bad news. This was at the time of the reverses in Germany and Italy. Since his brother's letter, Bonaparte had meditated leaving Egypt. What he learned from those newspapers decided him. It was clear to him that the days of the Directory were numbered, and that his own time had come. He had no hesitation in deserting the army he had launched on so perilous a venture. He deceived it by the announcement of a journey into Upper Egypt, and, taking the opposite direction, he travelled quickly to Alexandria, which he had made a rendezvous for those he wished to take with him. He

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sent word to Desaix, who was in Upper Egypt, to prepare to rejoin him in France; he took most of the best generals with him, Berthier, Lannes, Murat, Marmont, Duroc, the experts Berthollet, Monge, and others, leaving Kléber, to whom he forwarded his instructions, to do what he could with the remainder. He authorised Kléber to treat for the evacuation of Egypt if he had not received succour from France by the following May and if the plague had cost him over fifteen hundred men.

On being informed of the departure of Sidney Smith, who had been obliged to retire to re-victual his fleet, he embarked on the night of the 5th Fructidor (22nd of August) with a small squadron composed of two frigates and two small vessels. Contrary winds and the necessity of avoiding the English rendered the crossing long and difficult. Bonaparte put into his native island for a few days, and it was in Corsica that he obtained information on the situation in France.<sup>1</sup>

In sight of Toulon he narrowly escaped falling into the middle of an English squadron. He escaped the enemy and disembarked at St. Raphael, in the gulf of Fréjus (October 9th, 1799). From Fréjus to Lyons the population received him with the ringing of bells and the blaze of illuminations. The brilliant welcome which he received at Lyons proved to him that the reactionary party, which dominated in that large town, was not attached to the Bourbons and only asked to devote themselves to him. He wrote to his wife and to his brothers that he was going to Paris by way of Burgundy, and then travelled by another route, fearing some obstacle or ambush by the road, at the hands of the Directory. The *Moniteur* announced his return for the 15th of October. He arrived on the 16th. That very evening he presented himself at the house of Gohier, at that time president of the Directory. "President," he said, "the news which reached me in Egypt was so alarming that I have not hesitated to leave my army to come and share your perils."



CLAUDE LOUIS BERTHOLLET  
(1788-1822)

[1 Hamel, however, says: "He had not even warned Kléber who, with his unreserved candour, would not have failed to tell him how shameless this desertion was, and how culpable it was of him to abandon to an unknown fate so many brave men whom his ambition, his persistent and dogged will, his unappeasable thirst for renown had thrown without any gain to France into distant Egypt." As it was necessary to leave someone in command, he sent written instructions to the conqueror of Mount Tabor, appointing him in his place to command the army of occupation. No doubt some daring on his part was required to face a perilous voyage in an inferior frigate through the Mediterranean, tarrowed in every sense of the word by the victorious English fleets. But there was nothing left to do in Egypt. His irreparable reverse at Acre had demolished his wild dream of laying the foundations of his fortune in the East. He was being invited more or less openly to play the rôle of dictator in France. How could a man of his temper hesitate? He had all that was necessary towards success — prodigious talent, profound genius, and entire absence of scruple. If in Henry IV's opinion 'Paris was worth a mass,' the prospect of becoming supreme lord over France was in the eyes of Napoleon well worth the risk of being taken by an English cruiser."]



"General," answered Gohier, "those perils were great ; but we have come out of them gloriously. You arrive to join us in celebrating the triumphs of your companions in arms."

The next day Bonaparte appeared at the official audience of the Directory. He renewed his protestations and, laying his hand on the hilt of his sword, declared that he would never draw it except for the defence "of the republic and its government."

The council of the Five Hundred made an advance to him by electing as their president his brother Lucien, who had acquired some influence by his intrigues and by his flowery and declamatory eloquence. This choice was a grave imprudence, as the event proved.

Bonaparte did not immediately think of a conspiracy and a *coup d'état*. He knew that ardent republicans aimed at getting the election of Sieyès annulled for some irregularity, as had happened in the case of Treilhard. In that event, he meditated procuring his own election as director in the room of Sieyès. But his youth precluded him according to the terms of the constitution, and the two sincerely republican directors, Gohier and Moulins allowed no one to touch the constitution. Neither would the Five Hundred have permitted it. Gohier and Moulins would have restored Bonaparte to the army of Italy ; Barras and Sieyès were not in agreement with them on the subject. He was offered, however, a command-in-chief. He did not accept it, on the plea of ill-health. He then conceived the idea of coming to an understanding with the Jacobins for the purpose of making a change in the Directory by a *coup de main*, if the majority could not be obtained in the Five Hundred. For this the concurrence of the republican generals present in Paris would have been needed. Bernadotte



GOHIER  
(1746-1830)

and Jourdan refused to take part in the violation of the constitution.

Sieyès' responsibility towards posterity is immense. Without him Bonaparte could not have succeeded. Sieyès secured Bonaparte a basis in the very heart of the powers organised by that constitution whose destruction was being plotted. Sieyès commanded a majority of the council of Ancients composed of men who feared the revolutionary ferment of the Five Hundred, and who were disgusted and disheartened by the perpetual divisions of the Directory. Many sincere republicans judged a change in the constitution indispensable to the salvation of the republic, and that the five directors must be replaced by a more concentrated executive power. They were thus drawn, against their will, into preparing the ruin of liberty. Without the concurrence of the majority of the Ancients and of a fraction of the Five Hundred, in the projects vaguely put forward by Bonaparte, a purely military revolution would not have been possible. In spite of the disdainful hostility which the generals exhibited towards the declaimers of the assemblies, the

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army was still too republican to lend itself wittingly to a stroke aimed at the whole body of legal powers and to own to itself that it was about to give a master to France.

But now the generals flocked around Bonaparte, ready for the most part to follow whither he might desire. Moreau was at Paris, justly dissatisfied with the Directory; he had not been left in command of that army of Italy which he had saved at Novi. Bonaparte won him over by skilful attentions and demonstrations of high esteem. Moreau would not enter into the details of Bonaparte's plans, but he declared to him that he was, like him, "weary of the yoke of the lawyers who were ruining the republic." He placed himself and his aides-de-camp at Bonaparte's disposal. Macdonald and Sérurier also pledged themselves. Berthier, Murat, Lannes, Marmont, all toiled to corrupt the officers of the different arms. The police shut its eyes. The minister Fouché placed himself in a position to obtain the reward of his complicity if the stroke succeeded, without being ruined if it came to grief.

The departmental authorities were secured by the commissioner of the department of Paris Réal. Two of the directors, Sieyès and Roger Ducos, sided with Bonaparte. A third, Barras, was put out of count by the universal distrust and contempt. Bonaparte imposed upon the remaining two, Gohier and Moulin, honest but not very clear-sighted men. He had entered into intimate relations with them and had overwhelmed them with exhibitions of friendship and confidence up to the last moment. The war-minister, Dubois-Crancé, a former member of the national convention, tried in vain to open their eyes.

On November 6th a banquet given to General Bonaparte, took place in the church of St. Sulpice, then called the Temple of Victory. Bonaparte had had a roll and half a bottle of wine brought for him by an aide-de-camp. He was afraid of being poisoned! He drank to the union of all Frenchmen. He was listened to in silence. He went out precipitately and hastened to Sieyès' house to settle final arrangements with him. They agreed to feign a Jacobin conspiracy, in order to give the Ancients a pretext for decreeing the translation of the two councils to St. Cloud. The constitution granted the council of Ancients the right to change the seat of the legislative body in case of "public peril." The public peril which Sieyès and Bonaparte dreaded was that the people at Paris might side with the constitution against the conspirators. The same decree, although the Ancients had constitutionally no right to do this, was to give Bonaparte the command of all the military forces of the Paris division. The councils once transferred to St. Cloud, Sieyès and Roger Ducos would resign and the resignation of the three other directors would be obtained either with their own consent or by force. The Directory having thus disappeared, the two councils would be got to set up three provisional consuls, Bonaparte, Sieyès, and Roger Ducos, who would be charged with the preparation of a new constitution. They counted on extorting the consent of the Five Hundred, when surrounded at St. Cloud by troops devoted to Bonaparte.

#### THE 18TH BRUMAIRE (NOVEMBER 9TH, 1799)

Nothing was decided as to the actual groundwork of the constitution. Bonaparte, in general terms, affected to trust to the knowledge of his future colleague, and Sieyès did not press the point. It was decided that the blow should be struck within three days.

On the 18th Brumaire (November 9th), at six o'clock in the morning, a crowd of generals and other officers convoked by Bonaparte met at his house. The commandant of the Paris division, Lefebvre, had not been informed of what was on foot; he was a good general and very patriotic, but not very perspicacious. He arrived ill-disposed towards the project. "Well, Lefebvre," Bonaparte said to him, "will you, one of the pillars of the republic, leave it to perish in the hands of these lawyers? See, here is the sabre I wore at the Pyramids; I give it to you as a pledge of my esteem and confidence." "Yes," cried Lefebvre, "let us throw the lawyers into the river." Bonaparte was not so fortunate with Bernadotte. He had come in bourgeois dress, brought by his brother-in-law, Joseph Bonaparte. He refused to join in the undertaking, affirmed that it would not succeed, and withdrew without promising to remain neutral. The council of Ancients was meeting at that very moment. Those members whose opposition was anticipated had not been convoked.

Everything fell out as Bonaparte and Sieyès had arranged. To provide against pretended dangers the Ancients decreed the translation of the two councils to St. Cloud on the next day. Bonaparte was charged with the measures necessary to the execution of the decree and with the command of all the military forces. A short, vague proclamation accompanied the decree. Bonaparte appeared at the council of Ancients with all his brilliant staff. The decree was read to him. "Citizen representatives," he said, "the republic was perishing; your decree has now saved it. We desire a republic founded on true liberty, on civil liberty, on national representation. We shall have it; I swear it in my own name and in the name of all my companions in arms." All the generals cried, "I swear it." But Bonaparte had not tendered the legal oath to the constitution of the year III.

Bonaparte went to review the troops at the Carrousel, in the garden of the Tuileries and at the place de la Concorde. Sure of the commanding officers, he had convoked the regiments for a review even before the Ancients had invested him with the command. The war-minister, Dubois-Crancé, had vainly issued a counter order. Bonaparte was received with acclamations by the soldiers and cordially welcomed by the population, who ran up astonished and curious. What was passing did not give them the impression of a revolution. A small pamphlet explaining that the constitution needed restoring was distributed in the streets. "It would" it was there stated "be sacrilege to attack the representative government in the century of liberty and enlightenment."

Whilst the Ancients were convoked for seven in the morning, the Five Hundred had only been summoned for eleven o'clock. Lively interpellations were made on the subject of the decree of translation. The president of the Five Hundred, Lucien Bonaparte, answered, as the president of the Ancients had done, that further discussion could only take place next day at St. Cloud. The Five Hundred separated with cries of "Long live the Constitution of the year III!" The most energetic turned their attention to seek means of resistance. Bonaparte actively pursued his task. Sieyès and Roger-Ducos had already given in their resignations. Talleyrand intervened with Barras, who now only asked security for his person and money. Barras sent his resignation to the Tuileries.

Bonaparte took the opportunity to make a theatrical scene. "What have you done," he said to Barras' secretary, in a thundering voice, "what have you done to this France which I left so glorious? I left peace, I find war; I left victory, I find reverses; I left the millions of Italy, I find rapa-



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cious laws and poverty! What is become of the hundred thousand men who have disappeared from French soil? They were my companions in arms—they are dead. Such a state of things cannot last; it would lead through anarchy to despotism.” This harangue was intended, not for Barras’ secretary, but for the public; it was instantly sent to the papers. The two remaining directors, Gohier and Moulins, awakened at last from their unsuspecting security, saw the last means of action escape from their hands by the defection of Barras.

There was no longer a Directory. However, they appeared at the Tuileries to try one last effort. Bonaparte tried to seduce them. “Unite with us,” he said, “to save the republic! Your constitution does not supply the means. It is crumbling in every part; it is exhausted.” “Who told you that?” answered Gohier. “Wretches who have neither the will nor the courage to march with it. The republic is triumphing everywhere, triumphing without your help.”

At this moment, Bonaparte received the news that the faubourg St. Antoine was beginning to rally round its ancient commandant Santerre. He declared to Moulins, who was a friend of Santerre, that he would shoot the latter if he stirred. He tried in vain to wring their resignations from Gohier and Moulins. Neither threats nor caresses had any effect. These two men, mediocre in intelligence but upright in heart, secured honour for their memory by their firmness. They returned to the seat of the Directory, the Luxembourg, which Bonaparte caused to be guarded by troops. Moreau had accepted the command of this post which made him the jailer of the directors. Bonaparte had maliciously involved this great general in a part unworthy of him. It was always his policy to compromise men whose talents or honesty were in his way, that he might reduce them to being his instruments.

The 18th Brumaire had seen a successful day’s work in Paris. The movement in the suburbs came to nothing. There was still the morrow at St. Cloud. What would the two councils do? The leaders of the majority of the Ancients and of the minority of the Five Hundred met that evening at the Tuileries with Bonaparte, Sieyès, Roger Ducos, and the minister of police Fouché. Sieyès proposed to have forty of their principal opponents in the two councils arrested. It was Bonaparte who refused. He thought himself so sure of success that he judged violence useless. Some of the representatives who had shared in the hazard began to feel misgivings about their work and to dispute the necessity of a dictatorship. They would now have wished Bonaparte to content himself with taking his place in a new Directory. It was too late. Bonaparte told them plainly that a change in the constitution was in question; that for the moment it was necessary to have a dictatorship, in fact, if not in name. They did not venture to insist. It was agreed to establish three provisional consuls and to adjourn the two councils for three months. Bonaparte left without anything having been settled about the future constitution. “You have a master there,” said Sieyès. It was he who had given them that master.

During the night a dozen of the people’s representatives had concerted together to organise resistance. They had decided to assemble such colleagues as they could count on, before the hour fixed for the sitting at St. Cloud and to give the command of the guard of the Five Hundred to Bernadotte. Here was a serious risk; but they had had the imprudence to meet at the house of a Corsican deputy, Salicetti, whom they believed to be an enemy of Bonaparte. Salicetti denounced them, and Fouché’s police prevented their meeting at St. Cloud.

## THE 19TH BRUMAIRE

The two councils opened their sitting at St. Cloud on the 19th Brumaire, a little before two o'clock : the Ancients sat in one of the halls of the palace ; the Five Hundred in the orangery. One of Bonaparte's chief adherents proposed that the Five Hundred should name a committee to consider the danger of the republic. This was a way of avoiding debate. The assembly responded almost *en masse* with the cry "Long live the constitution! Down with the dictatorship." It decided that all the deputies should be called on by name to renew the oath of fidelity to the constitution of the year III. The president, Lucien Bonaparte, was obliged to swear with the others. This was nevertheless a mistake, for these formalities gave their adversaries time. However, the Ancients were no longer in the almost complete unanimity of the day before.

Bonaparte, warned of their hesitation, suddenly presented himself before them. Disconcerted by the unforeseen resistance, frightened, and irritated at being so, he spoke in an incoherent and confused manner, at once violent and vague. He protested against the accusation of desiring to be a Cæsar or a Cromwell, even while affirming that the wish of his comrades and of the nation had long called him to the supreme authority. "Let us save liberty and equality," he said. A deputy cried out to him: "And the constitution?" "The constitution?" he answered in an outburst of passion, "you violated it on the 18th Fructidor; you violated it on the 22nd Floréal; you violated it on the 30th Prairial." This was bold on the part of the man who had been foremost in ardour on the 18th Fructidor. "The constitution!" he resumed. "It can no longer be a means of salvation for us, because it no longer commands respect from anyone." And he concluded by demanding a concentration of power which he would abdicate as soon as the danger should be passed.

"What danger?" he was asked. He answered by declaiming at factions and finished with an outburst against the Five Hundred, "amongst whom," he said, "were men who wanted to re-establish the revolutionary committees and the scaffold! If some orator, paid by the foreigner, spoke of putting me outside the pale of the law, I would appeal to you my brave companions in arms, whose bayonets I see! Remember that I march accompanied by the god of fortune and the god of war!" He went out, leaving in the Ancients his partisans anxious, and his adversaries reanimated.

The fortune of which Bonaparte had boasted was wavering. Jourdan, Augereau, and Bernadotte were at St. Cloud, ready to take advantage of circumstances and to show themselves to the troops. Bonaparte felt there was no longer a moment to be lost and went from the Ancients to the Five Hundred. The Five Hundred had just decided on the despatch of a message to the Ancients, to demand the cause of the translation of the two councils. Barras' resignation had been read to them and they were discussing the question of nominating another director in his place when Bonaparte appeared. He was escorted by several generals and some grenadiers belonging to the guard of the legislative body.

At sight of the arms the assembly rose in tumult. "What is this?" was the cry—"sabres here! bayonets!"

A crowd of representatives sprang in front of Bonaparte. "You are violating the sanctuary of law," the deputy Bigonnet exclaimed to him. "Is it for this you have conquered!" said the deputy Destremx. On all sides broke out cries of "Down with the tyrant! Outlaw the dictator!"

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Several seized him by the collar crying, "Get out of this," and shook him roughly. He turned pale and shrank back, he who had so many times impassively faced the showers of grape. General Lefebvre and the grenadiers left near the door hurried up. The grenadiers seized him round the body, released him, and dragged him out of the hall.

The president, Lucien, essayed to defend his brother. The cries of "Outlaw the dictator" resounded anew. "Would you have me outlaw my own brother?" returned Lucien with theatrical despair. He protested, he struggled obstinately. It was then seen what a mistake the assembly had committed in giving themselves, as president, the natural accomplice of the man they dreaded. The cries of "Outlaw!" made themselves heard in the group in which Bonaparte was standing. There was a moment of terror. They recollected the 9th Thermidor. Sieyès alone retained his self-possession. "They are putting you outside the pale of the law," he said to Bonaparte; "it is they who are outside it."

Bonaparte, by a sudden inspiration, sent ten grenadiers in search of his brother. The grenadiers penetrated into the hall and brought Lucien away. It was a masterly stroke. They had not been able to intimidate the assembly, but there was now the question of invading it with the legislative body's own guard, which had been placed under the command of Murat. The attitude of this guard was uncertain and there was some hesitation to give it orders which perhaps it might not obey. The conspirators now had with them the president of the assembly himself. Lucien, mounted on horseback, placed himself beside his brother, and harangued the soldiers. "The president of the Five Hundred," he said, "makes known to you that that council is oppressed by representatives who are threatening their colleagues and lifting the dagger against them. They are brigands in the pay of England; they are in rebellion against the council of the Ancients. Soldiers, in the name of the people, deliver the majority of your representatives. The true legislators are about to rally round me; those who remain in the orangery are no longer the people's representatives. Long live the republic!" The soldiers cried "Long live Bonaparte!" Yet they still hesitated; Lucien seized a sword and, turning to his brother: "I swear," he said, "to pierce the heart of my own brother if ever he shall attack the liberty of Frenchmen."

Murat had the charge sounded and led his soldiers forward. They stopped, however, at the threshold of the assembly. "Citizen representatives," cried their colonel, "by order of the general, I request you to withdraw. We can no longer answer for the safety of the council." The representatives responded with a cry of "Long live the republic! Long live the constitution of the year III!" and remained in their places. "Grenadiers, advance," cried the commandant. The noise of the drum drowned the last protestations of the assembly. The soldiers advanced, pushing the people's representatives before them. The hall was evacuated.<sup>1</sup>

#### THE CONSULATE ESTABLISHED

In the evening, about nine o'clock, Lucien Bonaparte assembled some thirty members of the Five Hundred, who declared themselves to be the majority of the council, and decreed that Bonaparte, the generals, and the grenadiers had deserved well of the country. Boulay proposed and carried the measures agreed on by the conspirators, namely: the nomination of

[The deputies escaped by the windows, and through the woods; leaving, not unsuitably, their Roman togas in fragments upon every bush.]



three consuls, the adjournment of the legislative body for three months, the formation of two committees of the councils charged to assist the consuls in "the changes to be introduced into the constitution," and finally the exclusion of fifty-seven of the people's representatives, amongst whom was General Jourdan.

The decree was brought to the Ancients at one o'clock in the morning and ratified by them. "The changes to be introduced into the constitution," it was stated in the decree, "can have no aim but the preservation of the sovereignty of the French people, of the republic one and indivisible, of the representative system, of the division of powers, and liberty, equality, and safety of life and property."

The three consuls went to take the oath before the two councils. The little group from the Five Hundred had been gradually swelled by such men as always rally to the side of fortune. Bonaparte was the first to swear inviolable fidelity to law, liberty, and the representative system. The president, Lucien, congratulated his colleagues in a harangue wherein he concluded that "if French liberty was born in the tennis court of Versailles, it had been consolidated in the orangery of St. Cloud."

On the 21st Brumaire, appeared a proclamation from Bonaparte to the French people. In it he declared himself to have repulsed the proposals of the factions (it was he who made the rejected proposals to the factions). He averred that he had but executed the plan of social restoration conceived by the Ancients, and affirmed that, in the Five Hundred, twenty assassins had flung themselves upon him, stiletto in hand, and that one of his grenadiers in thrusting himself between him and the assassins had been hit by a blow from a stiletto. All this was pure invention. There was falsehood everywhere. The accomplices of the *coup d'état* talked of nothing but the principles of '89 and "liberal ideas." It was indeed at this time that the use of the word "liberal" became common.

Now the 18th Brumaire had just struck a blow at the principles of '89 and at liberal ideas, the consequences of which were to grow more and more serious for the space of fifteen years — a blow more fatal than even that of the 31st of May, and which struck more deeply into the moral life of France. Before these principles and ideas could begin to again lift up their heads, abysses had to be crossed into which the greatness of France perished after her liberty. Up till then, the Revolution had never ceased to progress amidst the tempests. The republic of '92 had been an advance on the royal democracy of '91; the constitution of the year III had been an advance on the revolutionary dictatorship; from the 18th Brumaire the Revolution for a long time swerved and went backward.

It is in the moral state of the country, and not in the individual fact of the disagreement between the Ancients and the Five Hundred, that we must seek the cause of the 18th Brumaire. It was not because there were then two assemblies that the republic perished. If there were two assemblies on the 18th Brumaire there was but one on the 2nd of December. We ought no more to reproach the convention for having instituted two chambers in the year III than the constituent assembly for having established but one in 1791. The convention and the constituent assembly both acted as it behoved them to act. Mignet,<sup>2</sup> the first historian to sum up the general facts and the spirit of the Revolution with any depth of insight, has rightly said: "Revolutions are begun with one chamber and they are finished with two." It is evident why the constitution of the year III had not succeeded in finishing the Revolution.

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THIERS ON THE FALL OF THE DIRECTORY<sup>1</sup>

Such was the revolution of the 18th Brumaire, so variously judged by men, regarded by some as the heinous crime which nipped the bud of liberty, by others as a bold but necessary blow which terminated anarchy. What may in truth be said is that the Revolution, after having worn all characters, monarchical, republican, democratic, assumed at last the military guise, because, in the continual struggle with Europe, it required to be constituted in a strong and solid manner. Republicans deplore so many fruitless efforts, such torrents of blood uselessly shed to establish liberty in France, and sigh to witness it sacrificed by one of the heroes it had generated. In this, a sentiment more noble than reflective misleads them. The Revolution, intended doubtless to confer liberty on France and a preparative to her full enjoyment of it some day, was not nor could be itself liberty. It was rather a convulsive struggle against the ancient order of things. And after having vanquished this order in France, it had to overcome it in Europe.

A contest so violent admitted not the forms nor even the spirit of liberty. An interval of liberty existed under the constituent assembly, and of very short duration; but when the popular party became so violent as to cause general intimidation; when it invaded the Tuileries on the 10th of August; when it immolated all who gave it umbrage on the 2nd of September; when on the 21st of January it provoked universal complicity by the sacrifice of a regal victim; when in August, 1793, it compelled every citizen to repair to the frontiers or surrender his property — when, in fine, it abdicated its own power and delegated it to that great committee of public welfare composed of twelve individuals, was there or could there be liberty? No; there was the strenuous effort of passion and of heroism, the muscular tension of a wrestler contending against a powerful adversary.

After the first period of danger, after the victories of the French arms, there was a moment of reprieve. The end of the convention and the Directory presented degrees of liberty. But the conflict with Europe could only be for a while suspended. It soon recommenced; and at the first reverse, all parties arose against a too moderate government and invoked some potent arm. Bonaparte, returning with the halo of glory from the East, was hailed as the desired chief and installed in power.

It is in vain to allege that Zurich had saved France. Zurich was an isolated accident, a mere respite; Marengo and Hohenlinden were still needed for her salvation. And more than military successes were required; a powerful internal reorganisation of all the departments of government had become essential, and a political rather than a military chief was the main exigency of France. The 18th and 19th Brumaire were therefore necessary. It may be affirmed only that the 20th was condemnable, and that the hero abused the service he had just rendered. But it will be answered that he acted under a mysterious mission which he held, unknown to himself, from destiny, and which he fulfilled as an instrument.

It was not liberty he came to uphold, for it could not yet exist; he came to continue under monarchical forms the Revolution in the world; to continue it by placing himself, a plebeian, on the throne; by conducting the pontiff to Paris to pour the sacred oil on a plebeian forehead; by creating an aristocracy with plebeians; by compelling the old aristocracies to associate with his plebeian aristocracy; by making kings of plebeians; by receiving into his

[<sup>1</sup> It is with these words that Thiers ends his history of the Revolution.]

bed a daughter of the cæsars and mingling a plebeian blood with one of the most ancient royal bloods in Europe ; by intermixing nations and spreading French laws through Germany, Italy, and Spain ; by refuting, in fine, all established prejudices, by stirring and confounding all elements. Such the inscrutable mission he was to accomplish : and in the interim, the new society was to be consolidated under the ægis of his sword, and liberty was to follow at the appointed time.<sup>c</sup>



A PEASANT OF THE FRENCH PYRENEES





## CHAPTER XVII

### THE CONSULATE

[1799-1801 A.D.]

From this moment the republic was changed into a military monarchy, and this would have been to the great advantage of France and of all Europe had the great mind which created this new order of things persevered in that plebeian way which had made him a hero, and not renewed the ancient knighthood and the Byzantine throne.

— ALISON.<sup>b</sup>

DURING the two eventful days of the 18th and 19th Brumaire the people of Paris had remained perfectly tranquil. In the evening of the 19th reports of the failure of the enterprise were generally spread and diffused the most mortal disquietude; for all ranks, worn out with the agitation and sufferings of past convulsions, passionately longed for repose, and it was generally felt that it could be obtained only under the shadow of military authority. But at length the result was communicated by the fugitive members of the Five Hundred, who arrived from St. Cloud, loudly exclaiming against the military violence of which they had been the victims; and at nine at night the intelligence was officially announced by a proclamation of Napoleon, which was read by torch-light to the agitated groups. The five-per-cent, which had been last quoted at seven, rose in a few days to thirty.

With the exception of the legislature, all parties declared for the Revolution of 18th Brumaire. All hoped to see their peculiar tenets forwarded by the change. The constitutionalists trusted that rational freedom would at length be established; the royalists rejoiced that the first step towards a regular government had been made, and secretly indulged the hope that Bonaparte would play the part of General Monk, and restore the throne. The great body of the people, weary of strife, and exhausted by suffering, passionately rejoiced at the commencement of repose; the numerous exiles and proscribed families exulted in the prospect of revisiting their country.

Ten years had wrought a century of experience; the nation was as unanimous in 1799 to terminate the era of Revolution as in 1789 it had been to commence it.

Napoleon rivalled Cæsar in the clemency with which he used his victory. No proscriptions or massacres, few arrests or imprisonments, followed the triumph of order over revolution. On the contrary, numerous acts of mercy as wise as they were magnanimous, made illustrious the rise of the consular throne. The law of hostages and the forced loans were abolished; the priests and persons proscribed by the revolution of 18th Fructidor were permitted to return; the emigrants who had been shipwrecked on the coast of France, and thrown into prison, where they had been confined for four years were set at liberty. Measures of severity were at first put in force against the violent republicans; but they were gradually relaxed, and finally given up. Thirty-seven of this obnoxious party were ordered to be transported to Guiana, and twenty-one to be put under the observation of the police; but the sentence of transportation was soon changed into one of surveillance and even that was shortly abandoned. Nine thousand state prisoners, who at the fall of the Directory languished in the prisons of France, received their liberty. Their numbers, two years before, had been sixty thousand. The elevation of Napoleon was not only unstained by blood, but not even a single captive long lamented the progress of the victor; a signal triumph of the principles of humanity over those of cruelty, glorious alike to the actors and the age in which it occurred; and a memorable proof how much more durable the victories gained by moderation and wisdom are than those achieved by violence and stained by blood.

#### NAPOLEON GETS THE UPPER HAND OF SIEYÈS

The revolution of the 18th Brumaire had established a provisional government and overturned the Directory; but it still remained to form a permanent constitution. In the formation of it a rupture took place between Sieyès and Napoleon. Napoleon allowed Sieyès to mould, according to his pleasure, the legislature, which was to consist of a senate, or upper chamber a legislative body, without the power of debate; and a tribunate which was to discuss the legislative measures with the council of state; but opposed the most vigorous resistance to the plan he brought forward for the executive, which was so absurd that it is hardly possible to imagine how it could have been seriously proposed by a man of ability.

The plan of this veteran constitution-maker, who had boasted to Talleyrand ten years before that "politics was a science which he flattered himself he had brought to perfection," was to have vested the executive in a single grand elector, who was to inhabit Versailles with a salary of 600,000 francs a year, and a guard of six thousand men, and represent the state to foreign powers. This singular magistrate was to be vested with no immediate authority; but his functions were to consist in the power of naming two consuls, who were to exercise all the powers of government, the one being charged with the interior, the finances, police, and public justice; the other with the exterior, including war, marine, and foreign affairs. He was to have a council of state, to discuss with the tribunate all public measures. He was to be irresponsible, but liable to removal at the pleasure of the senate. It was easy to perceive that, though he imagined he was acting on general principles, Sieyès in this project was governed by his own interests; that the situation of grand elector he destined for himself, and the military

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consulship for the conqueror of Arcola and Rivoli. But Sieyès soon found that his enterprising colleague would listen to no project which interfered with the supreme power, which he had already resolved to obtain for himself.

The ideas of Napoleon were unalterably fixed; but he was too clear-sighted not to perceive that time, and a concession, in form at least, to public opinion, were necessary ere he could bring them into practice. "I was convinced," says he, "that France could not exist save under a monarchical form of government; but the circumstances of the times were such, that it was thought, and perhaps was, necessary to disguise the supreme power of the president. All opinions were reconciled by the nomination of a first consul, who alone should possess the authority of government, since he singly disposed of all situations, and possessed a deliberative voice, while the two others were merely his advisers. That supreme officer gave the government the advantage of unity of direction: the two others, whose names appeared to every public act, would soothe the republican jealousy. The circumstances of the times would not permit a better form of government." After long discussion, this project was adopted.

## CONSTITUTION OF THE YEAR VIII (1799 A.D.)

The government was in fact exclusively placed in the hands of the first consul; the two other consuls had a right to enlighten him by their counsels, but not to restrain him by their vote. The senate, itself nominated by the consuls, selected out of the list of candidates who had been chosen by the nation those who were to be the members of the tribunate and legislative. Government alone was invested with the right of proposing laws. The legislative body was interdicted the right of speaking; it was merely to deliberate and decide upon the questions discussed before it by the tribunate, chosen by the senate, and the council of state nominated by the consuls: the first being understood to represent the interests of the people, the second that of the government. The legislature was thus transformed from its essential character in a free state, that of a deliberative assembly, into a supreme court, which heard the state pleadings, and by its decision formed the law.

The people no longer were permitted to choose deputies for themselves, either in their primary assemblies or electoral colleges. They were allowed only to choose the persons eligible to these offices, and from the lists thus furnished the government made its election. All public functionaries, civil and military, instead of being chosen, as heretofore, by the people, were appointed by the first consul, who thus became the sole depository of influence. By means of the senate, chosen from his creatures, he regulated the legislature and possessed the sole initiative of laws; by the appointment to every office, he wielded the whole civil force of the state; by the command of the military, he overawed the discontented, and governed its external relations.

The departmental lists were the most singular part of the new constitution. Every person born and residing in France, above twenty-one, was a citizen; but the rights of citizenship were lost by bankruptcy, domestic service, crime, or foreign naturalisation. But the electors were a much more limited body. "The citizens of each *arrondissement* chose by their suffrages those whom they deemed fit to conduct public affairs amounting to not more than a tenth of the electors. The persons contained in this first list were alone eligible to official situations in the *arrondissement* from



which they were chosen. The citizens embraced in this list chose a tenth of their number for each department, which formed the body alone eligible for departmental situations. The citizens chosen by the departmental electors again selected a tenth of their number, which formed the body alone capable of being elected for national situations. The persons on the first list were only eligible to the inferior situations, such as *juges de paix*, species of arbiters to reconcile differences and prevent lawsuits; those on the second were the class from whom might be selected the prefects, the departmental judges, tax-gatherers and collectors; those on the third, who amounted only to six thousand persons, were alone eligible to public offices. — as the legislature, any of the ministries of state, the senate, the council of state, the tribunal of cassation, the ambassadors at foreign courts."

Thus, the whole offices of state were centred in six thousand persons, chosen by a triple election from the citizens. The lists were to be revised, and all the vacancies filled up every three years. These lists of eligibility, as Napoleon justly observed, formed a limited and exclusive nobility, differing from the old noblesse only in this, that it was elective, not hereditary; and it was, from the very first, subject to the objection that it excluded from the field of competition many of the most appropriate persons to hold public situations. The influence of the people in the legislature was, by these successive elections, completely destroyed, and the whole power of the state, it was early foreseen, would centre in the first consul. The changes introduced however, diffused general satisfaction. All the members of the legislature received pensions from the government; that of the senators was 25,000 francs; that of the tribunate 15,000 francs; that of the legislative body 10,000 francs. The senate was composed of persons above forty years of age; the legislative body, above thirty. A senator remained in that high station for life, and was ineligible to any other office.

On the 24th of December, 1799, the new constitution was proclaimed; and the whole appointments were forthwith filled up, without waiting for the lists of the eligible, who were, according to its theory, to be chosen by the people. Two consuls, eighty senators, a hundred tribunes, three hundred legislators, were forthwith nominated and proceeded to the exercise of all the functions of government. In the choice of persons to fill such a multitude of offices ample means existed to reward the moderate and seduce the republican party; and the consuls made a judicious and circumspect use of the immense influence put into their hands. Sieyès, discontented with the rejection of his favourite ideas, retired from the government. Roger Ducos also withdrew, perceiving the despotic turn which things were taking; and Napoleon appointed in their stead Cambacérès and Lebrun, men of moderation and probity, who worthily discharged the subordinate functions assigned to them in the administration. "In the end," said Napoleon, "you must come to the government of boots and spurs; and neither Sieyès nor Roger Ducos was fit for that." Talleyrand was made minister of foreign affairs, and Fouché retained in the ministry of the police; the illustrious La Place received the portfolio of the interior. By the latter appointments Napoleon hoped to calm the fears and satisfy the ambition of the republican party. Sieyès was very averse to the continuance of Fouché in office; but Napoleon was resolute. "We have arrived," said he, "at a new era: we must recollect in the past only the good, and forget the bad. Age, the habits of business, and experience, have formed or modified many characters." High salaries were given to all the public functionaries, on condition only that they should live in a style of splendour suitable to their station: a wise measure, which

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both secured the attachment of that powerful body of men, and precluded them from acquiring such an independence as might enable them to dispense with employment under government.

Such was the exhaustion of the French people, occasioned by revolutionary convulsions, that this constitution, destroying, as it did, all the objects for which the people had combated for ten years, was gladly adopted by an immense majority of the electors. It was approved of by 3,011,007 citizens; while that of 1793 had obtained only 1,801,918 suffrages, and that in 1795, which established the Directory, 1,057,390. These numbers are highly instructive. They demonstrate what so many other considerations conspire to indicate, that even the most vehement changes are brought about by a factious and energetic minority, and that it is often more the supineness than the numerical inferiority of the better class of citizens which subjects them to the tyranny of the lowest.

Such was the termination of the changes of the French Revolution and such the government which the people brought upon themselves by their sins and their extravagance. On the 23rd of June, 1789, before one drop of blood had been shed, or one estate confiscated, Louis offered the states-general a constitution containing all the elements of real freedom, with all the guarantees which experience has proved to be necessary for its continuance — the security of property, the liberty of the press, personal freedom, equality of taxation, provincial assemblies, the voting of taxes by the states-general, and the vesting of the legislative power in the representatives of the three estates in their separate chambers. The popular representatives, seduced by the phantom of democratic ambition, refused the offer, usurped for themselves the whole powers of sovereignty, and with relentless rigour pursued their victory, till they had destroyed the clergy, the nobles and the throne.

France waded through an ocean of blood; calamities unheard of assailed every class, from the throne to the cottage; for ten long years the struggle continued, and at length it terminated in the establishment, by universal consent, of a government which swept away every remnant of freedom, and consigned the state to the tranquillity of military despotism. So evidently was this result the punishment of the crimes of the Revolution, that it appeared in that light even to some of the principal actors in that convulsion. In a letter written by Sieyès to Riouffe at that period, he said, "It is then for such a result that the French nation has gone through its Revolution! The ambitious villain! He marches successfully through all the ways of fortune and crime — all is vanity, distrust, and terror. There is here neither elevation nor liberality. Providence wishes to punish us by the Revolution itself. Our chains are too humiliating; on all sides nothing is to be seen but powers prostrated, leaden oppression; military despotism is alone triumphant. If anything could make us retain some esteem for the nation, it is the luxury of perfidy of which it has been the victim. But the right of the sabre is the weakest of all; for it is the one which is soonest worn out."<sup>b</sup>

Yet Brunaire taken by itself is the victory of Sieyès rather than of Bonaparte. It raised Sieyès to the position he had so long coveted of legislator for France. The constitution now introduced was really in great part his work, but his work was so signally altered that it resulted in the absolute supremacy of Bonaparte. We should especially notice that it is Sieyès, not Bonaparte, who practically suppresses representative institutions; and we see with astonishment that the man of 1789, the author of *Qu'est-ce que le Tiers Etat?* himself condemns political liberty. Sieyès, who retained all his hatred for the old régime and the old noblesse, passed sentence upon the

whole constructive work of the Revolution; this sentence was only ratified by Bonaparte. But, while he absolutely condemned democracy, Sieyès did not want to set up despotism.<sup>c</sup>

#### RESUMPTION OF WAR

Upon his first assuming the office of chief magistrate of the state, Bonaparte sank his military propensities and character. He entered with novel delight upon the task of legislating and administering. His vanity, too, of which he had no inordinate measure, just as much as may be allowed to mingle with greatness, was pleased with the pomp of his station, and which he began to arrange early after the old regal standard. He liked to act king; and he took no small pleasure in announcing his accession to the generals and envoys of the republic, as well as to foreign states.

His letter to the monarch of Great Britain must be considered in this light. It was an announcement of his sovereignty; being perfectly aware that at that epoch England would not seek peace on the terms that the first consul could grant. Lord Grenville's reply, though of befitting spirit, was too verbose for pride, too vague for argument. It was really unfortunate for Austria that she did not follow the advice of the archduke Charles, in making peace now in the hour of success. Her yielding would have obliged England to have put an end to the war, and a treaty then would have been more favourable to the allies than that of Amiens proved. Engaged in the paths of peace, Bonaparte might not have found his new despotism so tranquilly submitted to; and even he might have passed, like Barras, had not the victory of Marengo placed the crown upon his head. Austria, however, did not condescend to these considerations. Her imperial pride, sustained by British money, had resolved upon another campaign, in which the fierce soldiers of Suvaroff were to be ill replaced by German contingents from Bavaria and other petty principalities. The archduke Charles protested, he saw no wisdom in this zeal; and he was removed in consequence from command.

Previous to taking the field, Bonaparte determined to root out even the semblance of civil war. He summoned the Vendean and Chouan chiefs to Paris with fair promise of accommodation. They had hopes, such as many entertained, of his restoring the Bourbons — an idea far from his intentions. Most of them submitted. The fiercest, Georges Cadoudal, Bonaparte sought to awe or win in a personal interview. But the Breton, true to the stubbornness of his provincial character, only conceived a more deadly enmity towards the new dictator.

"A new dynasty," say the French orators of the day, "must be baptised in blood." Bonaparte felt so. He had need of a crowning victory, not only for his country's but his own sake, and he was determined that it should be full and glorious, opened by a gigantic march which was calculated as much to strike imaginations at home as to distress the Austrian. The first consul had despatched Moreau to the Rhine. For his own purposes, an army, called that of reserve, was collected at Dijon, and organised by Berthier. His object was to recover Italy, which the Austrians now occupied to the foot of the Alps, with the exception of Genoa, where Masséna still held out, though pressed hard by famine, by the Austrians on land, and by an English fleet. Melas, commander of the imperial armies, had his quarters at Alessandria; his troops and views all directed towards the Savoy Alps in pursuit of Suchet, who was retreating over those mountains. Of meeting with the



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French general in any other direction he did not dream, and the name properly given to the army assembled at Dijon, that of reserve, indicated no bolder intention than that of defending the course of the Rhine.

The real views of Bonaparte were indeed too bold to have entered into the Austrian general's conception. They were, to traverse Switzerland with his army, by Geneva, its lake, and the valley of the Rhone, to Martigny; from thence to cross Mount St. Bernard, and descend into the plains of Lombardy in the rear of Melas. The communications of the Austrian would thus be cut off, all his plans deranged, his troops obliged to counter-march and take new positions; whilst a defeat would be total ruin. To keep up the dread of his name by surprise was another object with Bonaparte, who knew the value of being original in war. On the 6th of May the first consul left Paris. The army of Dijon, reinforced from the Rhine,



MAP ILLUSTRATING THE ITALIAN CAMPAIGNS

and amounting to about 40,000 men, marched into Switzerland. Mount St. Bernard was crossed, its passage by the gallant hosts forming one of the most picturesque feats in the annals of modern warfare.<sup>d</sup>

#### NAPOLEON CROSSES THE ALPS (MAY 20TH, 1800)

The account of this famous achievement may be compared with Polybius' recital of Hannibal's similar march in the history of Rome, vol. V, chapter XI. But it must be remembered that Hannibal marched through an unknown region infested by hostile tribes, and while the skill with which Napoleon accomplished his end redounds to his credit, it also redounded to the ease of the deed, and the following account, while iconoclastic, is correct.<sup>a</sup>

Bonaparte stayed forty-eight hours at Geneva to inspect all that had been done in the way of transport for the mountain war by the artillery and engineers. All the ingenious modes of transportation were due to

the generals Marmont and Marescot, to whom the first consul had confided the artillery for the campaign. After the inspection Bonaparte fixed his headquarters at Lausanne, a well chosen centre, while the reserve carried out its movement on Villeneuve by the Italian roads across Valais.

The reserves were made up of several bodies, each under a young and ardent general. The first, which took the name of advance guard, was directed by Lannes, the companion of Bonaparte in the Italian army. Berthier commanded the centre in his capacity of commander-in-chief, this being a post which Bonaparte could not hold; but it was an open secret that the first consul was really commanding with Berthier as chief of staff. The artillery, the most important part, was directed by Marmont, the engineers by Marescot.

Doubtless, for men accustomed to monotonous levels the St. Bernard routes must have seemed terrible; otherwise there was nothing very extraordinary or fantastic in this mule-back passage, except for the artillery, on a road that a little precaution could make secure.

According to orders from the commander-in-chief, rations were sent up to the monks to be distributed as extra refreshment to the army when it should reach the top, and a reward of five francs was promised to every soldier who should help in getting up the artillery. With all the light-heartedness of Frenchmen, the soldiers of the Lannes division boldly began to ascend the first rock of Mount St. Bernard. It is just as well to state, in order to be historically correct, that the Lannes division left on the 15th of May and by the 16th was on the other side of the mountain. On the 16th the Berthier division had also arrived at the St. Bernard hospice, but the first consul did not leave Lausanne till the 19th, so that the romance of his making the passage over the St. Bernard at the head of his troops is incorrect. The enthusiastic admiration of David has placed Bonaparte on horseback, wrapped in a classic cloak, like Cæsar in the midst of his legions, but the real truth is that when Bonaparte crossed the summit the army had passed on three days before and only the rearguard remained.

From his headquarters he had news at every point of the march over the Alps. He could follow Suchet's operations on the Var, see Masséna shut up in Genoa, Moncey traversing the St. Gotthard. Lausanne was his proper post, while his young soldiers under Lannes were scaling the steep rocks. When all the troops were on the march, Bonaparte skirted the lake as far as Villeneuve; then, taking the St. Pierre route through the mountains, he arrived on the evening of the 20th at the monastery of St. Bernard.

The army crossed the mountain with wonderful courage, but the soldiers' imagination had exaggerated the perils and fatigues. The stories told have nothing of the marvellous in them. When one has become accustomed to glacier climbing, what were the fatigues of such an expedition to the old brigades accustomed to wonders and privations? Astonishment was only for young soldiers—for the conscript who came from Dijon or the Carrousel reviews. One of these wrote as follows:

“We have at last scaled the St. Bernard, and here we are on the other side in Piedmont. Our half brigade left yesterday at one o'clock for the St. Pierre camp to scale that famous mountain where it is necessary to go single file on account of the rocks and the great quantity of snow. This St. Bernard is of an incredible height: sixty to eighty feet of snow covers the road at certain parts, enormous water-falls pass under this ice frozen for centuries; one fears at every step to be engulfed. Happily for me I was in the advance guard with the three companies of carbineers I commanded,

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and we arrived at the summit at nine in the morning. Bonaparte had given orders that there should be at the convent (the only house for six leagues) wine for the troops, and each soldier had a half bottle. Although wrapped up in my cloak I was almost frozen and shivered like a man attacked by fever. I left at eleven and made in less than three hours the five leagues between here and the mountain top. I did the first league in less than a quarter of an hour. I went down by the steepest side, which ended in a little lake, the ice on which they assured me was twenty-five feet thick. I slid down on the snow, and all the soldiers, following, not daring to remain on their feet as I had done, placed themselves on their backs and slid down to the bottom.

"We came through winter, for I have never known such terrible cold. Snow and ice fell at short intervals as in the month of December. Half an hour later, having gone down much lower, the snow left us and we might have thought ourselves in the spring season. The air was soft, grass was to be seen, also a few flowers. Another half hour, always descending, the heat was stifling and we were in midsummer, so that in less than an hour we had gone through the three seasons, winter, spring, and summer. Then to complete the year, my servant, whom I had sent to reconnoitre, found some excellent wine at a farm a quarter of a mile from the camp, so I tasted the best autumn fruits in as comfortable a manner as though under the vine trellises of Burgundy.

"Before climbing the St. Bernard 2,600 livres were offered to our soldiers if they would get up two pieces of cannon of eight and one of four bore, with four cases of ammunition. The proposition was accepted. The cannon, etc., were taken to pieces, and the ammunition unpacked. Some carried wheels, some other parts; the carbineers carried cases or dragged the cannon on hollow trees, and everything arrived the same time as ourselves, without any losses. One cannon of eight bore stuck in the snow, but ropes and strong arms extricated it. Soon after they came along to tell us that the 2,600 livres would be given in the artillery ground, where we had put the cannon and remounted them ready for the journey. The carbineers and scouts would not take the money, and charged the commander to inform the first consul that they had done it not for interest but for the honour and prosperity of the army."

This account, evidently dictated by the astonishment of an imaginative enthusiast, presents no circumstance, no incident, that could alarm men accustomed to crossing the Alps. The army had seen glaciers and century-old snow; had experienced the rapid change of temperature—that sudden rush from spring to summer. Dugommier had seen it in the Pyrenees, Masséna in the German Alps, and everyone knows it who has visited the glacier region. What really was wonderful in this expedition was the courage of these young men who everywhere attacked the Austrian posts with an intrepidity worthy of olden times. Hardly was the St. Bernard passed, when the two half brigades, full of ardour, fell on the bridge of Aosta: the Loison division gained this first and splendid victory. It had crossed the mountain after unheard-of efforts. A few moments' rest, and behold, the silent valley of Aosta was theirs! The division made on foot a further march of six leagues, and saw Châtillon crowning the heights. The 12th Hussars climbed the heights; the castle of Bara was surrounded, and cannon sprang up as if by magic upon the rocks and peaks. General Loison, seeing he could not take the castle, resolved to get the artillery past it in the night, even though under fire from the castle. Marmont



presided over all these operations. The cannon were placed on sledges with straw and hay, so that no noise should be made.

The first consul had not yet left the mountains; all these operations were done independently of him and under the orders of Lannes and Berthier. Bonaparte did not cross the St. Bernard until the 20th or 21st; he arrived before Ivrea just as General Lannes was taking it, the 23rd of May. Here occurred the first serious fight. Two entire divisions took part. The passage was defended by five thousand infantry and four thousand cavalry. At Ivrea the road divides. To the right is Turin, to the left Milan, the great capital of Lombardy. Lannes took the Piedmont road with the advance guard, marching on the Po from the Susa side, and taking possession of this point. Murat marched quickly into Vercelli, whilst the body of the reserves debouched on the Milan high-road, and the outposts approached Novara. At Vercelli the first consul established his headquarters, having Turin at his right and Milan in front of him.<sup>e</sup>

#### MASSÉNA YIELDS GENOA

While Napoleon was conquering the Alps, famine was conquering Masséna at Genoa. One must imagine a town of seventy thousand souls blockaded for sixty days, no provisions coming in from outside after the first day; to picture the streets encumbered with dead and dying; people disputing over horses dead of disease, dogs, cats, and unclean animals, even grass in the gardens, to get even a faint idea of the sufferings in Genoa during this cruel blockade. The population, six times more numerous than the army, exasperated by suffering, began to revolt, and the troops were so worn out that the sentinels could no longer watch except seated, their arms by their sides. Masséna's energy redoubled, and he displayed a superhuman activity. Sharing the common suffering, his force of soul supported him physically, but his hair went white in a few days.

At length there was only one ration left for each man. All that could be endured had been endured with patience and loyalty. Masséna was obliged to evacuate the town on conditions worthy of him. Following the convention signed on the 4th of June, the handful of soldiers who had survived returned to France by land or sea with their arms and baggage. It surpassed in length and suffering the defence of Genoa by Boufflers in 1746.

Called the "saviour of the republic" in the last campaign, Masséna augmented his title to national gratitude by prolonging his resistance ten days beyond the time fixed by the first consul, and, in spite of the distance, by his powerful co-operation in the victory of Marengo. This defence did not, however, satisfy Bonaparte completely. Later, he made out that Masséna need not have been blockaded in Genoa if he had put the mass of his forces on the march at the beginning of the campaign. But to do that the line of communication with Nice would have had to be broken, and this he had been particularly told to guard. Moreover, how would Masséna have fed the army? Bonaparte blamed him also for not having rallied the centre at Finale under Suchet, and pursued the corps of Ellsnitz by marching on Alessandria at the head of the reserves; as if he could have mobilised eight thousand men exhausted by a two months' famine and deprived of artillery and ammunition! However, as Masséna had become indispensable to him for re-organising the remnant of the Italian army and the reserves, the first consul hid his grievances and after the interview at Milan made Masséna commander-in-chief.<sup>f</sup>

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Bonaparte had followed the course of the Dora and the Po, entered Milan and Pavia, and seized all the letters and communications passing betwixt Melas and Vienna.

The Austrian general had already retrograded; he could not credit the report of Bonaparte's being in Italy. He sent a trusted messenger to learn; and the messenger for a thousand louis betrayed to the French a complete account of the force and positions of their enemy. What above all astonished Melas was to hear the French cannon: how had they passed the Alps? Bonaparte's arrival at Milan, itself a triumph, and felt as such by his army, took place on the 2nd of June. Monecy was to join him with reinforcements from the army of Switzerland. He in the meantime despatched his lieutenants to seize the towns on the Po, which was effected. Murat in taking Piacenza intercepted a courier who bore tidings of the fall of Genoa. This misfortune left Bonaparte no object save that of marching upon Melas, and defeating him in battle. The Austrian general concentrated his force at Alessandria; whilst Ott, his lieutenant, after having reduced Genoa, marched to surprise the advance posts of the French as they passed the Po. He was met by Lannes at Montebello, and a severe engagement ensued, the forerunner of the great one. Ott and O'Reilly were completely beaten by Lannes, and driven back upon Melas, with the loss of five thousand men. It was in memory of this action that Lannes afterwards bore the title of Duke de Montebello.

The French army now advanced to Stradella, taking up an advantageous position in case of attack. It remained several days in these quarters, to allow Suchet time to close on Melas from the rear, and Masséna, with the liberated garrison of Genoa, to join from the south. The Austrians showed no sign of movement, and Bonaparte found that Melas might escape him by marching either north towards Turin, or south towards Genoa. Rather than allow this, he advanced into the plains of Marengo; thereby giving great advantage to his enemies, who were on the other side of the Bormida, at liberty to attack at their choice or defend the course of the stream. So little activity did Melas show, that Bonaparte's anxiety was increased lest he might escape to Genoa, and shut himself up there; where, with the English, masters of the sea, he might hold out an almost unlimited time. With this fear he detached Desaix, just arrived from Egypt, on his left, to provide against and prevent any such movement of Melas—a precaution that was near proving fatal to the French; for the Austrian at the same moment had decided in a council of war that the only secure mode of reaching Genoa was to give battle to the French.<sup>1</sup>

The morning of the 14th, destined by Melas for the attack, found the French not drawn up in line to receive them, but *échellonné*, or thrown back, in separate divisions, with considerable intervals betwixt them, extending from Marengo, the village next the Bormida and the Austrians and occupied by the French advance guards, to their headquarters at San Giuliano. The Austrians crossed the river by three divisions and three bridges. One cause of the security of Bonaparte was the assurance that the principal of these bridges had been broken. The Austrians' attack convinced him of the contrary; its first effort was against the French at Marengo. Instead of marching boldly to the charge, the imperials deployed, planted batteries, and waited to effect by their fire what an assault might have accomplished. This afforded time to the French, and allowed Bonaparte to recall Desaix.

[<sup>1</sup> The chances were greatly in favour of the Austrians, as they were superior in numbers and had three times as many cavalry as the French. — HAZLITT.]

The right and left of the Austrians had scarcely an enemy to contend with. Chiefly composed of cavalry, they swept all obstacles before them, and turning towards the centre at Marengo, completely expelled the enemy from that village.<sup>d</sup>

#### THE TIDE TURNED AT MARENGO (JUNE 14TH, 1800)

The imperial troops, as a result of their brilliant successes, became absolutely careless, and, O'Reilly having forced a battalion to lay down their arms at Casina-bianca and the troops being thoroughly exhausted, a long rest was decided upon before continuing the march, the officers in command of the imperial army judging that the conflict was over, for that day at least. Melas, having had two horses shot under him and being slightly wounded, thought it best on account of his age to retire to Alessandria, from where he could send the joyful tidings of victory to Vienna, Turin, and Genoa. The command now fell to Zach, who under the firm conviction that he was pursuing a fugitive host relaxed his discipline to such an extent that the soldiers, greedy for booty, refused on several occasions to obey orders. Towards three o'clock in the afternoon, Zach gave orders to resume the march.

Bonaparte, beginning to despair of being joined by Desaix, had already decided to retreat. But between four and five o'clock the advance guard of Desaix reached San Giuliano, and Bonaparte immediately resolved to proceed to the attack. Victor, who had again collected three thousand men, was already in San Giuliano; Lannes reopened the artillery fire at La Buschetta on Ott's slowly approaching column, while Rivaud harried their left flank. Desaix made a sortie from San Giuliano. All the remaining troops were placed in the reserve and occupied a position outside the village. Meanwhile, the first consul sought to inspire his disheartened troops with renewed courage as he rode proudly through the ranks calling out: "We have withdrawn far enough for to-day. You know I always sleep on the battlefield."

The second battle began and Marmont unmasked a battery of twelve cannon which belched forth a destructive fire. Desaix, at the head of the 9th light half-brigade, supported by Victor, dashed forward on Saint-Julien, only to meet his death by one of the first shots fired;<sup>1</sup> and he sank lifeless into the arms of General Lebrun. This sudden and unexpected attack took the imperial troops completely by surprise. The battalion of the first division wavered and fell back. The artillery retreated after a few shots, and even the cavalry were dismayed as the combat rapidly developed in intensity.

This was Kellermann's opportunity. Protected by a thick leafage of vines that overgrew a closely planted plantation of mulberry trees, he led his 600 horsemen into the high-road and here, diverging to the left, advanced on the imperial infantry, whilst his rear squadron completely routed the panic-stricken Lichtenstein dragoons. The capture of General Zach and 37 officers with 16,257 men was the outcome of this bold act. Saint-Julien

<sup>1</sup> As he advanced at the head of a troop of two hundred men, he was shot through the heart by a ball, and fell dead at the instant he had given the word to charge. By his death Napoleon was deprived of the man whom he esteemed most worthy to be his second in the field. He shed tears for his loss, never speaking of him afterwards without regret; and he was one of those who he believed would have remained faithful to him to the last. His death did not disconcert the troops, but inspired them with greater ardour to avenge it. General Boudet led them on. The 9th light demi-brigade did indeed prove itself worthy of the title of "incomparable."<sup>e</sup>]



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escaped a similar fate only through the sacrifice of some dragoons, who alone possessed sufficient courage to meet the French. Kellermann did not rest one moment in his career of victory, but, reinforced by a regiment of the Champeaux brigade and the cavalry of the guard, he took up the pursuit, and about a mile and a half beyond La Ventolina came upon Nobili's cavalry who, without offering the slightest resistance, fled in utter confusion and over-ran a detachment of their own men. Nothing but the fast approaching darkness saved the remains of this once proud regiment of cavalry from complete destruction. At the shrill cry, "To the bridge!" even the infantry took to flight. The resistance of the imperials at Marengo was soon overcome. They managed, however, to hold the village against Boudet until the larger part at least of their conquered army had reached the left bank of the Bormida. We can estimate the utter confusion that prevailed among the fleeing troops from the fact that 20 forsaken cannon were found in the bed of the river.

The victorious French army now encamped in their former quarters. The imperials' loss was officially estimated at 252 officers and 6,229 men killed and wounded; 1 general, 74 officers and 2,846 men taken prisoners; 13 cannon captured, 20 lost in the Bormida. Jomini<sup>h</sup> reported that the army of reserve had lost 7,000 men, dead and wounded, and 1,000 taken prisoners in the first battle. The army bulletin maintains that the returns gave only 1,100 men killed, 3,600 wounded and 900 taken prisoners. According to a Prussian authority, Bonaparte, in the long course of his victorious career, never had so small a personal share in a battle and never gave so little proof of his usually brilliant talent as in this battle, which is generally placed in the front row of his deeds of arms.

The night following the bloody victory brought no rest to the aged imperial commander-in-chief. Wounded, and deprived of his principal adviser, he gave himself up to despair. His subordinate officers seemed to have completely lost their wits. Only a few of them thought of reorganising the remains of the troops under their command and of providing them with rations and ammunition. The greater number of the staff and general officers loudly bewailed their lost baggage. On the morning of June 15th, Melas called a fresh council of war. Opinions were divided at this meeting. Some blamed Zach and the ministry of war, and demanded of those powerless factors efficient aid. A few undaunted men wished once more to try their fortune in the field. The possibility of escaping to Milan or Genoa was suggested, but this attempt might lead to a still greater catastrophe. As a last resort there remained the fortress of Mantua, which the majority of the convention hoped to reach in safety, under the pretext of holding a council with Napoleon. This plan, dictated by cowardice and convenience, finally triumphed, and it was resolved to treat with Bonaparte, who at that moment was at the head of barely 18,000 men.

Zach returned to Alessandria accompanied by Berthier in order to close the convention, by the terms of which the imperials made an almost unconditional surrender of half Italy. The battle awarded to the victor the possession of 12 fortresses, 1,500 cannon, and enormous magazines.<sup>i</sup>

Thus, the battle of Marengo, "so far lost at midday," says Savary,<sup>j</sup> later duke of Rovigo, "that a charge of cavalry would forever have decided it, was restored, and gained by six o'clock in the evening." The charge of young Kellermann, later duke de Valmy, was the decisive movement. The partisans of Bonaparte assert that the order issued from him. Kellermann himself protested it was his own unsupported act; and a strong feeling of

jealousy existed, in consequence, betwixt him and the first consul. "That charge of yours was opportune," observed Bonaparte after the battle, in rather a lukewarm tone of praise. "Opportune indeed," replied the fiery little Kellermann, "it has put the crown upon your head."

The consequence of this campaign of a few days were as important as those of the long struggle of 1796. An armistice was agreed on, the terms of which were that the Austrians should retire behind the Mincio, thus abandoning all the conquests of Suvaroff; besides, Genoa no sooner was retaken than resurrendered. France reaped, at a blow, her old superiority in the field; and Bonaparte was marked anew by the hand of destiny as the candidate for the vacant throne. His return to Paris was one continued triumph. The whole population lined the roads: the beauties of Lyons and Dijon crowded round him, at the risk of being trodden down by his steed. Paris was in equal tumult of admiration and joy. A short time subsequent to his return occurred the 14th of July, the anniversary of the federation, of the birth of freedom and the Revolution. He feared not to celebrate it in the Champ-de-Mars. Here, where the deputies from all France had met to swear their solemn vows to liberty on the altar of the country, a military dictator now rode amidst his guard, bearing the Austrian colours taken at Marengo. The acclamations, the enthusiasm, at either epoch was the same; the object alone was different. It had been then an abstract name; it was now a substantial idol, a hero, calculated to take strong hold on the affections of the people, who with their wonted obliquity of vision, still saw in him the representative of what they called liberty and the Revolution.

The convention with Melas was considered preparatory to a treaty. Bonaparte offered to Austria the terms of Campo-Formio; but the court of Vienna, which unfortunately was gifted with that vigour in despair which was ever wanting to her in prosperity, pleaded her engagements with Great Britain as precluding her from treating, except in conjunction with this latter country. The French had an apt rejoinder: "Let there be an armistice, then, by sea, as well as by land." But this would have given too great an advantage to the French. Egypt would have been succoured, and the whole system of naval war deranged, and England would not listen to the proposal; and Austria, with a heroism worthy of better fortune, persisted in renewing hostilities. Italy as a field had been unfavourable to her. She turned to Germany.<sup>d</sup>

#### BONAPARTE'S JEALOUSY OF MOREAU

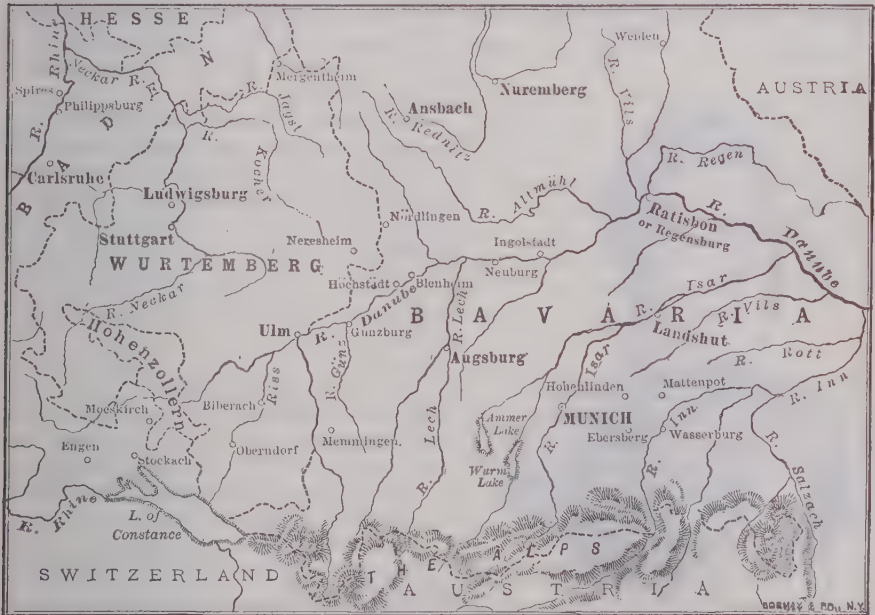
When England and Austria refused his overtures, Bonaparte had the good fortune of getting precisely what he wanted, *viz.*, war, in precisely the way he wished, that is, as apparently forced upon him. This war is peculiar in the circumstance that throughout its course Bonaparte has a military rival with whom he is afraid to break, and who keeps pace with him in achievements — Moreau. To Moreau the success of Brumaire had been mainly due, and he had perhaps thought that the new constitution, as it did not seem to contemplate the first consul commanding an army, had removed Bonaparte from the path of his ambition. He now held the command of the principal army, that of the Rhine, in which post Bonaparte could not venture to supersede him.

The problem for Bonaparte throughout the war was to prevent Moreau, and in a less degree Masséna, who was now in command of the army of Italy, from eclipsing his own military reputation. He did not, however, succeed in tearing from Moreau the honour of concluding the war. Marengo

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did not lead to peace; this was won, where naturally it could only be won, in Bavaria by Moreau's victory of Hohenlinden (December 3rd) — a victory perhaps greater than any of which at that time Bonaparte could boast.

Never was Bonaparte more recklessly audacious, never was he more completely and undeservedly successful, than in this campaign. Brumaire had given him a very uncertain position. Sieyès and the republicans were on the watch for him on the one side; Moreau seemed on the point of eclipsing him on the other. - His family felt their critical position; "had he fallen at Marengo," writes Lucien,<sup>1</sup> "we should have been all proscribed." Perhaps



MAP ILLUSTRATING MOREAU'S CAMPAIGN IN GERMANY

nothing but a stroke so rapid and startling as that of Marengo could have saved him from these difficulties. But this did more, and developed the empire out of the consulate.<sup>c</sup>

#### MOREAU'S CAMPAIGN IN GERMANY (1800 A.D.)

Moreau had chosen as his lieutenant-generals Gouvion-Saint-Cyr, Lecourbe, Grouchy, Ney, Decaen, and Richepanse, all men of tried strength and valour, all worthy of following such a captain. The entire French army numbered from 90,000 to 95,000 men, and the enemy had an equal number of fighters. The Russians had abandoned the Austrians, and the archduke Charles, worthy emulator of Moreau, had been replaced by General Baren von Kray. The junction of the troops, although difficult owing to the respective position of each, was executed according to a skilfully drawn-up plan. Moreau, by certain movements and feigned attacks, confounded the plans of General Kray in every respect, and took the offensive. He found the enemy at Engen. The plateau which dominated Engen was taken and



retaken five times (May 2nd). At last, about six o'clock in the evening, after a most vigorous resistance, the Austrians abandoned a battle-field strewn with 4,000 dead, and left in the hands of the enemy 8,000 prisoners, standards, and many cannon. Moreau had achieved his end in breaking through the formidable line from Engen to Stockach.

Kray precipitately retired on Moeskirch. Moreau, who followed him closely, attacked him at daybreak and by skilful manœuvring carried off a long-disputed but complete victory. He had four horses killed under him, and received a spent bullet in his chest. The enemy crossed the Danube. Moreau sent General Gouvion-Saint-Cyr towards Biberach. This general, having met the enemy at Oberndorf, attacked them in spite of their superior position, overthrew them in the Riss ravine, captured Biberach, and entered Memmingen.



MARSHAL NEY

(1769-1815)

Kray made a movement on Günzburg. Moreau beat him back to the other side of the Danube, and crossed this river himself at the end of a manœuvre as clever as fortunate. Moreau resolved to force him away from Ulm by a bold stratagem, which was to separate him from his magazines. The Austrian general, dismayed by this manœuvre, was obliged to retreat or give battle. Moreau had neither boats nor pontoons. But two swimmers, followed by two boats carrying their arms, crossed the Danube at Blenheim, and took possession of two cannon, which they loaded and turned against the enemy, thus making it possible to repair the bridges, over which passed two French divisions. Moreau beat the Austrians near Höchstädt, then at Neresheim, pursuing them as far as Nördlingen. The two armies were facing one another after this last move. The gunners opened with a terrific fire, and the signal for a charge

was given, when all at once the trumpets sounded a recall. The firing ceased, the rumour of an armistice, precursor of a peace, was spread, and immediately the French and Austrians shook hands and embraced. Casks of wine and beer were rolled on to the field so lately a scene of carnage, and the two armies gave themselves up to joy and confidence. Moreau did not know of the suspension of hostilities which had just been concluded in Italy. Kray, in communicating it to him, demanded an armistice; these palavers deceived the troops. Moreau, not wishing to give the Austrians time to establish themselves in Bavaria, where they would have disputed his entrance, refused to accept the armistice and sent off a considerable force to Munich, with orders to make all speed. Kray halted at Neuburg, where he was again defeated in spite of the fierce onslaught of his troops. He gained Ingolstadt, which Moreau also forced him to abandon, as well as the position he took up at Landshut, leaving only a feeble garrison in that place. General Decaen, who had hurried by forced marches to Munich,

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arrived at his destination and took possession of the capital of Bavaria, after having covered thirty leagues in three days, and having fought three battles *en route*.

Moreau marched on victoriously, each success was the forerunner of another; all fled before him, and Kray, yielding to his rival's superior talent, no longer tried to hold his own. Moreau was adored by the men whom he always led to victory, and esteemed by those who submitted to his arms because he always respected their usages, customs, and religion. He was admired and feared by his enemies and acquired an astonishing celebrity. The Germans uttered his name with a kind of religious awe.

General Kray was disgraced, and Archduke John replaced him. This was the emperor's brother, a young prince not exactly calculated to distinguish himself in warfare, so he was directed by Lieutenant-General Baron von Lauer.

The preliminaries, signed by Bonaparte and Count Saint-Julien, not having been yet ratified by the Austrian emperor, Moreau wrote to the archduke John that he was going to recommence hostilities unless he consented to a one month armistice and gave back Philippsburg, Ulm, and Ingolstadt to the French as guarantee of a definite peace. Francis II consented. But the English cabinet, as we have seen, were interested in a continuance of the war and used their influence at the Austrian court, persuading the emperor to try his fortunes again in war. Orders were immediately despatched by the Vienna cabinet to raise new troops and reorganise the army.

#### THE BATTLE OF HOHENLINDEN (DECEMBER 3RD, 1800)

Moreau had profited by the suspension of hostilities to go to Paris; but, informed of what was passing in Austria, he hastened back to his headquarters at Munich. His aim was to make Archduke John give battle near the Inn, in the village of Hohenlinden in Bavaria, a place then little known, but since rendered immortal by the great valour of the French and the strategy of Moreau.

Moreau first made a strong division pass between the centre and the left wing of the enemy's army, and, although General Baron von Lauer had been warned of this, he refused to believe that so considerable a force could make its way across marshes, woods, and very difficult roads. Vainly was he twice warned. He would not believe it until the French division lay between his advance-guard and the centre of his army. Then, driven in spite of himself to give battle, he came on to Hohenlinden. General Grouchy carried his left wing to the left of the village. Generals Decaen and Richepanse, at the moment of attack, were to attack the rearguard of the enemy. Moreau was skilful enough to keep the prince in such a position as to insure his complete defeat. As soon as he perceived the Austrian army falter he was sure General Richepanse had begun his flank attack, and immediately assumed the offensive. General Ney and his troops came pouring through the defiles of Mattenpot, joining with General Richepanse as Moreau had himself arranged. Towards the left of the Hohenlinden forest the enemy defended themselves with cannon and a sustained musketry fire. The Hungarian grenadiers formed in squares and charged. General Richepanse, although separated from the main body and having only five battalions and one regiment of chasseurs, rushed on the enemy and routed all he met. Meanwhile General Ney came out of a pass towards Hohenlinden, and pursued a large column which had taken refuge in the forest.

Soon nothing was heard save the cries of wounded and fugitives begging for mercy. The highway, bristling but an hour before with thousands of armed men, was now covered with the dead bodies of men and horses, with frightened horses careering about riderless, and overturned gun-carriages. In the midst of this frightful *mêlée*, this sanguinary disorder, the generals Ney and Richepanse, whose columns had been gradually drawing near each other, met at last on the field of battle. Thenceforward the enemy had no chance. In vain an Austrian corps marched from Wasserburg upon Ebersberg; General Decaen threw it back in disorder. The archduke John wanted to try another attack upon Hohenlinden, but Moreau was expecting this and had left behind two divisions and a mass of cavalry, which met the enemy in a furious charge and accomplished its final overthrow.

It was fearful weather; snow fell in huge flakes all that day and on into the night. There was hardly a regiment some of whose men were not frost-bitten. The roads were also destroyed by rain; yet the movements and attacks had been so well planned by Moreau that not one of them failed. The enemy was in a deplorable state of disorder. The archduke and his counsellor Lauer were so disconcerted that they gave no orders. Each Austrian general saved what he could of the troops remaining to him. Night put an end to the pursuit, and many detachments of the enemy bivouacked among the French soldiers. The trophies of this memorable day were 10,000 prisoners, among them 3 generals and the *élite* of the Austrian grenadiers, with about 84 cannon and guns.

Moreau had planned things so well that he lost only 1,200 men, not counting the wounded, while the loss of the Austrian army in killed and wounded amounted to 10,000 men. War, which too often hardens men, could not hurt the mind of Moreau the conqueror. He considered it such a scourge that on the very evening of the memorable battle of Hohenlinden, he spoke these words: "We have had enough bloodshed; let our efforts now be towards making peace."<sup>2</sup>

#### THE ATTEMPT ON NAPOLEON'S LIFE (DECEMBER 24TH, 1800)

On the 24th of December, Bonaparte left the Tuileries in company with several of his generals to go to the opera where an oratorio was to be given. The escort composed of mounted grenadiers followed the carriage instead of preceding it, as had formerly been done. That circumstance probably was the means of saving the first consul's life. When the carriage arrived in the rue St. Nicaise, not far from the rue du Carrousel, the way was found to be encumbered with a wagon and a hackney coach, but the first consul's driver skilfully and quickly threaded his way between the wagon and the wall. The escort had done the same, when suddenly a frightful detonation was heard, windows and doors were shattered and houses overthrown. The first consul's carriage was so broken that it rested on the axles and had all its windows smashed. "They have mined us," exclaimed Bonaparte. After making inquiries as to the escort, of which only one soldier had been wounded, he gave orders to proceed to the opera-house where he showed himself as calm and imperturbable as ordinarily, in spite of the excitement and shouts of the spectators rejoiced to see him escaped from so great a danger. This calm, however, did not last; as soon as he returned to the Tuileries and learned all the details of this frightful attempt, his anger burst out in threats against the Jacobins and Septembrists to whom he attributed the crime. He would not listen to Fouché who rightly attributed it to the roy-



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alists. By a consular decree, which the senate hastened to endorse, three hundred individuals were imprisoned without trial.

Fouché nevertheless was on the track of the real culprits. He made the discovery by chance. The cab-drivers, in testimony of their admiration for the consul's coachman, entertained him at a complimentary dinner. In the confidence generated by conviviality, one of the guests, in toasting the hero's skill, said he knew perfectly well who had played this trick on him. This coachman was arrested and gave evidence about the wagon which he had seen in a coach-house. The matter was gone into, and in the end two agents of Georges Cadoudal, Saint-Rejant and Carbon, were arrested. Then it was found out why the plot had failed. Saint-Rejant, who fired the powder barrel, was not well instructed; he understood that the escort rode in advance of the first consul's carriage and he had allowed the first vehicle to pass by. In addition he was thrown against the wall by one of the soldier's horses, but hurried nevertheless to ignite the powder. But its action was slower than he had expected, and his machine, justly called infernal, shattered only such as had inquisitively approached to see the first consul. It is scarcely conceivable, but he had put the horse and wagon in charge of a young girl of fifteen, knowing full well that she would be blown in pieces. Saint-Rejant and Carbon were condemned to death and executed; their accomplices had found time for flight. But the three hundred Jacobins were none the less transported.<sup>n</sup>

#### THE TREATIES OF LUNÉVILLE AND FOLIGNO

The loss of the battle of Hohenlinden obliged Austria to treat. Cobenzl her plenipotentiary, came over to Paris for that purpose. The negotiations were, however, carried on at Lunéville, Joseph Bonaparte acting as the envoy of his brother. Here a treaty was concluded little differing from that of Campo-Formio.<sup>d</sup>

This treaty was signed the 9th of February. Austria, exhausted, accepted a separate peace, without any intervention from England or the empire. She recognised the four republics, the Batavian, Helvetian, Cisalpine, and Ligurian, as constituted by France, on the sole promise that they should remain independent. Nothing was stipulated with regard to Naples, Rome, and Piedmont. The first consul reserved to himself the right of deciding as to their fate. Austria, although keeping Venice, found herself excluded from all share in Italian affairs. Naturally this treaty was celebrated in Paris by brilliant *fêtes*. It assured to the French the possession of the left bank of the Rhine, and immediately the tribunate hastened to declare the Rhenish provinces annexed to France. These provinces were the four departments of Roer, Sarre, Rhin-et-Moselle, and Mont-Tonnerre. Unfortunately, Bonaparte organised nothing very lasting beyond the Alps. He left Austria humiliated and with rage in her heart, and if he reserved to himself the right of regulating the destinies of Italy, it was not to give her a durable constitution but to use her as a stepping stone in carrying out his further projects. He did not really think of her, but of himself—of his own ambition; but this ambition bade fair to make him ultimately lose all conquests won.

Brune had detached three French columns which invaded Tuscany under various pretexts, or for the purpose of repelling Neapolitan troops. They had treated it like a conquered country, and at Leghorn they had captured some supplies and some English ships. Bonaparte refused to listen to the urgent and well-founded complaints made on this subject by Cobenzl; he wished to make Tuscany into a kingdom of Etruria for the prince of Parma, whom

he might compel to close it against the English. On the 21st of March he concluded with Spain the treaty he had been negotiating for some months with this object in view, and by which he obtained in exchange the cession of Louisiana to France; while Spain agreed to compel Portugal to recede from her English alliance even at the cost of invading her.

The Roman states were maintained in their integrity. As bishop of Imola, Pius VII had expressed conciliatory sentiments and the desire to put an end to the disputes between the church and the Revolution. These sentiments had perhaps not been without their share in his election. Bonaparte on his side, had a fixed intention of re-establishing religion in France, a restoration which he judged necessary to complete the return to the normal order of things. He had already declared himself at Milan on the subject of his determination to restore the altars. He had even summoned Monsignor Spina, archbishop of Corinth, to Paris, that he might arrange with him respecting the means of carrying it out. For these reasons Murat, who commanded an advanced corps in Tuscany, received orders to avoid offending the holy see, and to exact only that the ports of Roman states should be closed against the English.

As to the sovereigns in Naples, Napoleon thought at first of dethroning them, because of their intimate relations with the English. He thought for a while of giving Naples to the duke of Parma in exchange for Etruria, but renounced the idea, having need to propitiate Russia, who had taken Queen Carolina under her protection. Murat went to Foligno, where an armistice was signed, but changed into a definite treaty on the 28th of March. The court of Naples, unable to resist, submitted to the conqueror. The states were restored to them on condition that they shut their ports to the English and yield their share in the island of Elba and the *Presidios*, which France had reserved to herself in her arrangements with Spain and Etruria. Finally they were to arm three frigates, and shelter ten thousand French soldiers near the Gulf of Taranto; these would then be ready to succour Egypt if necessary. Piedmont was held in reserve for future uses and plans.<sup>m</sup>

#### AN ARMISTICE

Whilst the new century opened under such prosperous auspices for the French, fortune had never seemed more menacing to Great Britain. In Austria she lost her last continental ally. Portugal had been invaded and compelled to renounce her friendship with England. Paul, emperor of Russia, having passed suddenly from enmity to admiration of France, concluded a treaty with Bonaparte; and, in conjunction with the Baltic powers, now became a party to the Armed Neutrality [December 16th, 1800], to resist England's right of search upon the seas.<sup>1</sup> On her own element, however, that country was mistress still. Her fleet, under Sir Hyde Parker, or rather under his lieutenant, Nelson, entered the sound, and destroyed the Danish navy in the harbour of Copenhagen. The death of Paul at the same time deprived her of a formidable enemy; and marred, for the time, the plan of the French ruler for excluding her from the ports of Europe. Prussia, the self-

[<sup>1</sup> The idea of a union among the neutral powers in opposition to the intolerable allegation of England that she was entitled, when at war with any power whatsoever, to subject the ships of all neutral powers to examination and search, had been relinquished by the empress Catherine in 1781, to please the English ambassador at her court; the emperor Paul now resumed the idea. — SCHLOSSER.<sup>o</sup> The fuller details of this opposition to a naval principle of England which brought about the War of 1812 with America, will be found in the history of England, and also in the histories of the other countries concerned.]

[1801 A.D.]

ish Prussia, which had taken the opportunity to invade Hanover, was compelled to evacuate it. Malta fell into the power of England: Egypt was menaced: and the rival powers, sinking into the attitude of languid and inactive defiance proper to two exhausted combatants, agreed to allow each other a breathing time of truce at least, although the causes of quarrel and enmity were too profound to be removed, except by the absolute prostration of one or the other.

Whilst England in 1801 was bent on her Egyptian expedition, the first consul was employed in organising and consolidating his government. Bonaparte dreaded the Jacobins far more than the royalists. "Emigration and Vendéeism are but eruptions of the skin," said he; "terrorism is an internal malady." The attempt of the infernal machine had enabled the first consul to establish special military commissions for trying similar offences. It was on this occasion that the opposition first revealed itself in the tribunate and legislative body. Though chosen by the senate, itself appointed by the first consul, the members of these assemblies were still the children of the Revolution, averse to arbitrary power established by law, however they might excuse and admire its action from expediency; and inspired with a far greater hatred to aristocracy than to tyranny. Thus the first consul obtained with far more ease their consent to his unlimited authority over personal freedom, and even over the press, than their acquiescence in allowing the émigrés to return, in re-establishing religion, and in other acts of justice and expediency.

#### THE CONCORDAT RE-ESTABLISHES A STATE RELIGION (1801 A.D.)

Bonaparte, however, pursued his plan of reorganising the monarchy, with its higher ranks, its hierarchy, and all the necessary machinery for holding together and moving the body politic. His first enterprise was to re-establish the Catholic religion, as not only tolerated but instituted by the state. He had spared the pope with this in view; and the year 1801 was spent in negotiating a *concordat* or agreement with Rome. No doubt policy was in this affair the motive of Bonaparte. His counsellors opposed the idea. "Hearken," said Bonaparte to one of them during a promenade at Malmaison: "I was here last Sunday, walking in this solitude amidst the silence of nature. The sound of the church bells of Ruel suddenly struck upon my ears. I was moved, and said, If I am thus affected, what must be the influence of those ideas upon the simple and credulous mass! The people must have a religion; and that religion must be in the hands of the government." After divers commonplace assertions, the counsellor, waiving the broad question of religion or no religion, objected at least to Catholicism. "It is intolerant; its clergy are counter-revolutionary; the spirit of the present time is entirely opposed to it. And, after all, we, in our thoughts and principles, are nearer to the true spirit of the gospel than the Catholics, who affect to reverence it." Here Bonaparte urged that, by his leaning to Protestantism, one half of France might embrace it, but the other half would remain Catholic; and weakness, not strength, would be gained to both nation and government. "Let them call me papist if they will. I am no such thing. I was a Mohammedan in Egypt, and I will be Catholic here, for the good of the people."

Bonaparte succeeded in gaining from the pope a concordat, by which, in return for a decree declaring the Catholic religion that "of the great majority of the French," and undertaking to give salaries to the clergy, the pon



tiff agreed to consecrate such bishops as the French government should nominate; to give up all claim to the old church lands; and to order a form of prayer for the consuls, to whom the new bishops were to swear allegiance. The court of Rome thus showed itself obsequious, secularising Bishop Talleyrand at the same time, by Bonaparte's desire. But it was from the nation, at least from the eminent personages, that resistance was to be expected. The theophilanthropists raised the no-popery cry. The soldiers were indignant. It was on Easter Sunday, 1802, that a *Te Deum* was celebrated at Notre Dame by Cardinal Caprara, in commemoration of the re-establishment of the church. The first consul attended, surrounded by his officers. On his return he asked several what they thought of the ceremony. "A pretty *capucinade*," replied Delman; "there was merely wanting the million of men, who have perished in overthrowing all you have built up." The first consul soon after observed to Rapp, his aide-de-camp, who was a Protestant, "You will go to mass now?" "Not I." "Why not?" "These things may do very well for you. They don't concern me, unless you should take these people for aides-de-camp or cooks."<sup>1</sup>

#### THE FRENCH LOSE EGYPT

Whilst the French, triumphant over the continental powers, were obliged to rest on their arms, regarding England with inactive enmity, the latter country had resolved manfully to put forth its strength, and send an army to Egypt. Malta was already in their power. The French force in Egypt, though formidable, was little anxious to defend the country, and looked rather to the hopes of escape. Kléber, who had been left with the command, had, in 1800, proposed to evacuate Egypt; and Sir Sidney Smith, the admiral commanding in the Mediterranean, had concluded an agreement with him to this effect. But the Austrians at that time still held out, and the British government could not allow the veteran army of Egypt to reinforce the army opposed to her. The capitulation entered into betwixt Kléber and Sir Sidney was accordingly refused to be ratified, and war continued in Africa. A Turkish army advanced from Syria, which was met and defeated by Kléber in the plains of Heliopolis. That rude but talented leader soon after fell a victim to an Arab assassin in his quarters at Cairo;<sup>2</sup> and the command devolved upon Menou, who had espoused a Turkish woman, adopted the Mohammedan religion and dress, and prefixed Abdallah to his name.

The honour of the expedition to Egypt belongs, according to Sir Walter Scott,<sup>r</sup> exclusively to Lord Melville, who promoted it despite the irresolution of Pitt and the reluctance of George III. The free constitution of England, and its representative system of government, proved, indeed, sadly destitute of vigour, compared with that which the tyranny of the committee of public safety, and subsequently of Bonaparte, gave to France. Even now this expedition, entered into with but half a will on the part of the government, was inferior to the French force in Egypt. "We were incontestably superior," says Savary,<sup>j</sup> "in cavalry and artillery." Yet with an

<sup>1</sup> Rapp and Savary were aides-de-camp to Desaix, adopted by Bonaparte on the field of Marengo. The latter soon made progress by his suppleness: the former was a blunt Alsatian, and became neither duke nor marshal. He once ushered a dark-looking Corsican to the presence of Bonaparte, and took care to hold the door open whilst the interview lasted. When questioned by Bonaparte why he did this, "Because," replied Rapp, "I don't put much trust in your Corsicans." The blunt remark caused much amusement.

[<sup>2</sup> June 14th, 1801, the same day Desaix fell at Marengo.<sup>n</sup>]

[1801 A.D.]

inferior army General Abercromby was to force a landing, to take and garrison Alexandria, and then march to Cairo. Fortunately for the British, Menou wanted generalship and activity. His force was disseminated, and the British landed without opposition on the very beach which had proved fatal to the Turkish expedition. This was early in March, 1801. The garrison of Alexandria attacked the British, but were beaten back. Menou in the meantime arrived from Cairo, and mustered hastily his troops. With these he gave battle on the 21st near Alexandria.

He was defeated, driven within the walls, and soon besieged. Abercromby had fallen in the action, as well as Lanusse on the part of the French. General Hutchinson succeeded the former; and conducted the rest of the campaign, according to French testimony, with great ability. General Beliard was compelled to surrender in Cairo, Menou himself in Alexandria; on honourable conditions, however — those of being transported to France. Thus terminated Bonaparte's brilliant scheme for revolutionising the East.<sup>d</sup>

## NAVAL AFFAIRS

Success, which had deserted the French so cruelly in Egypt, showed signs of returning to them on the sea. Admiral Ganteaume, after having for the third time endeavoured to disembark troops on the African shore, had for the third time retraced his steps without having succeeded. But during his return he had chased and captured an English vessel, and this little exploit was treated as a great triumph and immoderately rejoiced over. A few days later, Rear-Admiral Linois, one of Ganteaume's subordinates, obtained a more tangible success in the bay of Algeciras. It occurred on July 6th, 1801.

Linois had taken refuge in the harbour of Algeciras, opposite Gibraltar, with three vessels and a frigate detached from Admiral Ganteaume's squadron. There he was attacked by the English Admiral Saumarez who, with six battle-ships and one frigate, thought himself quite sure of the small French naval force. Saumarez was bitterly deceived. His fleet, battered at one and the same time by the French ships' guns and guns from the forts, experienced a complete reverse. The English ship *Hannibal* was compelled to strike her colours, four others were disabled or dismasted, and Saumarez had barely time to run his almost ruined fleet to shelter under the guns of Gibraltar.

A few days later Linois left the bay of Algeciras to make his way to Cadiz in company with the Spanish admiral, Moreno, who had joined him with six vessels. Saumarez, having effected his repairs, set out in pursuit of the Franco-Spanish fleet, and cruelly avenged upon the Spanish ships of Admiral Moreno the sanguinary reverse he had experienced at the hands of the French. A fatal occurrence forcibly helped his designs. Two Spanish ships, the *Real Carlos* and the *San Hermenegildo*, approached each other without in the darkness realising their mistake; they fought furiously together till both were blown up. Thus the French allies destroyed themselves with their own hands. But the French had that night a good share at least of the glory. The *Formidable*, still disabled by the injuries received at the battle of Algeciras, struggled successfully against three English ships. Skillfully handled by her commander, Captain Troude, she riddled the enemy's bulwarks with shot, pierced and dismasted the *Venerable*, and at daybreak sailed into Cadiz harbour, where, some hours later, she was joined by the rest of the combined fleets.<sup>p</sup>

## NAPOLEON PLANS TO INVADE ENGLAND

Meanwhile Napoleon, relieved by the Treaty of Lunéville from all apprehensions of a serious continental struggle, bent all his attention to Great Britain, and made serious preparations for invasion on his own side of the Channel. Though not of the gigantic character which they assumed in a later period of the contest, after the renewal of the war, these efforts were of a kind to excite the serious attention of the English government. From the mouth of the Schelde to that of the Garonne, every creek and headland was fortified, so as to afford protection to the small craft which were creeping along the shore from all the ports of the kingdom, to the general rendezvous at Dunkirk and Boulogne. The latter harbour was the general point of assemblage; gunboats and flat-bottomed prams were collected in great quantities, furnaces erected for heating shot, immense batteries constructed, and every preparation made, not only for a vigorous defence, but for the most energetic offensive operations.

The fleets of Great Britain in the narrow seas were, indeed, so powerful that no attempt at invasion by open force could be made with any chance of success; but it was impossible to conceal the alarming fact that the same wind which wafted the French flotilla out of its harbours might chain the English cruisers to theirs; and the recent expeditions of Ganteaume in the Mediterranean, and of Hoche to the coast of Ireland, had demonstrated that, notwithstanding the greatest maritime superiority, it was impossible at all times to prevent a vigilant and active enemy from putting to sea during the darkness of the autumnal or winter months. It could not be denied that, even although ultimate defeat might attend a descent, incalculable confusion and distress would necessarily follow it, in the first instance. Influenced by these views, the British government prepared a powerful armament of bombs and light vessels in the Downs, and intrusted the command to Lord Nelson, whose daring and successful exploits at the Nile and Copenhagen pointed him out as peculiarly fitted for an enterprise of this description.<sup>b</sup> Under the orders of the admiralty, Nelson prepared to bombard the harbour of Boulogne.

Admiral La Touche-Tréville was informed of this project. He came out of port, where his crowded ships would have run great risks, and formed outside the moles so as to bear broadside on to the piers a long line of ships composed of six brigs, two schooners, twenty armed sloops, and a huge number of flat-bottomed boats. On the 4th of August, Nelson came himself at day-break to anchor his bombketches before the French line. He hoped that, to avoid this attack, the flotilla would take refuge in the harbour of Boulogne, and he promised himself to direct his shells the next night on the mass of shipping thus enclosed within narrow limits. Towards nine in the morning the bombardment began. He could not shake the defensive line, and did nothing, except smash a brig and a flat-bottomed boat. Not a man on board the flotilla was harmed, and the French batteries from land and sea answered the English bombardment by a lively fire. The bursting of a shell wounded an artillery captain and two sailors. This first attempt, then, was an utter failure. But Nelson prepared another, more serious, and of which he hardly doubted the success.

On the 15th of August he anchored at about six thousand yards from the French fleet, still broadside on before the Boulogne harbour. He had with him sloops and pinnaces of every size, by the aid of which he hoped to carry off or burn the French men-of-war. He divided his fleet of fifty-seven



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into four divisions. In each division two ships' boats were particularly charged to cut the cable and chains of the vessels attacked. These boats, armed with a cord ending in a hook to be thrown on the enemy's vessel, were not to make any attack but simply to try to drag the vessel out. Other vessels undertook to attack and dispose of ships drawn out of line. Each vessel had a well-ground axe, a fuse, and some inflammable composition, so that the ship could either be carried off or burned. The sailors were armed with pikes, swords, and hatchets; the marines had guns and bayonets. At half-past ten that night the ships were fully manned, and at eleven o'clock, when the frigate *Medusa*, commanded by Nelson, showed six lights on her battery, they pushed out into deep water and formed a line in a prearranged order behind the *Medusa*. At a given signal, they set out together from this rallying-point, directing their course by different routes towards the Boulogne sands. The password was "Nelson," the rallying-word "Bronté." The first division, that commanded by Captain Somerville and charged to attack the right wing of the flotilla, found itself on nearing land carried away by the tide in the east of the bay of Boulogne. Captains Parker and Cotgrave did not meet the same obstacle. Parker at the head of a part of his division, boarded the brig *Etna*, which carried the ensign of Captain Pevrieux, but the defences of this brig resisted the English attack. Two hundred infantry, in addition to the sailors, received the English with a well-directed musketry fire, forcing them back to their ships with bayonet thrusts. Parker was seriously wounded in the hip, and would have been taken but for the devotion of one of his midshipmen. Other ships from his division had tried to haul away the brig *Volcan* and were equally unsuccessful. The attack directed by Captain Cotgrave had no better success, and the first two divisions were in full retreat when Captain Somerville reached the port. This brave officer was nothing daunted by the failure of his companions. He threw himself on the right wing and began to imagine he had mastered one of the brigs, when a lively fusillade from the surrounding ships obliged him to retire hastily. He gained the open sea after considerable loss. The fourth division, intended for an attack on the left wing, had met, like that of Somerville, with a contrary tide, and could not get far enough eastwards. It only arrived on the scene of action in time to pick up the wounded and join in the flight of the others. This close combat turned entirely to the advantage of the French. It cost the English 170 men, and produced a profound impression on the opposite shores of the Channel. It was the second repulse Nelson had had. At Boulogne, as at Teneriffe, he had met with unforeseen difficulties and had relied too much on chance and the possible negligence of his enemies.<sup>9</sup>

## THE PEACE OF AMIENS

Peace could no longer be deferred. Bonaparte was all-powerful on the continent. Holland was quite subjugated. Germany was almost at Napoleon's feet while he was weighing the important question of the secularisations. Prussia and Austria descended to the rôle of beggars, and showed a shameful avidity in the division of church goods. Italy was devoted to him. The pope, ruined, deposed, had no hope but in his clemency. Spain, where in this interval several disturbances had taken place, owing to the frivolity and inconstancy of the Prince of the Peace, fell in with Bonaparte's politics [as is shown fully in the history of Spain], partly because of the false position in which she found herself and partly

from her inability to make the least resistance. Russia was well disposed towards the first consul, who had found the emperor's weak spot — the desire of playing a prominent part — and offered to let him figure as mediator in the distribution of indemnities.

Against such an influence what could England do? So the preliminaries were speedily followed by a satisfactory solution. The document was signed in London on the 10th of October, 1801, and peace was definitely concluded at Amiens, from which town the document received its name, on the 27th of March, 1802.

France consented perforce to evacuate Egypt, for her troops had been taken back by English vessels after the capitulation of Menou, which had taken place in the interval. England restored all her maritime conquests, save Ceylon, taken from the Dutch, and Trinidad, from the Spanish. Imprudence and bad faith on the part of the Prince of the Peace caused this loss to Spain. Great Britain, moreover, respected the integrity of Portugal and the independence of the Ionian Islands. But nothing could make her yield Malta to France, because she regarded that as the key to Egypt. It was finally agreed that it should belong to neither one nor the other, but that pending its restitution to the knights of St. John of Jerusalem (which order was being reorganised) it should be garrisoned by a neutral power who would guarantee its independence. The Peace of Amiens might be called a general peace, for after it all the world rested awhile from the fatigue of a ten years' war.*f*





## CHAPTER XVIII

### NAPOLEON MAKES HIMSELF EMPEROR

[1801-1804 A.D.]

Bonaparte, whose name might have taken many years to reach the isolated and illiterate peasantry in many parts of the country, was now brought home to them every day, for he was prayed for at morning and evening service. The few among the more educated classes who had not abjured their faith, not only saw in him the hero of the military glories of the nation, but the protector of the national religion. Far-seeing politicians perceived in this act of the free-thinking first consul, who had taken such a deep interest in the doctrines of Mohammed when he was in Egypt, a step in the direction of higher power.

— WHITE.<sup>b</sup>

THE war of the Revolution in reality was finished and the new wars of which public opinion did not perceive the imminence, necessarily had another character and another aim. Republican France had achieved the highest degree of power that could have been dreamed of by the statesmen of the by-gone monarchy in their wildest aspirations. It surpassed all that had been wished for her by those grand defenders of the Revolution, Danton, Carnot, Merlin de Thionville, who would have preferred an earlier peace. Having attained the limits of ancient Gaul, land of her forefathers, France needed only to fortify herself in her new position by attaching to herself, by kindred ideas, sentiment, and interest, Savoy, Belgium, and the left border of the Rhine, as she had already attached Alsace and Lorraine. They should have surrendered, for her natural and spontaneous development, the little adjacent nations which she ruled at that moment, Holland, Switzerland, the states of northern Italy, while still continuing to protect them against any hostile power. She ought indeed to have assumed once more a pacific attitude towards the great powers, no matter what might be her form of government.



This programme, precise and limited in its magnitude, conceived in view of the permanent interests and historical development of France — could it be adopted and followed by the man to whom France had confided her fate, and who laboured not so much for the destiny of France as for what he believed to be his own individual destiny? The vulgar herd might believe it, but not those men of penetration who had learned to understand him. A Prussian agent, who had observed with shrewdness the march of events in France, wrote to his court: "The one thing in which you must not deceive yourselves is that the last step necessary for Bonaparte to arrive at the throne cannot be made except as the result of new victories. Therefore, please consider the so-called Peace of Amiens in reality a preparation for war." We have followed without interruption the course of events, military and diplomatic, up to the re-establishment of general peace which roused such hopes and such illusions. We must now turn back a little in order to see the development of the new conditions in France, and the policy of the consular régime in the interior.

#### A REVIEW OF NAPOLEON'S ADMINISTRATION

Napoleon strove with his usual decision and activity to popularise the bustle and stir of work and production which had been brought back under the Directory. He began by the mending of roads so greatly neglected during the grave crises of France. He ordered the completion of the canals, begun towards the end of the former government; next he ordered the cutting of the great canal which traverses all Brittany from Nantes to Brest. He had made, across Valois, which was occupied by French troops, the famous road of the Simplon which descends by Lago Maggiore to Milan. He caused three other routes to be cut from France into Italy. The object of these works was, above all, to facilitate the descent of the French armies into Italy; later, commerce and international relations might find profit in them also.

There was nothing gained by constructing or repairing roads unless their security was guaranteed. The roads during the latter period of the war against Austria were more than ever infested by highwaymen. The *chauffeurs* left in the minds of the people a most doleful memory. The brigands were thus designated, because they burned the feet of those whom they attacked in their homes at night, in order to force them to divulge the hiding-places of their money. These brigands recruited from the "companions of Jesus" in the Midi, like the Chouans in the west, laid waste the half of France. Several hundred of the brigands were shot. The rest dispersed, traffic was resumed.

At the same time Bonaparte made all sorts of advances to the émigrés and priests. A new consular decree of the 20th of October, 1800, suppressed finally from the list of émigrés all persons whose names had been struck off before, no matter by what authority during later times, and all women and children, as well as those priests who had quitted the country in obedience to laws of banishment. The enormous list of émigrés, comprising in the neighbourhood of 145,000 names, was reduced to men who had carried arms against France, who had received rank or honours in foreign countries, or who were in the employ of exiled princes. The recalled émigrés had to promise fidelity to the constitution and to remain under the surveillance of the *haute* police for a year. This was to protect the purchasers of public lands whom the returned émigrés began to harass and menace in every way.

[1800-1801 A.D.]

There was no fault to be found with the order itself. The first consul had the right to present it like a measure of justice and humanity; but what was justly disquieting was the fond welcome it gave and the preference it showed towards men of the Old Régime, courtiers or refractory priests. He caused significant phrases to circulate regarding it. "It is only men of this class," said he, in speaking of men of the former court, "who know how to serve." Another day he cried out in open state council: "With my prefects, my gendarmes, and my priests I can do whatever I like!" It was known that he had begun negotiations in view of an arrangement with the pope. He gradually substituted in his official manifestos for the words "country" and "liberty" those of "fidelity" and "glory" and "honour." The tendencies manifested by Bonaparte towards the monarchy deceived the royalists. They dreamed that they would be brought back to work for others rather than for him, and to play in France the rôle of that General Monk, who in England, after the death of Cromwell, had re-established the monarchy of the Stuarts.

The pretender, "Louis XVIII," who was at that time living in retirement in Russia, and who was nevertheless a reflective spirit and coldly sceptical, made the mistake of writing to the first consul two letters, inviting him "to give back her king to France, and to make his conditions as to the places he desired for himself and his friends." Bonaparte answered him with dignity and returned him offer for offer. "You ought not," he wrote, "to wish to return to France. You would have to walk over five hundred thousand corpses. Sacrifice your interests to the repose of France. History will give you the credit. I am not insensible to the misfortunes of your family; I should contribute with pleasure to the agreeableness and tranquillity of your retreat." (September 7th, 1800.) Bonaparte continued seeking to gain the royalists and watching the Jacobins with defiance and aversion.

The disastrous episode of the infernal machine, which had fully manifested the arbitrary character of the consulate, had taken place during the second legislative session of the constitution of the year VIII. At the opening of that session, the 1st Frimaire (December 10th), the government had protested its benevolent and impartial dispositions towards all. It was now seen what that meant. Two bills had been presented—one which diminished the importance and the number of justices of the peace, to the advantage of the police and the detriment of individual liberty; the other which instituted special courts, partly civil, partly military, which the government could substitute in place of the ordinary justice, wherever it might consider it necessary. The military commissions against the brigands had been justifiable, but it was not meant to change what might be called an accident of war into an institution. Benjamin Constant, Daunou, Chénier, the ex-Girondist Isnard, who had returned to his first principles of liberty, after having strongly fought against the reaction, and Ginguené, one of the most distinguished writers of the time, all fought against the two laws most energetically. They passed at the tribunate by only a small majority.

Bonaparte was furious when the discussion held at the tribunate was reported to him; and he burst out into insults to those "metaphysicians," those "philosophers" who were only fit to throw into the sea. He considered all criticism an outrage. Opposition was encountered in financial affairs also. He had made arrangements to evade all control on this subject. Instead of presenting a budget comprising the receipts and expenses, "he proposed," says Lanfrey, "to prorogue for the year X the contributions of the year IX,

and presented a budget in which the receipts alone figured. Thanks to this system the costs of this session were not submitted for the examination of the legislative body until the following session, in order that, all the funds having been consumed, criticism should become useless." His aim was not to hide such disorders, since he had on the contrary re-established order in the finances, but he intended as always to be the absolute master. After lively debates the financial law was rejected by the tribunate but adopted by the legislative body.

Until now the deficit in the budget had been made up by withdrawal from the national funds; in order to retain what yet remained this resource was replaced by giving bonds to certain creditors of the state. This issue of bonds had exceeded fifty millions since the Peace of Lunéville. The floating debt which still remained, since a third only of the public debt had been funded, was finally regulated under conditions more or less arbitrary as liquidations of this sort always are. The national debt of France therefore was estimated at fifty-seven millions in *rentes perpétuelles* and sixty-nine millions in annuities and pensions, which would be reduced by annual liquidation. The total budget amounted to approximately six hundred millions. These figures would at the present time represent more than double these sums. The revenue of England was from one billion to eleven hundred millions, but burdened with nearly five hundred millions of annual debt, while France always had one resource which England had not—the power of re-establishing the indirect taxes, abolished since 1789. Only the tolls had been re-established. The financial situation of France was therefore satisfactory.

The first consul established, for the reduction of the debt, a sinking fund, bonded on the national property. From the national properties still remaining, valued at four hundred millions, an endowment was assigned for the benefit of public instruction and the "Invalides." It was a wise measure, but it remains to be seen how public instruction was understood. It is very evident that Bonaparte did not act in this as the national convention had expected him to in its creations of the year III. He was at that moment absorbed in destroying the crowning work of that glorious year: the separation of church and state. He had abolished the elective institutions in the state, in the province, in the community, and in the judiciary as well as in the political and administrative orders. He now applied himself vigorously to the study of the consequences of the Revolution on matters of religion. The result was, as we have seen, the concordat of 1802.

#### THE CIVIL CODE

Pending the negotiations of the concordat, the first consul had had another bill prepared, one of the greatest importance, and which was as necessary as the concordat was useless and dangerous: this was the "civil code." A commission composed of the jurists Portalis, Tronchet, Bigot de Préameneu, and Maleville, having been formed in July, 1800, to prepare the bill, it was then conveyed to the tribunals in order to get their opinions, and afterwards presented to the state council. This work was almost achieved in 1793 by the convention. If this body had not put the finishing touch to it and had not promulgated it, it was because the form in which it was put by the jurists charged with its composition and editing was not sufficiently philosophical. It was not under the government of Bonaparte that one could hope to see the fulfilment of the intentions of the convention in that regard.



[1800-1801 A.D.]

The code in regard to general ideas could not but lose by being altered under the direction of the first consul. Civil laws are not like political laws. The men who gave to the code its definite form were too much imbued with the modern spirit to return to the traditions prior to '89 and Bonaparte himself had no such idea. What he wished, above all, was that the codification of the new civil institutions of France should appear as his own personal work and that the immense labours of the revolutionary assembly might be cast into the shade. The same men who had prepared the composition of the code under the constituent assembly, like Tronchet, or had it executed under the convention, like Cambacérès, Treilhard, Merlin de Douai, Berlier, Thibaudau, altered it under the consulate and gave the credit of it to the first consul.

Bonaparte moreover posed with great artfulness before France and all Europe in order to be considered a great legislator. To sustain successfully the rôle he was playing required all those extraordinary faculties with which he was endowed. He assimilated with an incredible facility, by hasty interviews with specialists, elements of knowledge most foreign to him, and discoursed with much force, brilliancy, and originality upon subjects of which he had not known a word the day before. It is thus he debated on ecclesiastical themes with theologians and the canonists of the pope, and now he debated before the state council on judiciary matters. He had an amazing talent for condensing long discussions and cutting them short with a single word for or against.

This was not always to the advantage of the soundest ideas and it was rarely to the advancement of progressive ideas that he employed these marvellous faculties. Thus, although affecting constantly the desire to reconstruct the society overthrown by the Revolution, the desire to strengthen the ties of families, and above all to facilitate the formation of associations, in reality he wanted only isolated individuals: they are easier to govern. As to divorce, which the Revolution had made so easy as to be almost a menace to public morals, the civil code imposed serious restrictions and returned again to the true principles according to which divorce should be only the exception — a necessary evil, to prevent still greater evils; but this reform demanded by the interests of society was in a manner forced upon Bonaparte by the jurists by whom he was surrounded. He surpassed on this point the revolutionary exaggeration, and would have wished that the divorce might be decreed on the demand of only one of the spouses, on the plea of "facts not proven." This would have meant illimitable freedom of divorce. It required much persuasion to induce him to renounce this idea. This was because he was laying plans for himself, having abandoned all hope of having children by Josephine and hoping thus to provide himself with an heir.

He wished at the same time to relax family ties and subjugate women. Women were for him entirely inferior beings, and he professed in regard to them views which seemed to be at times the outlived ideas of the most retrograde peoples, of those Mussulmans whom he preferred to Christians; views which indicated the absence of moral principle which characterised him and the greater part of his family. He resembled the cæsars in this respect as well as in his political ideas. His enormous labours were always incompatible with his unmethodical habits and above all he disliked scandal and affected to react by the imposing etiquette of his family against the brazen license of the time of Barras.

The imperfections of the code, be they in regard to the rights of women and the inconceivable preference to the most distant collateral relatives of the sur-

living heirs to an estate, be they in regard to other important matters, such as the unjust inequality between employers and employes in their industrial relations (civil code and penal code), are principally if not exclusively imputable to Bonaparte. The enormous blank which the code presents relative to associations of all kinds may perhaps not entirely be attributed to Bonaparte, but also to the fact that the prodigious development of industrial and commercial relations could not be foreseen. The most eminent members of the state council were learned jurists but not economists. In regard to this point they too often looked back to the Roman law and did not see whither modern progress was tending. For the same reason they occupied themselves almost exclusively with landed property and had not the slightest premonition of the immense future of personal property.

In spite of these shortcomings and defects, the civil code of France is, taken on the whole, none the less the realisation of the views of the eighteenth century and the principles of '89. New France will revise and correct, but will never replace it. As the combined work of 1791, of 1793 and 1801, it is a monument to the French Revolution which the reaction from the 18th Brumaire was obliged to build and consecrate. Much superior to the confused mass of traditions and conditions and contradictory customs which formed the legislation of other European nations, it was adopted with a reasonable and steadfast fidelity by the peoples then reunited to France and since separated from her; and it has become a model which other nations have striven to copy. The next presentation of the concordat of the civil code to the body of state which was to discuss and vote upon them gave great importance to the legislative session of the year X. It opened on the 1st Frimaire (November 22nd, 1801).

#### GROWING AUTOCRACY OF NAPOLEON

The discontent caused by the concordat spoiled the satisfaction produced by the state of general peace. The treaties of peace and then the first three sections of the civil code were presented to the legislative body. Bonaparte, in view of the spirit which was being manifested, adjourned the presentation of the concordat. One article in the treaty with Russia caused the liveliest discussions in the tribunate. It was said in that article that the two contracting parties (France and Russia) promised mutually not to allow any one of their subjects to foment trouble on the territory of the other party. The word "subjects" roused indignation: "Our armies," cried Chénier, "have fought for ten years, that we might become 'citizens'; and we have become 'subjects.' Thus the vow of double alliance is kept." There were at this time three senatorial vacancies to fill; the tribunate, the legislative body, and the first consul, according to the constitution, could each present a candidate, and the senate could choose. The candidate of the legislative body for the first place was Grégoire. The senate by a large majority elected Grégoire, preferring him to the candidate of the first consul. Bonaparte was hurt by that rebuff, but soon received a more serious one.

Daunou was proposed simultaneously by the tribunate and the legislative body for the second place vacant in the senate. It was an act of opposition much more marked than the choice of Grégoire. Daunou, who could not console himself for having taken part in the 18th Brumaire, had broken with Bonaparte on the occasion of the law which established the tribunals of exceptional (special) law and had declared that he would take no part in legislative work while this tyranny continued.

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Bonaparte was exasperated. The following day he had a violent scene with the senators who presented themselves for an audience. He intimated to them that he should consider it a personal insult if the senate nominated Daunou and that he never forgot an injury. The senate weakened deplorably and shamefully. It feigned to have no knowledge of the nomination of Daunou by the legislative body, and to have received no notification except of the nomination of General Lamartillière — Napoleon's candidate.

Bonaparte had thought for a moment of a *coup d'état*, a new 18th Brumaire against his own constitution. Cambacérés dissuaded him from this, and suggested that he evade the constitution in lieu of breaking it. The pusillanimity of the senate had made the thing easy. Tronchet, who was at this time president of the senate, fearing the violent actions of which he foresaw Bonaparte would be capable was persuaded to second Cambacérés. The constitution had said that the tribunate and the legislative body should be renewed by a fifth from the year X. It was quite natural that this renewal should be made by drawing lots; but the constitution did not say so expressly. It was decided there should be no drawing of lots and that the senate should designate the retiring members, that is to say, that it excluded those displeasing to the first consul.

The senate consented to this strange interpretation of the constitution. It eliminated sixty members of the legislative body and twenty of the tribunate: Daunou, Benjamin Constant, Chénier, Ganilh the economist, the eminent writer Ginguené, the ex-Girondin Isnard, and with these other former conventionists or former patriotic priests opposed to the concordat; in a word, all those who elected Bonaparte (end of January, 1802). Among those replacing the excluded members, who were mainly military men or functionaries, was one republican, Carnot, who long ago had resigned from the ministry of war. Bonaparte expected henceforth not to hear another dissenting voice. April 5th, 1802, he had the concordat presented to the tribunate and the legislative body.

An historian favourable to Napoleon, Bignon<sup>e</sup> says very truly that the first consul intended to make of a clergy a sort of "sacred police." Bonaparte had completed the concordat, under the title of *articles organiques*, by a regulation which had been thoroughly studied and worked out by the state council and which was the application and development of the article by which the pope granted to the new government of France all the rights which it had had under the Old Régime. These *articles organiques* were invented to serve a double purpose: first, to protect the state against all interference by the court of Rome in home affairs; second, to make the bishops subject to the government, and the ordinary priests to the bishops. The bishops were not allowed to call themselves by any title except "Citizen" or "Monsieur."

The curés had to be chosen by the bishops of the diocese, but with the sanction of the first consul, and the bishop could not revoke the nominations arbitrarily; but there should be only one curé in a "canton," and as for vicars and officiating priests, their nomination was, and is still, entirely at the discretion of the bishop. The protection given formerly to the lower clergy by the ecclesiastical disciplinary board had been taken away. The lower clergy found and still find themselves in a worse position than before '89. The *articles organiques* are for them a law of servitude.

The concordat was followed by the recall of the émigrés. The resolution was presented to, and voted upon by the senate, the 6th Floréal (April 26th).



The irrevocability of the sale of national properties was again demonstrated. The amnesty accorded to the émigrés excluded the heads of army corps and some others whose cases were particularly grave. Such of the properties of the émigrés as had not been sold were restored to them, excepting woodlands. Bonaparte intended to gradually give back the forests in order to propitiate the aristocracy. The bill concerning taxes showed at this time neither the state of the receipts nor that of the expenses. The vote on duties was henceforth nothing more than a mere formality. Bonaparte regulated the budgets as he wished without any control.

#### THE LEGION OF HONOUR AND EDUCATIONAL PLANS

Two important bills were presented to the tribune and the legislative body—the Legion of Honour, and public instruction. The convention decreed that weapons of honour should be given to the defenders of the country for distinguished action. The first consul had arranged and regulated their distribution. This did not suffice for him. He wanted a vast system of rewards, calculated to excite the vanity, to remunerate the services, and place in the ruling hand a new and most powerful means of influence over civil as well as military society. He conceived therefore the creation of a Legion of Honour embracing every species of service and claims to public distinction.

He sought at the same time a counterweight to that which he made for the clergy and the émigrés. He exacted from the *légionnaires* an oath to defend the republic and its territory, equality, and the inviolability of the national property. This bill to reconstitute a great order of chivalry was fought, meanwhile even in the state council, as hindering that equality which the légionnaires were expected to defend, and as the re-establishment of an aristocracy.

In the tribunate the bill passed with only 56 votes against 38; in the legislative body with 166 against 110, this after the weeding out by which it had been calculated to annihilate all opposition. This proves how strong the Revolution still was, even in those departments of state so yielding and enervated. The institution of the Legion of Honour was specious, and although it encountered a strong opposition at its origin it has entered into the life of a people which, in spite of its passion for equality, loves distinctions, providing they are not hereditary. It will no doubt be considerably reformed and modified; it would be difficult to abolish it.

As to the bill on public instruction, it was deplorable. It did absolutely nothing for primary instruction. The state did not interfere. The community was to furnish the premises, wherever the students could pay the instructor. It was the complete abandonment of the plan of the great French assemblies. Concerning instruction in the second grade, the most enlightened of the counsellors of state wished that the “central schools” founded by the convention might be retained after improving them. About a third were successful. The rest weakened. It was necessary to encourage and reorganise them.

But Bonaparte would not allow this. He intended to substitute barracks where the young men should be brought up for this service. He upset the whole great plan of studies which the convention had adopted, started only thirty-two lyceums in place of the one hundred central schools, made them return to the routine of the old system of ecclesiastical colleges and begin the study of Latin and Greek at an age when the child is nearly always incapable of taking an interest in these beautiful learned languages, and

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understands nothing of grammatical and literary instruction. He suppressed the study of the living languages, so necessary to make France acquainted with the peoples with which she is in constant intercourse. He weakened instruction in diminishing the part assigned to the sciences, and curtailed it in doing away with the moral sciences, that is to say, history and philosophy, incompatible with despotism.

He completed his system of secondary instruction by the establishment of six thousand scholarships which would be a means of influence like the Legion of Honour. The scholarships were not to be gained by the competition of the students but distributed by the government, partly to the children of persons who had rendered military or civil service, partly to the students of the special boarding schools, which could not exist without the authorisation of the government, and sent their pupils to take the courses in the lyceums. As to the education of girls, that was entirely another question. This was perhaps the worst of all the institutions of the consulate. The only useful thing which was then done for instruction was the creation of six law schools, a necessary consequence of the codification which was to be made, and the increase of the schools of medicine from three to six. In addition to the Polytechnic School founded by the convention, the first consul established a military academy, formerly at Fontainebleau (late at St. Cyr).

While working thus to develop the study of the sciences of war, Bonaparte continued the campaign he had undertaken against philosophy, and completed the suppression of instruction in history and philosophy in the academies by abolishing the moral and political sciences in the Institute. That class in the Institute was not restored again until after the Revolution of 1830.<sup>k</sup>

#### NAPOLEON MADE CONSUL FOR LIFE

The ambitious and intriguing who surrounded Bonaparte asked for nothing better than a continuance in his hands of a power from which they derived the places and honours with which they were loaded. Some even wished for the re-establishment of hereditary monarchy in favour of Bonaparte. That was in reality the first consul's inward prayer. But sharp, cunning, and dissembling as he was, he disclosed this earnest desire to no one, wishing to be understood at half a word. Cambacérès was deceived in this. He thought this insatiable ambition would be satisfied with the consulate for life. It was, moreover, in his opinion quite sufficient remuneration for the services rendered to the country by the first consul. Consequently he used all his influence in the senate for the carrying out of his plan.

Already for some months devoted emissaries frequented the public places declaring that the time had come for the country to give some token of recognition to the author of all the blessings it enjoyed. An occasion must now be found to extract from the state bodies that brilliant token. The obvious opportunity was the presentation to the legislative body and the tribunate of the Treaty of Amiens, due for the most part to the victories and policy of Bonaparte, a presentation which had been purposely delayed. After the reading to the tribunate of the articles of this treaty on the 6th of May, Chabot, an old member of the convention, and president of the assembly, proposed to announce the offering made to the first consul in token of national gratitude. This having been voted, a deputation from the tribunate proceeded to the Tuileries to apprise General Bonaparte of it. With affected

modesty he replied to the tribune Siméon, the mouthpiece of the deputation, that he aspired to no reward other than the love of the citizens, and that death would have no terrors for him if he could with his last glances see the welfare of the republic assured.

The senate had been immediately taken with the tribunate's offering. Some of the senators who approached the consul endeavoured to get an expression of his secret wishes; but dissembling continually, he said that whatever was done would be well done and gratefully received.

The majority in the senate, under the impression that Cambacérès in proposing a consulate for life was asking the greater to obtain the less, thought that ample satisfaction would be given to the tribunate in issuing on the 18th Floréal (May 8th) a *senatus consultum* by which Citizen Napoleon Bonaparte was re-elected consul for ten years, which would commence concurrently with the expiration of his first term of office.

The disillusionment of the first consul was profound. In the first moment of irritation he was for brutally refusing the senate's offer. But wise Cambacérès was there and prevailed on him to be calm. He suggested a shift by which to escape from the delicate situation which the senatorial deliberations had created. That shift was the resort to a plebiscite. Bonaparte after all wrote to the senate his thanks for this exceptional proof of its esteem. He added that, from private motives, the term of his political existence seemed to be decided at the moment when the peace of the world was proclaimed. "But," he said in conclusion, "the glory and welfare of the citizen must be unmentioned when the state interest and the protection of the people are concerned. In your estimation, I owe the people another sacrifice; I will make it if the people's wish commands what your vote authorises." Tartuffe's art never went beyond this. Then a comedy was begun, worthy of the pen of Beaumarchais. The council of state was ordered to work without delay upon some scheme for obtaining a plebiscite, and from the 21st Floréal the *Moniteur Officiel* published a consular decree by which the people of France were called upon to answer the question, "Shall Napoleon Bonaparte be consul for life?" At the same time there appeared a pamphlet, an appropriate addition to that of M. de Fontanes, in which the anonymous author claimed on behalf of Bonaparte the time necessary to assure the welfare of France, that is to say, the century which began with him. The consular decree encountered no opposition. The senate was dumb in spite of the ignominious part it was compelled under the circumstances to play. The legislative body and the tribunate hastened to convey their adherence to the Tuileries.

Registries were immediately opened in all the town halls to take the affirmative or negative votes of the citizens. At the same time as he was engaged in a scrutiny of the plebiscite, the first consul occupied himself with a modification of the constitution, so that it should more nearly approach the monarchical system, since, though lacking heredity, he was about to become a literal sovereign. A few made it their business to suggest the English constitution as a model. Camille Jordan published a brochure on this subject which attracted a great deal of attention. Possibly a recent visit from James Fox, to whom the first consul had given the best reception possible, and the presence in Paris of M. de Calonne, who had been equally well received at the Tuileries, inclined Bonaparte towards a constitutional form of government. It was difficult to recognise the man of Brumaire. The hard lesson of adversity was necessary to teach him that it does not do for one head to transact alone all the business of the nation.



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The modifications introduced into the consular constitution above all things augmented the already great personal influence of the chief of the state. Thus the legislative body and the tribunate, whose last votes on the Legion of Honour had already laid them open to suspicion, saw themselves robbed of the right of making treaties. This prerogative was attributed to the privy council which, to the detriment even of the council of state, found itself intrusted in the same way with the wording of the *senatus consultum* organs. The privy council and the first consul were one and the same thing. The legislative authority of the tribunate was considerably diminished by the reduction of its members to fifty through repeated abolitions of seats. The council of state retaliated by increasing its strength by one-third. But the body which gained most in these constitutional modifications was the senate. Its present constitutional powers were largely increased. In addition it had the exorbitant right of suspending the empanelling and administration by jury in certain departments, of dissolving the legislative body and the tribunate, and of quashing judgments thought subversive to the safety of the state. Obviously in the first consul's opinion the state could only, under these diverse circumstances, be looked upon as an accommodating instrument to his personal wishes. Moreover, to be more sure of the members of this body Bonaparte assigned to himself the right to nominate specifically forty senators, and this, combined with the creation of fourteen new seats, brought the number of its members up to one hundred and twenty.

On the 13th Thermidor (August 3rd) the members of the senate, discredited in advance, betook themselves to the Tuileries, under the leadership of the old director Barthélemy, who acted as their president. There, in the presence of the representatives of all the foreign courts, President Barthélemy, in a harangue in which flattery was pushed to the furthest limit, enumerated Bonaparte's claims to the nation's gratitude, and predicted for him in the future an unlimited prosperity. He did not predict his reverses or disasters, matters upon which flatterers never inform themselves. After which discourse he read the *senatus consultum* by which Napoleon was proclaimed first consul for life. Bonaparte replied with that hypocritical selfishness familiar to him, and which is found elsewhere amongst all ambitious of power. "A citizen's life belongs to his country. The French people wish the whole of mine to be consecrated to them. I have bowed to their wishes."

Not a word about the republic. He promised only the prosperity and freedom of France. "God have mercy on us!" exclaims Ernest Hamel<sup>d</sup> they will henceforth be at the mercy of capricious fortune and the uncertainty of the future." On the next day the constitutional projects of the *senatus consultum* were agreed to in the council of state, after a discussion in which it pleased the first consul to take a lively part, and the same day it was approved by the senate. After the 17th Thermidor, this scheme was proclaimed in the accustomed way as an embodied law of the state.<sup>d</sup>

#### NAPOLEON AND THE SISTER REPUBLICS

The progress of Bonaparte's influence over neighbouring states was as great as his rise at home. The Cisalpine Republic had been remodelled to suit his views; and in January its legislature elected him president. The Batavian, the Ligurian republics, were obliged to submit to similar modifications. Piedmont was formally annexed to France, and divided into departments. Thus the stipulations of the Treaty of Lunéville, guaranteeing

independence to the republics of Italy and Holland, became totally void. England began to show alarm and distrust; for both of which there was ample reason, although scarcely more than existed at the epoch of the treaty. When she remonstrated, Bonaparte replied, "You must have seen or foreseen all this. The Cisalpine chose me its president in January, two months before the signature at Amiens. And why should ye English complain of the infraction of the Treaty of Lunéville, when Austria, with whom it was concluded, holds her peace?"

Miserable, indeed, is the special pleading on both sides to throw, each upon its adversary, the blame of the war. Both were right, and both were wrong. England, in her native might and pride, could never sit still and look on whilst France assumed to herself such predominant power in Europe. Nor could France, or its ruler, refrain from wielding that influence which conquest had given her. But France was wrong in affecting a moderation which she had no idea of observing; and England equally absurd to affect to give a moment's credit to it — above all, to stipulate actual concession to it. At Amiens, and before the treaty, the British ministry seemed to be either willing dupes or blind ones. Their object in peace, the same as that of Bonaparte, to display to Europe and their own people, each how ready they were to make peace, and thus to throw the blame of the inevitable and speedy rupture upon its foe. In this aim we do think the English negotiators played the less clever game. And the ministry, though rationally justified in their mistrusts, in their withholding Malta and the Cape, on the grounds that France had increased its territories and encroachments in Europe, were still left without any precise plea, and were obliged to support their cause with vague recrimination. The French kept the letter of the treaty; the English broke it. And yet the former were the true aggressors and encroachers. Such were the blunders of British diplomacy.

No sooner did Bonaparte announce his determination of interfering with the Helvetian republics, than the English ministry sent an agent thither with promises of support to the independent party, hesitated to surrender Malta, and sent counter orders that the Cape of Good Hope was not to be delivered up to the Batavian Republic. In the meantime other than these great interests of territory sowed divisions betwixt the first consul and Great Britain.

At all times sensitive to public opinion, so sensitive that even an imprudent reflection was enough to alienate him from a tried friend, a witicism sufficient to bring down an order of exile, he was particularly susceptible at the present moment, when employed in rearing the fabric of his power, to which his character was his only title. The freedom of the English press, its unsparing attacks upon him, re-echoed by the papers of the French royalists in England, was a kind of war more dangerous and galling to him than any other. Before it, indeed, no tyrant can stand. Bonaparte felt as much alarm from it as did England originally from the levelling principles of the Revolution. He made vain demands that this should be checked, and was modest enough to propose that the press of England should be gagged, as well as that of France, in order to give security to his personal ambition. Nevertheless, on this point the ministry gratified him, as far as might be done in a constitutional way, sending one of these libels before a jury. As might be expected, this made matters ten times worse, sending Pelletier's libel to fame through the trump of Mackintosh's eloquence. Another demand, that the Bourbons and their partisans should be expelled from England, met with a firm and generous denial.

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With the English press Bonaparte condescended to enter into a personal quarrel : just as he himself had charged the cannon against Toulon, so now he employed his time in penning articles for the *Moniteur*, his official paper, full of acrimony and insult. The unfortunate results of a sovereign so demeaning himself are evident. Bonaparte could never distinguish the difference betwixt a nation's government and its press ; so that, in answering squibs fired off by an individual editor, the first consul charged the great gun of state, and risked, or at any rate precipitated, a war betwixt millions of men, in endeavouring to apply a salve upon his own miserable vanity. Then appeared the imprudent vaunting report of Sebastiani, who had been charged with a mission in the Levant ; its information, that six thousand French soldiers could reconquer Egypt ; and the challenge, that " England alone dare not make war with France."

#### BONAPARTE'S QUARREL WITH ENGLAND (1803 A.D.)

These paper paragraphs certainly could not be serious grounds of war ; although the English government, by its imbecile arrangement and acceptance of the Treaty of Amiens, was obliged to recur to such pretexts, to collect and group them — thus making up by a mass of petty grievances for the want of one large and specific plea. The first consul now demanded why Malta had not been evacuated according to stipulation. The English replied by a claim to keep Malta on the ground that Bonaparte had increased his European territory, and that he threatened Egypt. The last was idle : the first objection " was not in the bond." Bonaparte, whose very throne was then being erected on the basis of national glory, could not yield Malta. To demand it of him was, in fact, to declare war. And the minister asserted with only becoming spirit, " England shall have the Treaty of Amiens, and nothing more than the Treaty of Amiens." War was inevitable, as indeed it had been from the first. England could not submit, at the risk of her existence. In this, at least, her ministry and Pitt were right, however imbecile and blundering the former had proved in these negotiations, which placed the letter of treaties against Britain, whilst their spirit, as well as their sense of security and justice, told loudly in her favour.

On these terms of mutual mistrust both countries thought fit to make preparations for war. Bonaparte assembled troops in the forts of Holland and North France, and despatched envoys to Prussia and to Austria. England was no less active. Bonaparte was unwilling to recommence war, at least so soon, inevitable as he saw it. But England was peremptory. She was tricked and annoyed in a thousand ways. And a warlike message from the king to his parliament in March, 1803, was the preluding blast to war. Bonaparte answered by one of his diplomatic notes. He was now betwixt two unpleasant feelings. It was important for him to throw the blame of the breach upon England, in order to content his people and conciliate the yet existing powers of Europe ; and nevertheless his pride was galled to find England assume the lofty, intractable, defiant language, so indicative of superiority and strength. His quick resentment prompted him to break through the laws of courtly decorum, and to vent his spleen upon the representative of Great Britain.

During a public levee he abruptly addressed the British ambassador Lord Whitworth, " You are decided on war, it seems — you wish it. After fifteen years' combat, we must yet recommence for fifteen years to come. You force me to it." He then turned to the ambassadors of Spain and Russia : " The



English will have war. They are the first to draw the sword : I will be the last to put it in the scabbard. They do not respect treaties, and we must henceforth cover them with a black crape. You may destroy France, but you shall not intimidate her." "We do not wish to do either one or the other," replied Lord Whitworth calmly. "Respect treaties. Woe to those who break through them : they shall be responsible to Europe for the consequences." This burst of anger is said by some to have been calculated. Why might it not be natural and deep-felt? Previous to the Treaty of Amiens, Bonaparte had borne England a national hate ; since then it had grown into a personal one — an antipathy founded on all causes of enmity, great and little, on pride and pique, as well as upon interest and patriotism.

Lord Whitworth was now ordered by his government to demand the occupation of Malta during ten years by British troops, whilst the French were to evacuate Holland. This was called an ultimatum, and but a week's interval allowed for reply. Yet even here the French assumed not that peremptory tone. Talleyrand was averse to war ; that able statesman is said to have foreseen the pernicious consequences even of fresh victories. But the English minister, conscious that he resisted usurpation, and an indefinite system of encroachment, held firm, gave very wretched and shuffling reasons for a mistrust well founded in itself, and covered the blunders of his diplomacy with sullen pride and defiance. Orders had been already issued for seizing the ships of France and of her subject states — a measure much in the spirit of that usurpation which one might have censured without imitating ; and the French consul retaliated by retaining all the British subjects whom curiosity or business had brought at that unlucky moment to French shores. Thus recommenced betwixt the nations a quarrel unrivalled for the inveteracy of its spirit and the variety of its fortunes. "The rupture was to the first consul," says Bignon,<sup>c</sup> "the decisive point of his destiny. Henceforth he saw England rise before him like a cape of storms, which he was forever forbidden to pass."

The only military enterprise set on foot during the year's peace, if we except the occupation of Switzerland, was the expedition to Santo Domingo. The principles of the Revolution, passed into decrees by the national assemblies, had been productive of the most fearful mischief in Santo Domingo, where Robespierre's energetic wish, of "Let the colonies perish rather than one principle be disturbed," received ample fulfilment. Whites and mulattoes had commenced a civil war, and the negroes had also asserted their rights. The latter, being most numerous, gained the ascendancy, headed by a chief of inflexible character, and of such high talents, both for warring and ruling, as to merit the name of the black Bonaparte :

Toussaint Louverture, such was his name, had established his rule in Santo Domingo. It was as beneficent and vigorous as that of the first consul in Europe ; but the latter was determined to recover the island ; and a fine army, composed of the conquerors of Hohenlinden, were sent out to subdue it under General Leclerc, who had married Pauline, Bonaparte's sister. The expedition reached its destiny. The blacks, after burning their capital, and making a stubborn resistance, were subdued, and the chiefs compelled to submit. Most of them accepted command under the French, except Toussaint, who scorned the offer, and merely demanded to return to his farm. Here, however, he was closely watched ; and in the effervescence of a population ill subdued, suspicions, true or false, could not fail to attach to the old leader. Toussaint Louverture was seized, sent on board a ship, and conveyed to France, where he lingered many years at the château of Joux, in

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the Jura. This treachery, if it was such, proved bootless. The yellow fever decimated the French, and soon reduced this flourishing army to a few thousand men. Leclerc himself fell a victim; and the breaking out of the war decided the ultimate loss, to France, of this her most important colony. [A fuller account of these affairs will be found in a later volume under the history of Santo Domingo.]

The first steps of Bonaparte, on the renewal of the war with England, was to order his armies to march north and south; that of Holland to occupy Hanover; that of Lombardy to invade Naples and garrison Tarentum. He could combat his maritime foe only by establishing his power in seaports, and in rendering every shore hostile to her, who rendered every wave hostile to him. To plant himself, therefore, like a huge colossus bestriding Europe, one foot in the Mediterranean, the other in the Baltic, was the attitude of menace assumed by the first consul against England. Towards the latter end of May, 1803, General Mortier marched with an army from Holland against Hanover. The troops of the electorate were not capable of making a serious resistance. They retreated before the foe, at length capitulated, and were broken, Mortier taking peaceable possession of the country.

These conquests of the French necessarily excited disquiet and mistrust on the part of the great powers of the north. Russia, which had taken the Sicilian court under its protection, was offended by the reoccupation of the kingdom of Naples, and still more seriously displeased to see the French flag waving upon the fortresses of the Baltic. That power had sought in vain to cover Hanover by a neutrality which was to extend to the north of Germany. Her remonstrances were not listened to. Prussia, as may be well supposed, had cause to be still more alarmed by the presence of such a formidable neighbour. The French, not contented with Hanover, already menaced to occupy Hamburg and Bremen. The necessity of opposing England was still the pretext. But the possession of Hamburg, commanding the mouth of the Elbe, would enable the French to give law to the north of Germany. Not only was Prussia herself weakened by this, but her only title to respect and influence being founded upon her claims to protect the liberties and independence of surrounding states, she was here stricken painfully by a blow vainly aimed at England. Thus, by delivering up Hanover without a blow, the English ministry, if they acted on calculation, fulfilled all the ends of wise policy, avenged themselves on Prussia for its selfish and pusillanimous neutrality, and placed the courts of Berlin and St. Petersburg in the necessity of either humbling their sovereign dignity before Bonaparte, or of flinging themselves into the alliance of Great Britain.

To counteract this, the scheme of Bonaparte was, by menace or bribe, to compel Russia to join cordially with him in a kind of submissive alliance. "The germ," says Bignon,<sup>c</sup> French ambassador to Prussia, and well acquainted with the projects of his master — "the germ of what was subsequently called the continental system existed in the mind of the first consul, and this system reposed upon the support of Prussia. One of the objects of the usurpation of Hanover was to make that court feel the inconveniences of a state of indecision towards France, and the advantages of a close alliance with her. To render Prussia powerful, in order that, by its union with France, it might awe the continent to quiet, was the aim of Bonaparte. If it be asked why, towards the close of his reign, Napoleon showed himself merciless towards Prussia, the reason is that Prussia was the power which wished him most ill, in forcing him to combat and destroy her, instead of

extending and strengthening her monarchy, in order that she and France united might keep Austria and Russia immovable, and at the same time give that development and efficacy to the continental system, which would force England to peace."

Nothing can be more clear than this language of the French diplomatist: Prussia was to be fattened and enriched, provided she acted a part subservient to France. Hanover was the bribe offered to her, and there was considerable hesitation in refusing it. But the influence which decided the monarch of Prussia to reject the insidious and disgraceful proposals of Bonaparte was that of Alexander, emperor of Russia, a sovereign whose high personal feelings of pride and independence raised him already in the east of Europe as the competitor of the tyrant of the west. Alexander visited

Berlin: his opinion, his arguments, had weight, and overcame all the representations of Duroc and the other French envoys. The queen and court, at first drawn into admiration of French heroism, were recalled to feelings of national spirit by the voice and example of Alexander; and the king, instead of aiming at rounding his territory at the cost of England and the gift of France, was inspired with the nobler aim of securing the independence of Germany.

Singular, indeed, it was, that every act of Bonaparte now told in favour of England, or of its ministry, which, had he rested tranquil, could certainly not have continued a war without feasible object or possible success. The occupation of Hanover and the southern peninsula of Italy roused Europe. And now a French army collected along its northern coast, and destined to invade England, had the effect of awakening all the energies of that country, silencing the remonstrance of the partisans of the peace, and



GERARD CHRISTOPHE MICHEL DUROC  
(1772-1813)

rousing the proud spirit of the British to that pitch of hostility against the foe, that war, to the last shilling and the last drop of blood, became the sole and all-pervading thought of the country. A field of battle was denied to Bonaparte: but his activity was turned to military organisation; and he now formed the armies, and prepared the resources, destined to achieve conquests hereafter with such brilliant success. Alexandria was fortified at an enormous expense. The first consul looked upon it as the bulwark of Italy. From Otranto and Tarentum to the Texel every coast and seaport saw fortifications rise around it; and the English fleet, blocking each harbour and menacing every shore, might observe with pride the gigantic attempt of her foe to surround Europe, as it were, with a wall of defence against her. As to the colonies or foreign possessions of France, the remaining ones now



[1803 A.D.]

fell; and Louisiana, wrested from the weak hands of Spain by a surreptitious treaty, was now sold for a sum of money to the United States, to preserve the province from England, and as the only mode left of deriving advantage from it.

The army and flotilla collected for the invasion of England was the chief object and topic of the year 1803. The former was swelled by contingents of Dutch, Swiss, and Italians. Soult, Davout, and Ney had each commands. His more ancient and celebrated generals Bonaparte had dispersed: he disliked their familiarity, their old footing of equality with him, and dreaded their interference with his ambitious designs. Thus Moreau was destined to some inferior command; Lannes, after a scene of altercation, in which he had used the most gross language towards Bonaparte, was despatched to Lisbon to cool his zeal and mend his fortune, both of which the gallant and rough soldier fulfilled; Murat was sent to Naples, as Leclerc had been to Santo Domingo, for the same purpose. Spain, reluctant to incur the hostility of England by furnishing open aid to France, proposed a pecuniary subsidy in lieu. This Beurnonville negotiated.

PICHEGRU'S PLOT AND THE DEATH OF THE DUKE D'ENGHIEN (1803 A.D.)

Public attention, however, was now turned from military projects and events to domestic ones, by the discovery of a conspiracy against the first consul. His measures for strengthening and perpetuating his own power, soon convinced the partisans of the house of Bourbon that no hopes were to be entertained of his co-operation, and accordingly their views were elsewhere directed. The consulship for life had been voted. Several distinguished men had protested against the decree, unless accompanied with guarantees of freedom. La Fayette conveyed his protest in a letter; Camille Jordan published his in favour of the liberty of the press; Madame de Staël courageously opened her salon to this enlightened opposition, but a decree of exile banished her from Paris. Some of these friends of liberty then turned their views towards Louis XVIII and entered into a correspondence with him, wherein that prince promised, in case of restoration, to respect the principles of liberty, and to grant a charter similar to that later decreed in 1814. The leanings and opinions, however, of retired and speculative men, were not energetic enough to inspire or conduct a project of conspiracy.

The Bourbons reckoned in their cause more zealous and active partisans, men eager to strike a blow, to force and anticipate events, rather than to wait for their tardy or improbable development. General Pichegru was one of these: he had escaped from his place of transportation to England, where he lived in want of those succours that the French royalists were willing to extend to their partisans. Pichegru now entered into a plot for violently overthrowing the power of Bonaparte, with a knot of men fitting for such an enterprise. Georges Cadoudal, the stubborn Chouan, was another leader.

What the conspirators chiefly wanted was a name, a leader of eminence, to oppose to that of Bonaparte. Moreau was precisely the personage; a great general, a rival of Bonaparte. The very project of enlisting such a man contradicts the idea of assassination, which he certainly would not listen to, and which his countenance might render unnecessary. Moreau, though a valiant soldier, was a weak man:<sup>1</sup> he had allowed himself to be

[<sup>1</sup> That Moreau would gladly have seen and gladly have helped an insurrection against Bonaparte is certain." — SEELEY.<sup>2</sup>]

duped in Brumaire; and since his victory of Hohenlinden he had been treated with studied neglect by Bonaparte. The royalist agents, on the watch, took advantage of this disposition, and formed a reconciliation betwixt him and Pichegru; and he thus became at least cognisant of the intended plot. Fouché, who had lost his post as chief of the police, but who still maintained his agents, is said to have been instrumental in thus implicating Moreau, and in maturing a plot, of which he himself holding the clue might take advantage with Bonaparte in showing his superior information, his utility, and zeal.

Pichegru, at length, arrived from England in an English vessel in January, 1804; Georges Cadoudal had preceded by many months. They both saw Moreau, who was disgusted by the ferocity of the latter; and their scheme, whatever it was, seemed not to make any progress towards maturity. Numbers of their accomplices were already in prison; and it seemed as if Pichegru and Cadoudal were allowed to continue at large merely to afford them leisure to win over Moreau still more, and implicate him. But these conspirators, of such discordant opinions, could agree in no plan whatever: they met, separated, hindered the conspiracy, had always excuses for deferring their project, and despaired of fixing upon any. When they were severally arrested — Moreau first, then Pichegru, Cadoudal, and the Polignacs — Pichegru and Cadoudal were both armed, and the latter made resistance.



ANNE JEAN MARIE RENÉ SAVARY  
(1774-1833)

In the interval between their arrest and trial occurred the blackest deed that history imputes to Napoleon, of guilt inexcusable, and of truth undeniable, even by himself — the murder of the duke d'Enghien. This noble youth, a grandson of the prince of Condé, and heir of that illustrious house, extinct by his death, was of course an émigré, and attached to the fortunes of his house.

He inhabited a place called Ettenheim, in the duchy of Baden, only a couple of leagues distant from the French frontier, and was aware that a revolutionary movement in favour of royalism was planning in Paris. Bonaparte was at this time besieged not only by the emissaries of his minister of police, but also by those of Fouché. As there really was a plot hatching, the first consul paid more attention than he otherwise would to these reports, by which he was eternally harassed and irritated. Fouché represented the conspiracy to have assassination for its principle object. "The air is full of poniards," wrote he to Bonaparte. Then it appeared, from the depositions of some of the accused, that they "only waited for the arrival of a French prince to commence." The duke de Berri was expected at the time to land secretly near Dieppe.

Savary was sent to lie in wait for him: for Bonaparte, maddened by Fouché, felt the Corsican spirit of revenge stir within him, and was eager to spill the blood of the family which, he imagined, aimed at his life as well

[1804 A.D.]

as his power. That prince, however, came not. Bonaparte was disappointed; and in order to make up in every way for the disappointment, he resolved to seize on the duke d'Enghien, a Bourbon also, and expectant of the royalist insurrection. He was on neutral territory, to be sure; but Bonaparte had learned to slight international as well as moral law. He accordingly gave orders that a body of troops should surprise the castle of Ettenheim, and carry off the duke. This was put in execution on the 15th of March; and the illustrious prisoner was, without delay, hurried to the castle of Vincennes near Paris. He arrived at nine o'clock in the evening much wearied. He was nevertheless brought on that very night before a military commission, and accused of the crime of bearing arms against France.

Instead of denying the charge, the young prince avowed and gloried in it; and the commissioners, like a jury, returned a verdict of guilty, and even that reluctantly, but still with a belief that a punishment so atrociously severe in his case as death could not follow it. Besides, the duke made a request to see and speak with the first consul. Savary, however, who had orders to see judgment executed, and who had learned in Egypt implicit and oriental obedience to the word of a master, interfered. Under his direction the prisoner was made to descend about daybreak into the fosse of the château, where he found a newly dug grave and a company of gendarmes drawn up. The prince saw his fate, and submitted to it with a soldier's courage. A murder worthy of the worst days of the Revolution was perpetrated; the heir of Condé had ceased to live; and Bonaparte, endeared by this pledge to the regicides, was assured of their support in mounting the imperial throne.

In this latter view, the death of the duke d'Enghien was not so bootless a measure as has been imagined. Moreau had not yet been brought to trial. The military were attached to him; the populace believed him honest; and, at such a moment, the resurrection and exertions of the Jacobin faction might have turned the scale against Bonaparte. Some time after this catastrophe, Pichegru was found strangled in his prison; and Wright, an English captain, who had landed Cadoudal from his vessel, and who had been taken prisoner, was discovered with his throat cut. Suspicion could not but fall upon Bonaparte. Yet, why should he not have brought Pichegru to trial as well as Moreau? On the other hand, it is not probable that these men fell by their own hands. Savary inculpates Fouché. The circumstance must remain matter of mystery and conjecture. Georges Cadoudal, and the most guilty conspirators, were next dealt with. They were brought to trial, condemned, and executed. The Polignacs were, however, spared by the first consul. Moreau was next arraigned:<sup>1</sup> there existed no proofs whatever against him. The tribunal was inclined to acquit him. But, by a kind of negotiation betwixt the judges and the government, Moreau was condemned to two years' imprisonment; a sentence that the first consul commuted to exile. Moreau retired to the United States. Fouché, as the price of his information and activity in these affairs, was reinstated as minister of police.

Whilst the royalist plot for overthrowing the first consul's government thus failed utterly, which it needed not have done, had it been a mere purpose of assassination, the French police were long and artfully engaged in attempting to implicate the diplomatic agents of England, and to raise ground of accusation against them. Subordinate envoys were first circumvented. Numbers of adroit emissaries introduced themselves to Mr. Drake, and to

[<sup>1</sup> It required some impudence to condemn Moreau for royalism at the very moment that his rival was re-establishing monarchy.—SEELEY.<sup>2</sup>]



Mr. Spencer Smith, English residents at the courts of Munich and Stuttgart, receiving plans, and making promises of royalist insurrection, of betraying towns, etc. "These bulletins," Bignon admits, "were all fabricated by the French police; the promises, only so many chimeras, with which the prefect of Strasburg fed the credulity of Mr. Drake." Poor Mr. Drake was indeed taken in. Some letters of his, in which he exulted over the speedy accomplishment of these designs, were intercepted; his folly, rather than his guilt, proclaimed; and, unfortunately, the story, garnished with unblushing falsehood, gave Bonaparte, what he so much loved, a pretext for declaiming against the Macchiavellianism of England.

It was in these petty squabbles and machinations that the meanness of Bonaparte appeared. Hitherto his life had been that of a hero—stained, indeed, with the blood of Jaffa, for which, however, he might plead the excuse of stern necessity. In fields of battle, in negotiations, in government, he had shown himself the superior spirit. But now, as he arrives at the height of power, as he doffs the hero's tunic to assume the mantle of the usurper, the vulgar Jacobin appears—rude, ruthless, tricky, envious, mendacious. Finding a worthy ally in Fouché, he condescends to make war by eavesdroppers at the doors of the envoys of his foe, rather than with armies in the field; and wields the base pen of malignity, rather than the warrior's sword. Absolute power proved fatal to him, flinging him at once into meanness and into crime. While a victorious commander of the armies of Italy, a crown could not have added to his greatness. When we first look upon him as emperor, we behold chiefly the murderer and the monarch united. Previous to this epoch, there existed still a feeling of generosity betwixt England and her enemy. But henceforth it was a personal and deadly war—a war not only of existence, but of honour; a duel not to be receded from till one or other of the antagonists fell. Unfortunate it was that France was identified in her leader's quarrel. Had she kept her liberties, that even of her press, such foul lies could not have gone forth to the world, nor been credited at home. But Bonaparte, not daring to trust his character and acts to a free press, shows sufficiently the colour of both: whilst, by yielding this precious liberty, this sun of the public mind, to a despot, after all the clamours and blood spent in the name of freedom, France becomes answerable for her own credulity, as well as for those crimes, and that injustice, which such credulity allowed him to commit.

#### NAPOLEON BECOMES EMPEROR (1804 A.D.)

This was the epoch of Bonaparte's becoming emperor. The steps of his throne were the supposed projects of Pichegru and Georges; the blood of Engghien cemented them. Here instantly appears the great object of representing the views of the conspirators to be those of assassination. For, the life of the first consul being aimed at, it became necessary, according to the logic of the hour, to render the present rule and system permanent; that is, hereditary. And in fact the argument was right; a despotism for life is an absurdity, a complete *bonus* upon assassination; however, the way of mending the absurdity was to abate the despotism, instead of rendering it eternal. Scarcely twelve months had elapsed since the first consul had declared in council "hereditary right to be an absurdity." The senate now asserted the necessity of declaring Bonaparte hereditary sovereign, "in order to insure the public triumph of liberty and equality without fear of overthrow." This unblushing reason for perpetuating a dictatorship was worthy of the *Moniteur*

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itself. The senate having obsequiously given its adhesion, the tribunate was required to discuss the question, not constitutionally, but as if in a "private re-union of citizens."

Twenty voted for, seven against, Bonaparte's elevation to the sovereignty. To such numbers were reduced even the mock representation of France. Carnot alone, as a staunch republican, spoke boldly forth his opinion. "Shall freedom, then," said he, "be shown to man, in order that he may never enjoy it? Must it be ever offered to his vows, as a fruit, tempting indeed, but fraught with death as the consequence of touching it? Nature is then indeed but a stepmother!"

On the 18th of May, 1804, the French senate passed a decree, and presented it to the first consul, styling "Napoleon Bonaparte emperor of the French." The people at large were to be consulted as to the hereditary right implied as belonging to this title; the farce of universal suffrage was never wanting in France to sanction acts of violence or usurpation. Still here a manifest difference was observed. Whilst the votes for the consulate had been nearly four millions, with a few thousand dissentient voices, the three millions that declared for the hereditary empire were counterbalanced by upwards of two millions that protested.

The *senatus consultum*, instituting the empire, confined the descent to Joseph and Louis; excluding Lucien, who had been most instrumental in elevating his brother to the consulate; and Jerome, who was profligate, and had made a foolish marriage. Court officers, with titles of superlative magnificence, were at the same time created; Joseph was called grand elector, as if in mockery of himself and of Sieyès. Then Louis became constable; Berthier grand huntsman. Three such men, wearing three such titles, must indeed have excited the derision of the Parisians. But sarcasm is short-lived, when allowed merely to vent itself in whisper. And the French, who had at first been ashamed to wear the riband of the legion of honour, soon came to admire stars and orders, and to worship dignitaries. The second and third consuls, Cambacérès and Lebrun, became arch-chancellor and arch-treasurer; whilst seventeen of the principal generals were declared marshals of France.

The year 1804 was spent by Bonaparte in assuming his new title. It was the subject of serious negotiation with all the states of Europe, England excepted. Austria, the weakest, was the first to recognise it. The opportunity was even chosen by her for modifying her own; her sovereign, instead of elective emperor of Germany, styling himself hereditary emperor of Austria. The army, however, was the true basis of Napoleon's power; nor was he contented, until his dignity had received their full approbation.

He accordingly visited Boulogne during the summer, and in a month after his arrival there, ordered a grand review and ceremony on the 16th of August, the day of his *fête*. He was to distribute crosses of the Legion of Honour to the military.

Seated in the midst of his numerous armies, the shores of England and its fleets before him, Bonaparte was thus in presence of the foe that served as a pretext to this elevation. The troops answered his claim to the empire with loud acclamations, and he considered himself henceforth raised on the buckler, like another Clovis, to be the founder of a new dynasty. From Boulogne the new emperor hurried to Aix-la-Chapelle (Aachen), the ancient capital of Charlemagne. Here he received the acknowledgment of his dignity by his "brother" of Austria.

That nought might be wanting, the church was requested to give its sanction. Its inferior members had already displayed their zeal. The clergy, in their addresses, styled him Moses and Cyrus, applying to him the name of every biblical hero. They saw divine right in success as well as legitimacy; and proclaimed "the finger of God" as the agent of his elevation. To sum up this condescension, the pope himself made a journey to Paris, in order to crown the new Charlemagne, who, by the by, had curtailed from the church those very possessions said to have been ceded to it by the pious Frank. On the 2nd of December, 1804, the coronation took place in Notre Dame; Bonaparte, however, placing the crown on his own head as well as upon that of Josephine. Pius VII spoke an humble homily on the occasion. Comparing himself to Elias and to Samuel, Napoleon to Hazael, to Jehu, to David, and to Saul, the pontiff consecrated, in the name of the Deity, whose vicegerent on earth he was, the crown of the new emperor.<sup>e</sup>

#### BERTIN'S PICTURE OF NAPOLEON'S COURT LIFE

In surrounding himself with a court Napoleon obeyed a political impulse. He wished to conquer by dazzling; to win over to his side French vanity by supplying it with ideal distinctions; and to add to his young empire the prestige of old monarchies. But what served his interests also flattered his vanity; the greatest genius in the world may sometimes find himself enjoying the puerile satisfactions of the *parvenu*. "Come, little Creole, and get into the bed of your masters," he said to Josephine, when they established themselves at the Tuileries. Who knows that the little Corsican gentleman was not as impressed by the unheard-of installation as the little Creole? Unfortunately it is easier to change one's apartments than one's habits, and neither by birth, education, nor temperament was Bonaparte fitted for that delicate part of a sovereign's calling known as *représentation*.

Neither in war nor in garrison life could he find time and opportunity to polish his manners; and besides, good form, even outside the camp, was the least care of the new society. Never was there a crowned head less resembling that classical type which was, as it were, incarnate in Louis XIV. Think of the prince so often described by Saint-Simon<sup>f</sup>—the majestic grace of his walk, of his movements, of his language, his attentive and uniform politeness to rank, sex, and age, the dignity which he showed even in his smallest actions, and compare, with this model of royal decorum, the cæsar described by Madame de Rémusat.<sup>g</sup> What a striking and humorous contrast! His ignorance, negligence, abruptness, and violence were absolutely fatal to decorum; he neither knew how to enter a drawing-room nor how to leave it; how to sit down nor how to get up, still less which hand he should offer to a lady. At table he would snatch at the first dish within reach, often beginning his dinner with the sweets. While dressing he hurried and ill-treated the valets who assisted him, and if he did not happen to like the article of clothing handed to him, he kicked it away or threw it on the fire. He was always assuming undignified attitudes, either poking the fire with his boots, or sitting astride a chair, his chin resting on the back, in order to converse more at his ease.

One of his familiar tricks was pulling people's ears, without the least regard to their rank or sex, and Madame de Rémusat's ear often enjoyed this distinction. Imagine Louis XIV taking such liberties with one of the queen's ladies-in-waiting! If some unfortunate flatterer with the best intentions in the world expressed a wish which was contrary to his secret



[1804 A.D.]

views, he instantly became furious, put his fist under the offender's chin, even were he marshal of France, and pushed him against the wall, treating him roughly as a lunatic. Compare this behaviour with the fine movement of the Grand Monarch, throwing his cane out of the window in order to resist the temptation of striking the insolent little Lauzun, who had just accused him of breaking his word, and had shattered his sword beneath his heel, swearing never again in his life to serve under him. It is only fair to add that the court was no better informed than the sovereign in matters of etiquette. The tumult of the Revolution had swept away the old traditions of French politeness, with many other things. France — who could believe it? — no longer knew how to curtsy. Josephine's ladies, feeling themselves such novices, watched each other in consternation. Fortunately the Revolution had spared a famous dancing master, Despréaux; this person, for whom there had long been no employment, was besieged; they fought for him as the living code of manners, they hastened to learn how to become great ladies. There also remained Madame Campan, first lady-in-waiting to Marie Antoinette; they questioned her, and made her relate in detail the intimate habits of the queen of France. Madame de Rémusat was given the official task of writing at her dictation, the result of which was an enormous book, which increased the file of memoirs sent to Bonaparte from all directions. One might have taken them for a meeting of scholars, fathoming a question of great antiquity, whereas the object of these researches (I was about to say of these excavations) was the old court customs, which had died out fifteen years before.

They not only revived the old customs of the court of France, they also imported new ones from foreign courts. The best of it was that Bonaparte himself was the author of the importation. He was the first to be bored by it. At Munich he had seen all the court pass bowing before the king and queen of Bavaria; he also wished to have this solemn homage paid him. The march past at first delighted his imagination, and flattered his pride; but soon his impassive majesty tired him, he grew impatient, fidgeted in his seat; in short he was bored, and it was only with great difficulty that they persuaded him to keep his seat until he had received the last reverences, which were hurried on by his order.

At the time of the marriage of Stéphanie de Beauharnais with the prince of Baden, the emperor, who gave his hand to the bride, dragged rather than led her to the altar. Behind him hurried the ladies of the palace, driven by merciless chamberlains, who walked like aides-de-camp on either side of the cortège, exclaiming with little gallantry: "Come, come, ladies, move on!" A certain countess of foreign origin, accustomed to the slow movements of the courts of the north, grumbled at this procession of postillions and demanded short skirts for the ladies of the palace, so as to have the costume in keeping with the situation. Further on, at the head of the procession, M. de Talleyrand, who as grand chamberlain had to lead the way, struggled along on his thin, crooked legs; but, always master of his expression, he disguised beneath an imperturbable coolness the irritation he felt at having his impatient master at his heels, and the aides-de-camp smiling derisively.<sup>h</sup>

### A THIRD COALITION AGAINST FRANCE

The year 1804 saw the rise of a new coalition against Bonaparte. Austria might quail under former defeats, and Prussia might well hesitate to provoke the conqueror. But Russia had no such fears, and spoke an independ-

ent language. The murder of the duke d'Enghien had excited the emperor Alexander's abhorrence. He put his court into mourning for the unfortunate prince. Gustavus of Sweden followed the example. Of the French functionaries, M. de Cléaubriand alone sent in a generous resignation; whilst Louis XVIII sent back the order of the golden fleece to his relative the monarch of Spain, who, though a Bourbon, dared not express a feeling of resentment towards France.

But it was the conduct of Alexander that most affected the French emperor. The mourning of the Russian court, and the remonstrances of its representative in Paris, were poignant injuries. Napoleon, as usual, took up the pen himself to answer them; and, as usual, falsehood and insult flowed from it. "Suppose," wrote he, "that when England meditated the assassination of the emperor Paul, the conspirators were known to be within a league of the frontier, would they not have been seized?" The allusion was a deadly and malignant insult, not so much to England, who might scorn such calumnies, but to Alexander, who had profited at least by his sire's untimely death. The Russian emperor replied by summoning the French to evacuate Hanover and Naples; and soon after his *chargé d'affaires* was ordered to leave Paris.

This breach accomplished the first desire of Great Britain, which was to find a continental ally against France. The death of the duke d'Enghien served her in this, and menaced its perpetrator. For a considerable time Spain had been in alliance with France, aiding her, however, with subsidies rather than with troops. England, though aware of the covert hostility of Spain, pretended not to observe it, and respected that country as neutral. But the prospect of Russian alliance made the ministry more bold; and the peace with Spain was suddenly broken by the capture of some ships of that nation returning laden with specie. It was a flagrant act of injustice, in the very style of Bonaparte's own conduct, and proceeded from the very same imbecility which threw upon England the blame of the renewal of the war — an irresolute, wavering system, which was but weakness, and which looked like treachery. England had thence to contend with the fleets of France and Spain united, an alliance which inspired Bonaparte with great hopes.

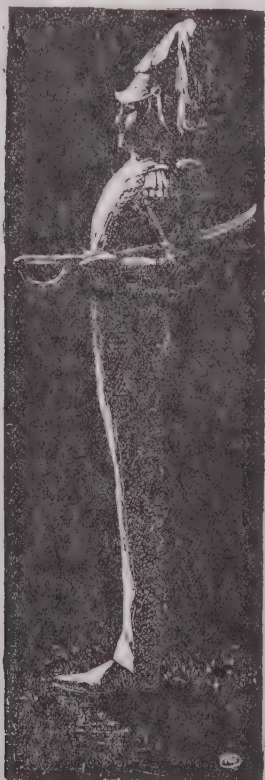
In the spring of 1805, whilst the clouds of hostility were gathering against him from the north, Bonaparte took a journey to Milan, in order to exchange his title of president of the Cisalpine Republic for that of king of Italy. Here, received with enthusiasm, he placed upon his own head, in great ceremony, the crown of Charlemagne, called iron, from a nail of the true cross which it contains. "God gave it me," exclaimed he; "beware who dares to touch it." He ordered a splendid review to take place on the plains of Marengo, and, to mark his attention to minutiae, he had brought from Paris the same gray frock coat which he had worn at that memorable battle. But the general's habit had lain by since he had donned the imperial mantle, and worms had eaten it. Genoa, of late the Ligurian Republic, was now, by a stroke of the pen, incorporated with the empire of France. This formed one of the complaints of Austria, then pressed by England and Russia to coalesce with them, and arm. But Bonaparte had acquired the habit of filching towns, and adding territory to territory. It was incurable and inevitable; and his amazement was that people could find fault with a thing so natural.<sup>e</sup>

Five years had passed since Napoleon had taken the field when the second period of his military career began. He now begins to make war as a sovereign with a boundless command of means. For five years from 1805 to 1809

[1805-1809 A.D.]

he takes the field regularly, and in these campaigns he founds the great Napoleonic empire. By the first he breaks up the Germanic system and attaches the minor German states to France, by the second he humbles Prussia, by the third he forces Russia into an alliance, by the fourth he reduces Spain to submission, by the fifth he humbles Austria. Then follows a second pause, during which for three years Napoleon's sword is in the sheath, and he is once more ruler, not soldier.

From the beginning of this second series of wars the principles of the Revolution are entirely forgotten by France, which is now a monarchy, even a propagator of monarchical principles.<sup>1</sup>







## CHAPTER XIX

### THE CONTINENTAL WAR TO THE PEACE OF TILSIT

[1805-1807 A.D.]

Such intensity of hatred as burned between the new emperor and England never disturbed the councils of Carthage and Rome. The system represented by each was utterly inconsistent with the very existence of the other. Military aggression, and the maintenance of internal tranquillity by an overwhelming force wielded by one man; a settled order of things, even if not the best in itself, and a government in accordance with the general will of the country, constitutionally expressed — these were such antagonistic principles that either the despotic propagator of new ideas must fall, or the defender of existing institutions be rendered powerless. The fight, therefore, became more like a duel between two irreconcilable adversaries, in which the seconds occasionally took part, than a war urged for European or national purposes. It was for the complete destruction either of England or of Napoleon, and the enemies felt from the beginning that the battle was to the death. — WHITE.<sup>b</sup>

NAPOLEON'S object in seizing Genoa is announced in one of his letters to Lebrun whom he appointed governor. That amiable man had mitigated his stern orders to press the naval population of the port. The emperor wrote him the following reprimand:

In uniting Genoa to the empire, I was induced neither by the revenue, nor by the land forces she might contribute; I had but one object in view, *viz.*, 15,000 seamen. It is then going against the very spirit of my feeling to be lenient or backward in raising and levying this force. You are too mild, too merciful. How can you govern people without discontenting them? What would you do, if you were charged with forcing the conscripts of a couple of French departments to march to the army? I tell you, that in matters of government, force means justice as well as virtue. As to discontent of the Genoese, I am not the man to listen to such remonstrances. Think you I am decrepit enough to fear them? My answer is, Seamen, seamen, and still seamen. Govern but to collect seamen — dream but of them. Say what you will from me, but say that I will have seamen. God keep you in his holy guard!

NAPOLEON.

This most characteristic letter shows the reliance he placed on a naval struggle, and his hopes of so weakening, if not vanquishing, England by sea, as to render his project of invasion possible. It was now that he formed the project of distracting the attention of England, and scattering her fleets, by

[1805 A.D.]

despatching his in different directions, some to the West Indies, some to the ports of Spain, in order to effect a union betwixt all, and form a naval force capable of giving battle to the British with great superiority of numbers. The progress of fleets, however, could not be ordered or calculated in the cabinet, or over a chart. A hundred chances were against the execution of a scheme which at best was almost hopeless. For in naval actions betwixt French and English, as in land battles betwixt French and Austrians, numbers served to increase the disorder and rout of the unskilful combatant. This was soon proved. The French squadron of twenty vessels, which had gone round by the West Indies to the chosen rendezvous in the Channel, fell in on its return with a much inferior British force under Sir Robert Calder. The French were, nevertheless, defeated; and the English admiral, instead of meeting with approbation for his victory, was severely reprimanded at home for not annihilating the superior numbers of the foe.

Napoleon himself was in the meantime at Boulogne, facing England, indeed, and menacing her with invasion; but with his looks all the time directed to the east and north of Europe. He was not in the least ignorant of the coalition, or the war brewing against him; and although his tent was pitched on the heights of Boulogne, the map upon that tent-table, the object of his meditation, was the map of Austria. A conversation of his with Bourrienne displays his real opinions on this subject. "Those who believe in the seriousness of my menace of invasion are fools. They do not see the thing in its true light. I can, without doubt, disembark in England with 100,000 men, fight a great battle, win it; but I must reckon on 30,000 killed, wounded, or prisoners. If I march upon London, a second battle awaits me; suppose me again successful, what am I to do in London with an army diminished by three-fourths, without hope of reinforcements? It would be madness. Without superiority of naval force, such a project is impracticable. No; this great re-union of troops, that you behold, has another aim. My government must be the first of Europe, or it must fall."

## THE THIRD COALITION (1805 A.D.)

However hostile were the intentions of Napoleon towards the still independent powers of Europe, these anticipated him in declaring war. In April, 1805, an alliance was concluded betwixt Russia and England. Hanover and Naples were to be the points, to the liberating of which their armies were to be directed. Sweden joined the alliance. Prussia approved its spirit, but those of its ministers in the French interest prevailed, and preserved the neutrality. Austria was more inclined to redeem her defeats. The coronation of the French emperor as king of the Italian dominions, which she at least expected to have been left independent, alarmed Austria and gave her a right to arm. The occupation of Genoa enforced both. The British envoy was ready with offers of subsidy, the Russians with the aid of large armies. Napoleon secured Bavaria by a promise of aggrandising her territory, and of himself making no acquisition beyond the Rhine. Austria in the meantime advanced her troops, and peremptorily demanded of the elector of Bavaria to unite with her. He temporised, practised some deceit, and succeeded in excusing himself, and drawing off his army. The Austrians occupied Munich.

Here was the aggression that Napoleon desired; for, without some such pretext, he feared the shame of abandoning the vaunted expedition against England. Thus, whilst Pitt precipitated Austria to hostilities prematurely,

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ere her allies had put forth their strength, in order to remove the French from Boulogne, he precisely served the purpose of Bonaparte. This last blunder of the English minister, with its unfortunate consequences, gave the destructive blow that put an end to his life. Napoleon affected great disappointment in abandoning his scheme of invasion, called Daru, and dictated to him at a breath the entire plan of a campaign against Austria, the march of each division, its route, the time of the arrival of each, and the point of junction. This seemed like magic and improvisation to Daru, being nevertheless the result of long and mature reflection. The several divisions instantly decamped from Boulogne, taking different directions to the Rhine. The emperor hurried to Paris, and obtained from his obsequious senate the decrees necessary for carrying on the war.

#### THE VICTORY OF ULM (1805 A.D.)

The command of the advance Austrian army was, as if by fatuity, intrusted to Mack, that pedantic tactician, who could not defend Rome with an army against a few thousand men under Championnet. He took post at Ulm, thinking that Bonaparte must necessarily take the same road which Moreau had taken. On the contrary, the French emperor divided his numerous force into seven corps, the greater number of which were ordered to march to the Danube, and cross it behind Mack. Thus Mack, with 80,000 men, was advanced far from all support, whilst nearly 200,000 were marching to surround him. The French were in his rear ere he dreamed of it. Retreat was impossible. All that remained was to unite the Austrian army, and fall with its whole mass on one or two of the French corps. But, no — Mack scattered his troops round Ulm. Dupont checked them on one side, Ney on another. The latter achieved a brilliant feat in carrying the bridge of Elchingen, at the third assault; the name was Ney's first title. Beaten on every side, Mack was shut up with the remains of his army in the town of Ulm. The general Ségur, sent to demand his submission, found nothing but disorder, and the brain of Mack in similar confusion. He did not even know that Napoleon was his antagonist. He began by demanding "eight days' truce or death," and concluded by surrendering immediately.<sup>1</sup> Never was so bewildered a person. An imperial bulletin now announced:

Soldiers, in fifteen days we have made a campaign, driven the Austrians from Bavaria; of 100,000 men, 60,000 are prisoners. Two hundred pieces of cannon, 80 stand of colours, are our trophies. A second campaign awaits us. We have to combat the Russians, whom England has transported from the ends of the universe. This battle will decide the honour of the French infantry, and will tell if it be the first or the second in Europe.

On the day after, the 21st of October, was fought the battle of Trafalgar,<sup>2</sup> where Nelson, annihilating the fleets of Spain and France, bequeathed to Bonaparte the cruel certainty, that, if invincible on land, his great rival was equally so upon the ocean.

[<sup>1</sup> On the 19th, 30,000 men, headed by 16 generals, 60 guns, 40 standards, and 3,000 horses passed before the French army, drawn up in battle array on the heights of the Michaelsberg and the Frauenberg. Napoleon surrounded by his staff and his guard, was secretly elated at a triumph hitherto unknown to him amongst his most brilliant victories of Italy and Egypt.<sup>d</sup>

[<sup>2</sup> Ulm concealed Trafalgar from the view of the continent. It was the stroke of Marengo repeated but without a doubtful battle and without undeserved good luck. After Marengo it had been left to Moreau to win the decisive victory and to conclude the war; this time there was no Moreau to divide the laurels. — SEELEY.<sup>c</sup>

The account of the battle of Trafalgar and of most of the naval affairs of the contest will be found in the history of the nation that usually won them — England.]



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Bonaparte now advanced into Austria, his lieutenants driving all before them as they advanced. On the 15th of November, Napoleon made his entry into Vienna. The Austrian emperor and his troops had retired into Moravia; for the Russians, whom Mack had expected at Ulm, were only now at Brünn. Napoleon was now not only master of Vienna, but of the neighbouring bridge over the Danube. Lannes had won it by an act of unexampled audacity. He had advanced on the bridge, speaking to the Austrian officers, alluding to a probable armistice, and distracting their attention, whilst a column of grenadiers followed him. As the Austrian officers were before their cannon and around Lannes, the artillery could not fire; when the former expostulated, Lannes gained time by excuses; and when the word to fire was about to be given, he overthrew the officer, the French rushed on the cannon, turned them; and the important bridge, securing a passage over the Danube, was won, we may say, in jest. Such was Austrian simplicity.

The first Russian army—it marched in two bodies—had advanced under Kutusoff. Hearing of the capture of Vienna, Kutusoff hurried back to Brünn. He feared to be cut off from the other body of his compatriots, and with some reason. Murat attacked him; but the French general allowing himself to be deceived by the proposal of an armistice, Kutusoff made good his retreat.

The French occupied Brünn. The emperors of Russia and Austria had rallied at Olmütz. They were at the head of 80,000 men, whilst Bonaparte did not muster more than 60,000. He had had to garrison Vienna; and to leave troops to watch the archduke Charles, who was in South Austria, pressed by Masséna, but still in force. A battle became a matter of absolute necessity to Napoleon, far advanced as he was in an enemy's country; Hungary unoccupied on one side, Bohemia on the other; Prussia, too, was menacing. The French, in their rapid march to intercept Mack, had passed through the Prussian territories of Anspach, and thus afforded a pretext for war. An envoy now arrived from Berlin; but the emperor told him to stay his message until a battle, which was imminent, should be decided.

## THE TRIUMPH OF AUSTERLITZ (DECEMBER 2ND, 1805)

The Russians and Austrians, having united all their forces, determined to act on the offensive. On the 27th of November they marched from Olmütz towards the French, who were concentrated to the eastward of Brünn. Napoleon, who had studied the ground in his rear, retreated before the enemy, drawing his right wing back more than the rest of the army. Kutusoff, seeing this, and taking it for weakness, determined to turn the right wing of the French, and so threaten to cut off their army from Vienna.<sup>1</sup> Bonaparte thus, by drawing his army as nearly as was wise to one point, suggested to his enemies the idea of turning and surrounding him; a dangerous project for them, since it extended their lines, and exposed their weak points to an enemy, vigilant, drawn together, and enabled to protrude

[<sup>1</sup> Such had been Napoleon's rashness, for his audacious daring was balanced indeed by infinite cunning and ingenuity, but was seldom tempered by prudence. In this position, it may be asked, how could he expect ever to make his way back to France? What he had done to Mack Prussia would now do to him. The army of Frederick would block the Danube between him and France, while the Russians and Austrians united under the archduke would seek him at Vienna. As at Marengo, fortune favoured his desperate play. The allies had only to play a waiting game, but this the Russians and their young czar, who was now in the Moravian headquarters, would not consent to do.]

an overwhelming force in any one direction. Had the Russians had an idea that this retreat and concentration of the French were dictated by art, they would of course not have committed themselves. But the French did everything to affect hesitation and timidity; they not only retired, but, in partial encounters, showed a disposition to fly. To the proposals of Alexander, Bonaparte answered hesitatingly. He received the aide-de-camp sent to him on the outskirts of the camp, as if to avoid its weak state being seen. Works were thrown up. An interview, as the pretext for a four-and-twenty hours' truce, was begged. In short, a hundred petty artifices were employed to persuade the Russians that the French meditated a retreat; and that the former should lose no time, not only to attack, but also to intercept.

On the 1st of December the combined army fell completely into the trap. The chief force was pushed on to the extreme left, whilst the troops of the rest of the line, diminished for this purpose, descended from heights in front of the French, in order to move towards the left also. Bonaparte watched anxiously the motions of the enemy in advance of Austerlitz; and no sooner did his acute eye perceive their forces thrown to their left, and the number, in front of him, on and around the line of heights diminished, than he exclaimed, "That army shall be at our mercy ere to-morrow's sun sets." Nay, so certain was he of this, that he determined to communicate his confidence to his soldiers; and informed them in a printed circular or order of the day, that "the enemy, in marching to turn the French right, had exposed their own flank." On the evening of the 1st the firing commenced on the menaced point, the right of the French. Napoleon galloped thither, made his disposition for the morrow, and returned on foot through the ranks and bivouacs of his soldiery. The morrow was to be the anniversary of his coronation; they promised him the Russian colours and cannon as a gift in honour of his *fête*.

The sun rose on the 2nd of December with unclouded brilliancy; it was hailed and remembered long as the sun of Austerlitz. Its rays discovered the Austrians and Russians disseminated on, around, and behind the heights before the village of Austerlitz, whence the allied emperors watched the first effect of their chief effort against the French right. Here the battle began; Soult and Davout supporting the attack with their wonted activity and skill, greatly aided by their positions, which were amongst flooded and marshy ground, with the ice too weak to support the tread. All that Bonaparte required of these generals was to hold their ground for a certain number of hours; his aim being to attack simultaneously with his left and centre that portion of the enemy in front of him, which he proposed to cut off from their engaged wing. No sooner, however, did he hear the sound of battle fully engaged in that direction, than he gave the word. His generals hurried from him, each to his post; Lannes, Bernadotte, Legrand, Saint-Hilaire, each at the head of his division, advanced. The allied columns at this moment were descending from the heights, in the direction of their left, where they looked for the brunt of the battle. The Russians were thus surprised, and attacked during an oblique march, by columns their equals or superiors in strength. They were cut in two, routed, and separated one from the other. The French gained the heights, pushing their enemies into the defiles. This, no doubt, took time to effect; but the details can be imagined, if the manœuvres be comprehended, and the result seized.

Between Austerlitz and the heights thus won by the French was still the Russian reserve, with the emperor in person; his choicest troops, the guard for instance, commanded by the grand duke Constantine. These two were

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marching towards the left, when to their astonishment the French skirmishers and cavalry charged in amongst them. It was a scene of surprise and confusion. The emperor, however, aided by Kutusoff, rallied his men. The Russian guards and other regiments charged; and the French, a moment since victorious, were driven back. Some regiments that had even formed squares were broken into and routed by the impetuosity of the Russians. Napoleon did not see what was taking place, Austerlitz being hidden from him by the heights. His ear, however, caught sounds that did not augur victory, and he instantly sent Rapp, his aide-de-camp, to see what was the matter. Rapp galloped off with some squadrons of the guard, rallied stragglers as he advanced, and saw, as he came up, the menacing position of affairs—the Russians victorious, and sabring the French, who were driven from their broken squares. They were already bringing cannon to play upon Rapp, when the latter, crying out to his men, “to avenge their comrades and restore the day,” charged at full speed amongst the Russians. This gave the routed French time to breathe and rally. They grouped and formed; Rapp returned to the charge. Half an hour’s obstinate struggle and carnage took place, which terminated in the rout of the Russian guards before the eyes of the two emperors.

This feat achieved, Rapp rode back to acquaint Napoleon that all the foe in the direction of Austerlitz were in flight. On other points victory had been already assured. The left of the allies—the left, on the efforts of which so much had been built—was now cut off; it was completely destroyed or taken. The most dreadful feature of its rout was the attempt of several squadrons to escape over the lakes; the ice at once gave way under the accumulated weight, and thousands of brave men perished.

Such was Austerlitz. Savary<sup>e</sup> had best summed it up in calling it “a series of manœuvres, not one of which failed, that cut the Russian army, surprised in a side march, into as many portions as columns were directed against it.” All have seen Gérard’s picture of the battle, or rather of its conclusion, where Rapp is seen riding up, with broken sword and bleeding front, to tell the tidings of his complete success.<sup>1</sup> It represents that fact. Of 80,000 combatants, the allies lost nearly one-half, of which 10,000 were slain.

On the evening of the battle, the emperor of Austria sent to demand an interview with Napoleon. It was arranged for the 4th, and took place within a few leagues of Austerlitz, by the fire of a bivouac. The sovereigns embraced, and remained two hours in conversation, during which the principal terms of an agreement were of course discussed. Napoleon showed forbearance and magnanimity. The emperor of Russia retired to his dominions. He professed great admiration for the French hero, but refused to enter into any treaty, or even to acknowledge him as emperor. The part of the king of Prussia was most difficult. He had been ready to join the coalition.

[<sup>1</sup> The battle of Austerlitz brought the third coalition to an end, as that of Hohenlinden had brought the second. It was a transformation-scene more bewildering than even that of Marengo, and completely altered the position of Napoleon before Europe. To the French indeed Austerlitz was not, as a matter of exultation, equal to Marengo, for it did not deliver the state from danger, but only raised it from a perilous eminence to an eminence more perilous still. But as a military achievement it was far greater, exhibiting the army at the height of its valour and organisation (the illusion of liberty not yet quite dissipated) and the commander at the height of his tactical skill; and in its historical results it is greater still, ranking among the great events of the world. For not only did it found the ephemeral Napoleonic empire by handing over Venetia to the Napoleonic monarchy of Italy, and Tyrol, and Vorarlberg to Napoleon’s new client Bavaria; it also destroyed the Holy Roman Empire while it divided the remains of Hither Austria between Württemberg and Baden.]



Count von Haugwitz had arrived, prepared to use the language of menace ; but finding Napoleon successful, he complimented him upon his victory. "This is a congratulation," was the reply, "of which fortune has changed the address." In proportion as he had shown forbearance to Austria, he gave way to vituperation and anger against Prussia. He railed against treachery and false friends ; and, in short, so frightened Haugwitz, that the latter concluded a treaty, resigning Anspach and Bayreuth on the part of Prussia, and accepting Hanover in lieu.

It was Napoleon's object thus to set England and Prussia at variance. It was singular enough that, almost at the same moment, Hardenberg, the Prussian minister, required the assistance of England, conjointly with Russia, in case she should be attacked ; and both these incompatible agreements were soon before the cabinet of Berlin, to its no small embarrassment. It drew back from the difficulty as best it might, accepting Hanover merely as a *depôt*, and yielding Anspach as Haugwitz had consented, with Cleves, Berg, and Neuchâtel ; the latter two principalities were bestowed upon Murat and Berthier. Soon after, the Treaty of Pressburg was signed between France and Austria, the latter power ceding Venice and its Dalmatian territories to the kingdom of Italy, and the Tyrol to Bavaria. The elector of Bavaria was raised, as well as the duke of Würtemberg, to the rank of king ; and the dominions of the new monarchs increased by the influence of France. Thus Napoleon commenced his plan, afterwards developed in the Confederation of the Rhine, of exercising himself that influence over the German states which the empire held of old, and which of late had been shared and disputed by Prussia as head of the Protestant interest.

#### NAPOLEON AS KING-MAKER

Napoleon had declared to his own senate, and to the emperor of Austria, that he sought no aggrandisement for France. This declaration was with him a kind of *nolo episcopari*, or *nolo regnare*, which was a certain forerunner of fresh acquisitions. Venice and Dalmatia acquired to the kingdom of Italy was a commencement. An army of English and Russians had invaded Naples. The French emperor now determined to occupy that country, and expel from thence its reigning house. This was effected by his mere command. He had made kings in Germany of the rulers of Bavaria and Würtemberg. This was merely trying his hand at monarch-making ; and at the same time Berthier and Murat were created German princes. Now his chancellor and treasurer, Cambacérès and Lebrun, were created dukes ; one of Parma, the other of Piacenza or Plaisance. The lately acquired provinces of Venice were declared duchies, and assigned to the generals and statesmen of the imperial court. Joseph Bonaparte, elder brother of Napoleon, was declared king of Naples ; and Louis, king of Holland ; the latter was a mild domestic character ; he had espoused Hortense Beauharnais, the daughter of Josephine.

This princess had been a great favourite with Napoleon ; so much so, that calumny had attached criminality to their friendship. We believe this to be false. Hortense, whose character strikes us in a more interesting light, as having composed that well-known air and song, *Partant pour la Syrie*, was attached to the brave Duroc, who, perhaps shaken by the calumnies which assailed her, desisted from following up the suit which he had at first paid. Napoleon, who was not adverse to this match, on its being broken off gave Hortense to his brother Louis—an event that made both unhappy. Such were the new king and queen of Holland.

[1805-1806 A.D.]

Napoleon could scarcely pardon himself for the crime of ignoble marriage, which he so severely reproached and visited upon his brothers Lucien and Jerome. These had no share in the honours of the day. His sisters were now all elevated to rank. Caroline espoused Murat the duke of Berg; Elisa was given the sovereignty of Lucca; and Pauline, the youngest, widow of General Leclerc, brought Guastalla in dowry to the Roman prince Borghese; Eugene Beauharnais at the same time married the daughter of the king of Bavaria; Talleyrand became prince of Benevento, Bernadotte of Pontecorvo.

In the great struggle of France for European supremacy, if not for universal dominion, to which circumstances partly impelled, and ambition partly prompted Bonaparte, there is neither space nor interest to spare for the pettier details of internal administration, the preparation of codes, or the financial crisis which, at the epoch of Austerlitz, paralysed the commerce, and nearly ruined the bank, of France. Diplomacy and war occupy the entire scene, and demand to possess it exclusively. In the commencement of 1806, some weeks after the battle of Austerlitz, Pitt breathed his last. On Fox's succeeding to him, there was some expectation of peace; and intercourse commenced by a letter of that statesman, warning the French emperor of an offer made to assassinate him. Negotiations followed, to which the great obstacle of success seemed to be, that the French insisted upon Sicily in addition to Naples. The most remarkable circumstance connected with these negotiations is the anxiety of Talleyrand to conclude a peace, and the sagacious and almost prophetic views on which were founded this anxiety. He saw clearly, and said that without a peace with England, Napoleon would go on warring, fighting battle after battle; which, with every chance in his favour, was still continuing to gamble, and to stake his fortune upon a throw.



JEROME BONAPARTE

(1784-1860)

## THE CONFEDERATION OF THE RHINE (1806 A.D.)

The only independent power bordering on France—for France now extended to the Elbe—was Prussia. She had acted altogether a most unworthy and imprudent part. We have spoken of the two treaties; one signed by Haugwitz with Napoleon, the other by Hardenberg with England, both in December, 1805. Perplexed by her bad faith, Prussia obtained the advantage of neither; she naturally hesitated to accept Hanover, and to shut her ports against England; but as Anspach and Cleves, ceded by Haugwitz, were already seized by the French, Prussia resolved to break with England rather than not get an equivalent; and her troops, accordingly, occupied Hanover. England raised an outcry. Fox declared the conduct of Prussia to be "everything that was contemptible in servility, and all that was odious in rapacity." Prussia had dishonoured herself for

the sake of Hanover and the French alliance; what then was her mortification on learning, through the English papers, that Napoleon had offered to restore Hanover to Great Britain as the price of peace! Nothing was more evident, than that the French emperor was merely making a tool of Prussia, and that he was prepared to crush her, to slight her, and to seize the first pretext for both.

The accomplishment of a new scheme of Napoleon was still more alarming to Prussia. This was the confederation of the Rhine, by which the smaller German states, which hitherto had met or sent their envoys to a diet, presided over by the emperor of Germany, were incorporated into a new federation, of which France was the head. These states were bound in alliance, defensive and offensive, with the French emperor; the quantity of their contingents fixed; so that, in fact, Napoleon became suzerain of the greater part of Germany. Austria could make no resistance to a measure, which she had almost proposed, in declaring her emperor's title hereditary. That sovereign now abdicated the ancient authority over Germany, which his ancestors, for so many centuries, had possessed.<sup>1</sup> With his declaration, in 1806, may be considered to terminate the reign of the modern cæsars.

The confederation of the Rhine, though drawn up, agreed on, and signed in July, was still kept secret for some time, and its ratification delayed. Negotiations were going on with England and with Russia; and had they succeeded, at least had that with England succeeded, the new scheme of usurpation would have been kept back and in reserve until a favourable opportunity occurred for declaring it. Peace with England, however, failing to be accomplished, and the war party getting the uppermost in Russia, Bonaparte ratified and publicly announced the confederation of the Rhine, flinging it, like a bold defiance, in the face of the powers that still resisted him.

#### WAR WITH PRUSSIA

Prussia was instantly in a state of mistrust and alarm, increased by learning that Napoleon had offered to restore Hanover to England. The French, indeed, made offers; invited Frederick to form, on his side, a similar confederacy in the north, and to assume the imperial title also. But the court of Berlin, though flattered by the proposal, received on all sides too many proofs of the bad faith, and slighting, if not hostile, intentions of France, to put trust in her offers. The breaking off of negotiations between Great Britain, Russia, and France, took place in July, 1806, as did the ratification of the confederacy of the Rhine. In August, Prussia sounded the trump of war, by increasing her army, and calling forth its reserves. Cause she might have for this act; yet not more cause than the last ten years might have afforded. Had Prussia united with Austria in the second or third coalition, before that power had received a final and stunning blow, France might, in all probability, not have succeeded in establishing a tyrannic supremacy over Europe. But selfish timidity kept her arms tied then; and now, when the French emperor was in his might, in the pride of victory, when Austria was humbled, Prussia steps forth, like a David before the great Goliath, but without either meriting or possessing that divine protection of the Israelite.

[<sup>1</sup> The emperor of Austria of his own accord renounced the empty title of emperor of Germany. Thus was the old Germanic Empire at an end. This was the most dangerous act that Napoleon had yet committed. To place so large a part of German territory under the yoke of France was to prepare an inevitable reaction amongst all the German peoples, and to unite one day against us, in a deadly struggle, Prussia and Austria supported by England and Russia. — HENRI MARTIN. *f*]



[1806 A.D.]

If it was imprudence in Prussia to have decided upon war, it was madness not to have sought and awaited the aid of Russia and Great Britain. For the sake of forcing the alliances of Saxony and Hesse, the Prussian army was advanced south to Weimar, far from its own territory, and from Russian aid. The blunder of Mack at Ulm was repeated.

The king of Prussia bade the French quit Germany, whose soil they had no right to tread. Napoleon returned the bravado most ungenerously, by making not Frederick, but his queen, the object of his attack. A French bulletin says, "The queen of Prussia is with the army, clothed as an Amazon, wearing the uniform of her regiment of dragoons, and penning twenty letters a day, in order to kindle flames on every side. One might believe her to be Armida out of her senses, setting fire to her own palace. Near her is the young prince Ludwig, overflowing with valour, and expecting vast renown from the vicissitudes of war. Echoing these two illustrious personages, the entire court cries, 'To war !' But when war shall have come, with all its horrors, it is then that each will vainly endeavour to clear himself of the guilt of having drawn down its thunders upon the peaceable countries of the north."

The French army came from the south. The road by which the Prussians had come, by which they must retreat, and along which were their magazines, ran from Weimar, where they were, in a northeastern direction to Leipsic, and by consequence obliquely to the French. Bonaparte resolved to march upon it, rather than upon Weimar, and thus cut off the Prussians from their home and their magazines. This was effected; the only resistance being made at Saalfeld by Prince Ludwig. But the Prussians, unsupported, were driven in, and Ludwig himself slain by a sergeant, who in vain called to him to surrender. The French now occupied the course of the Saale, their backs to Germany; whilst the Prussians were obliged to turn theirs to France, in facing the enemy that had intercepted them. To dislodge these, and restore the intercepted communications, was now the chief object of the Prussians. The greater part of their army marched with the king and the duke of Brunswick, to dislodge Davout, whom they met in advance of Nuremberg at Auerstädt.

The rest of the Prussians, under Prince Hohenlohe, advanced against the main army of the French, which was at Jena, commanded by Napoleon himself. The two encounters, that at Jena and at Auerstädt, took place on the same day, the 14th of October.

#### JENA AND AUERSTÄDT (OCTOBER 14TH, 1806)

The emperor surveyed the ranks, speaking to each man one of those sayings which he so well knew how to throw into his beautiful and noble historical language, kindling a noble ardour in the heart of the army. "Remember," he said, "the taking of Ulm, and the battle of Austerlitz; the Prussians are reduced to the same extremity; they have lost their lines of operation, they are hemmed in, and are only fighting to assure their retreat. Soldiers," he cried, "the Prussians wish to attempt to cut their way through—the corps which allows them to pass will be lost to honour; do you hear?—lost to honour." These words raised the liveliest enthusiasm. Then Napoleon gave them some directions for withstanding the renowned Prussian cavalry. "It is now that the honour of the infantry must show itself; the French are an armed race." Then the skirmishers deployed at the foot of the plateau.<sup>h</sup>

The battle of Jena, taken alone, does not present any masterly or decisive manœuvre. Where Napoleon showed his skill, was in the ordering of his march, which forced these decisive actions. On the field, however, he was not wanting. His force was concentrated upon a high and narrow plain, in front of Jena. His artillery could with great difficulty be brought into position. The emperor, who looked to all himself, was obliged to stand the greater part of the night in seeing a road cleared for it, he himself holding torches, and directing the labours of the pioneers. The morning of the 14th was foggy; the armies could not discern each other; and the Prussians, ignorant of the French position, knew not where to direct their attacks. Ney, however, attacked their left, and was beaten back, till Soult arrived to his support. As the fog cleared up at midday, the engagement became general. The Prussians could take no advantage of their successful resistance on many points. Charge after charge poured on them, was repelled, and allowed to form again. At length, Augereau arriving against their right with fresh infantry, and Murat coming up with his cavalry, the Prussians were defeated, gave up the field, and fled.

Davout at the same time had a much harder task than Napoleon. He had to make head against a Prussian force double his own, led on, moreover, by its sovereign and commander-in-chief. Napoleon was not aware of this, thinking, on the contrary, the main army of the Prussians to be at Jena; neither was Davout, until engaged. When the latter sent to Bernadotte to aid him, this general, under the same impressions, refused; which afterwards proved a great cause of, or pretext for, the emperor's severity towards him. At Auerstädt, as at Jena, a fog prevented the armies from observing each other's force, but not from coming to action. There was an obstinate fight. As the day grew clear, the French saw the numerous army which menaced them; utterly destitute, too, as they were, of cavalry. They drew up instantly in squares, and thus withstood all the efforts of the Prussian horse led on by Blücher. When these were obliged to retreat, the French rose and drove in the infantry in front of them, breaking the centre of the Prussians.

Again they formed in squares to resist fresh efforts of the duke of Brunswick and Prince William of Prussia, who led the cavalry to the charge. Fortune aided the valour of the French. All the Prussian generals were severely wounded, Brunswick himself, Schmettau, Wartensleben, and Prince William. Their troops were obliged to retreat. Lastly, the king himself made a gallant effort to restore the fortunes of the day in vain. The centre being broken, all the efforts of the wings could not produce a serious result. The Prussians, with their monarch, turned their backs; and the routed troops from both Jena and Auerstädt, as they mingled in their flight to Weimar, informed each other of the extent of the disaster.

All this strategy must be recapitulated; two battles took place on October the 14th, within six leagues of each other, one at Auerstädt, the other at Jena. In the first, 26,000 French, commanded by Marshal Davout, withstood the pick of the Prussian army, nearly twice their number; in the second, at Jena, Napoleon, with a third more men than the Prussian and Saxon corps of Möllendorf, easily vanquished their columns: Jena was an engagement, Auerstädt the battle. Bernadotte was in the centre of the position. As for Davout, his was a more memorable triumph; the honours of that great day were his; if Napoleon barely mentioned his name in his bulletin, as he all but omitted that of Marshal Soult in the report of the battle of Austerlitz, these omissions must be attributed to jealousy. Napo-

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leon never exalted his rivals in glory; he only praised military mediocrities, or men who incorporated themselves in him. No one else must be high when the emperor radiated in his glory.<sup>h</sup>

## THE OPPRESSION OF PRUSSIA

If the statesmanship of the king of Prussia had been neither noble nor wise, he, as well as his family and nation, at least vindicated their honour, even on the field which they lost. In his flight, Frederick sent to demand an armistice of Napoleon. It was refused, and on the following day Erfurt surrendered to Murat, with near 100 pieces of artillery, 14,000 men, and numerous magazines. The French pushed on without intermission towards Berlin. Napoleon had avenged the defeat of the French at Rossbach, but forgot his wonted generosity in victory, when he took away from the field the commemorative column, and sent it to Paris.<sup>1</sup> He at the same time liberated all his Saxon prisoners, in order to attach that elector to his interests.

On the 27th of October, Napoleon entered Berlin at the head of his guards, in the midst of the silent tears of its population. Napoleon showed himself far more severe towards Prussia than towards Austria; yet Prussia had shown him less inveteracy. But he revered the antiquity of the imperial house, whilst his plan of shutting all the seaports of Europe against England rendered it necessary that he should be perfectly master of Prussia. His conduct to the princess of Hatzfeldt is, however, an exception. The prince, who was civil governor of Berlin, had been rudely received by Napoleon. A letter of his, directed to his fugitive monarch, was intercepted; the emperor caused him to be seized and tried by a court martial. The fate of Palm, a poor bookseller, who had been condemned for some libel against Napoleon, and executed in consequence, showed that the French cared little for legal forms. The princess therefore hurried to Napoleon, flung herself at his feet, and craved the pardon of her husband. For reply, he handed her the intercepted letter, the proof of the prince's offence, and bade her burn it.

Frederick, in the meantime, had fled behind the Oder. Fortress after fortress had surrendered. Spandau had fallen at once; Magdeburg, the bulwark of the kingdom, after a short siege; and Blücher alone supported in flight the national character for ability and courage. He made a daring retreat amongst the French divisions, which pursued and crossed his path, and at length, shutting him up in Lübeck, forced him to surrender. Thus in one action had the power of Prussia been not only shaken, but destroyed. Prussia, after a long peace, started up against Napoleon in his might. The superior nationality of Austria also contributed to give her the advantage, but this not so much as is generally argued.

At Berlin, Napoleon had to enter once more upon the task of organising a new empire. All the smaller states of Germany were now compelled to make part of his confederation. Saxony was treated with lenience, Hesse-

<sup>1</sup> After Napoleon's return from Austerlitz, Denon presented him with divers medals illustrative of his victories. The first represented a French eagle tearing an English leopard. "What's this?" asked the emperor. Denon explained. "You rascally flatterer, you say that the French eagle crushes the English leopard; yet I cannot put a fishing-boat to sea that is not taken: I tell you it is the leopard that strangles the eagle. Melt down the metal, and never bring me such another." He found similar fault with the medal of Austerlitz. "Put Battle of Austerlitz on one side with the date, the French, Russian, and Austrian eagles on the other, without distinction. Posterity will distinguish the vanquished."



Cassel and Brunswick with severity. The emperor had even an idea of converting Prussia into a republic; of which, no doubt, he himself was to become in time president, consul, and king. But he soon gave up the hopeless plan of forcing himself upon the honest allegiance of the Germans. His armies now occupied Hamburg, a free city, against which the emperor had no assignable cause of war. To strike a great commercial port with nullity, and shut it against the English, was his object.

#### THE BERLIN DECREES OF 1806

But all Bonaparte's acts, even his conquests, were surpassed in audacity by the famous Berlin decrees. They were accompanied by numerous reports, and prefaced by such logic as the law of 500,000 bayonets might deign to use. Bonaparte commences by saying,

"England admits no law of nations, in that she captures the merchant vessels, as well as the armed ships of her enemy, together with the French crews of the former; in that she blockades ports unfortified as well as fortified, and declares in a state of blockade whole coasts and ports before which she can scarcely keep a single vessel."

This last is the only plausible charge; those which precede it are mere raving. Since, were Bonaparte's edition of the law of nations to be put in force, France might on land overrun and pillage the whole continent, whilst she might completely shelter her coast from her enemy by destroying the fortifications of every port, and be able at the same time to reap the gains of commerce on one side, and the plunder of war on the other. In order to establish these convenient rules, or rather until they were established, Napoleon decreed Great Britain to be in a state of blockade, forbade all commerce and correspondence with it. Every Englishman found in any country was prisoner of war; all English property, anywhere found, was confiscated. No ship coming from England or her colonies, or having touched at her ports, was to be received in any harbour; or if any arrived, it was to be confiscated.

Such was the decree by which Bonaparte endeavoured to shut out England from the continent at the expense of neutral and independent nations. This he intended to enforce in every port throughout the whole circuit of Europe, from St. Petersburg round to Constantinople. This scheme of wounding Great Britain by crippling her commerce, resembled, in its magnitude, its impracticability, and its ill-success, his plan of destroying her Asiatic commerce by invading Egypt. Both recoiled upon himself; for nought more than the severities of the continental system, as that of these decrees is called, alienated from Napoleon the affections of the middle classes both of his subjects and of his allies. Whilst the conscription, or its extreme enforcement, wounded their parental affections, the system deprived moderate fortunes of the common and customary luxuries of life. Sugar rose to eight and ten shillings a pound; coffee and all colonial produce tantamount; whilst the temptation to contraband trade, and the corresponding vexations of the excise, excited that perpetual war betwixt government and governed, which is the most fruitful source of disaffection.

#### NAPOLEON IN POLAND

Meantime, an attempt at negotiation on the part of the king of Prussia, who had retired to Königsberg, met with no result. Napoleon demanded the cession of all the country betwixt the Rhine and the Elbe: he had

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already conceived the project of establishing the kingdom of Westphalia in favour of his young brother Jerome. Russia was still unconquered, and Frederick William hoped that the power of Alexander might in a fortunate battle put a check to the ascendancy of the French. Unluckily for this hope, war broke out at this moment betwixt Russia and Turkey. A young military envoy, Sébastiani, whom Napoleon had sent to Constantinople, contrived in a few days of intrigue to destroy the amicable relations existing not only between Russia and the Porte, but between England and that its "ancient ally." In a moment, the invasion of Egypt by France, and its defence by England, were forgotten; and the French ambassador was seen arming the batteries of Constantinople, and commanding its militia, against the British.

Napoleon himself now advanced in pursuit of the Prussian monarch, after issuing a proud proclamation to his soldiers, in which he informed them that "they had conquered on the Elbe and the Oder, the French possessions in the Indies, the Cape of Good Hope, and the Spanish colonies." All the glories of Austerlitz and Jena appeared nothing, unless partly won at the expense of England. The emperor was now at Posen, the capital of that part of Poland acquired by Prussia. From thence he went to Warsaw. Here naturally occurred the great question of re-establishing the ancient kingdom of Poland. Napoleon might have called himself the avenger of Poland, and might have called it into being. It would indeed have been his wisest policy, a piece of generosity that might, in the future crisis of his fortune, have saved him from general ruin. But Napoleon was too selfish; he preferred raising up a kingdom for his worthless brother Jerome, to restoring one of the most ancient and heroic in Europe. There were difficulties in the way, no doubt. Prussia should disgorge the province of Posen; Austria, that of Galicia. But Austria might have been indemnified. At the sight of Russian and Prussian eagles flying from Warsaw, the Poles were in exultation. Their patriotism and national spirit revived; they re-assumed their national dress, and their youth crowded into the Polish regiments now formed to act in concert with the French. Napoleon was resolved, indeed, to make use of their zeal; but to reward it by national independence was a stretch of generosity requiring efforts and sacrifices from which he shrank. "Shall the throne of Poland be re-established? Shall the nation resume its existence, and start from the tomb to life? God alone, who holds in his hand the combinations of events, is the arbiter of this great political problem. But certainly never were circumstances more memorable, or more worthy of interest." Such was the vague language respecting Poland of the imperial bulletins.

The Russian armies had abandoned Warsaw, but were still not far from this capital and from the Vistula, where Napoleon intended to pass the winter with his army, pressing the siege of Dantzic, and awaiting the 80,000 fresh conscripts, which he demanded to be with him before the spring. It was necessary, however, to clear his front, and intimidate the Russians, a new enemy, by some striking feat. Lannes, for this purpose, attacked the Russian corps under Bennigsen at Pultusk; but that general made a stubborn and skilful resistance; he manœuvred so as to expose the French to a dreadful fire of artillery, which wounded their chiefs, and occasioned great slaughter. Bennigsen was at last, indeed, obliged to retreat; but the French lost their aim, and, instead of disheartening, gave fresh confidence to the Russians. Bonaparte ordered his army into the winter quarters first designed. Here, however, the French were not allowed to remain more than the first fortnight of the year, 1807, in repose.<sup>g</sup>

## CAPEFIGUE'S ACCOUNT OF THE EYLAU CAMPAIGN

The hard frost had set in, and Napoleon remained at Warsaw in the midst of receptions, concerts, of all the festivals and pomps of a refined court. Those around him seemed to notice a characteristic change in him; he had become indolent, somewhat indifferent about his troops; he had forsaken the bivouac for the palace—the cold seemed to paralyse him. This was no longer the general of Austerlitz, sleeping on December 2nd in an outhouse of deal. Was Warsaw destined to become the Capua of the new Hannibal? Napoleon worked in his cabinet on the civil affairs of his empire, and public matters occupied him, in the eyes of the Russians, who, he believed, had also gone into winter quarters; this need of sheltering himself behind walls was in itself a remarkable change in Napoleon! Was he already growing old? The emperor, with his iron constitution, had nevertheless not forgotten the warm climate of Ajaccio; this biting cold seemed to take from him the free use of his faculties; grown idle, he preferred the glowing log, where the wood of the fir tree crackled in the flames, to the activity of a snow-covered battle-field.

This caused a certain confusion in the army's movements; each marshal acted according to his own judgment, orders were badly carried out; now Ney would step forward and compromise the fate of the army by an impulsive act; the next day it would be Murat wheeling like a madman around the Vistula. They dug the earth in search of potatoes, and the horses ate the straw off the cottages from hunger. The banks of the Vistula were without vegetation and the shops were empty; plenty existed only in the palace at Warsaw, where Napoleon lacked nothing—not even the rich pelisses of northern Asia, lined with gorgeous furs. The soldier alone was dying of cold and hunger.

However, the Russians were not idle: their winter quarters consisted of the plain; they were pleased at the sight of the frozen ground; they pranced around the emperor's winter quarters. Bennigsen was perfectly aware of the demoralised condition of the French army in Warsaw, and with his hussar-like promptitude and daring, he resolved to surprise it by a forward movement. The Russian plan of operations depended upon two most important strongholds, Königsberg and Dantzic; the emperor, with his instinct for great matters, had seen that nothing serious could be undertaken until these two fortresses were in his possession; the one depended upon the other.

Bennigsen's march had for base Königsberg and Dantzic: then, supported from these two points, he was to surprise the French army and force it to quit Warsaw, where it was settled in its winter quarters. This movement was most daring. The Russians were first of all to fall upon Marshal Ney, who was imprudently engaged, always to the fore like a brave and worthy knight; they could not cut him off; Bernadotte supported him with his eminently military genius. Without Bernadotte, Ney would have been overwhelmed. Bernadotte, well informed of the movement, wrote to the emperor at Warsaw: "Bennigsen's entire army is advancing; make haste, sire, we must stop it by a battle." January 22nd the emperor left Warsaw in ten degrees of frost. The emperor's march was brilliant; General Bennigsen having advanced too far, Napoleon, in his turn, turned him by a left flank movement. General Bennigsen ordered a retreat.

Skirmishes continued until the two enemies had taken up their position at Eylau. Here lamentable and glorious funeral rites were enacted. Prussian Eylau is a large village with natural fortifications; it is situated in the



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midst of fir woods — melancholy-looking trees which form a vast retreat in deserts of snow. A plateau dominates the village and defends the outlet of a wide plain ; it was here that the Russians had taken up their positions. Quite close was a cemetery, of German aspect, with black crosses on tombstones engraved with armorial bearings ; this cemetery was occupied by a portion of the Russian guard, living corpses, who were soon to enrich this earth and supply ample food to the tombs. Napoleon gave no respite : in the evening, the word of attack was given ; the charge already resounded. As at Austerlitz, Marshal Soult commenced the action by striking the serried columns ; at all costs this position must be taken. Napoleon had ordered it, and nobody resisted such an order. A struggle with fixed bayonets took place in the dark, and Eylau was occupied by the French in the midst of the artillery's resounding fire. On this dark and memorable night, Marshal Davout made a movement to attack the enemy on the left, and Ney supported him. As for the emperor, he was on the plateau of Eylau ; the fires of the bivouac shone in the distance ; huge fir logs had been thrown in the roaring flames, for the cold was bitter during the night in Poland.

The following day, the 8th of February, witnessed a great battle. As soon as day dawned, the Russians were deployed in close columns ; their front was covered by a formidable artillery whose fire reached home. These masses of northern men were of splendid appearance, huge grenadiers, cavalry mounted upon beautiful Livonian horses, the artillery with its terrible fire — such troops would make a breach anywhere. Napoleon perceived the danger ; he opposed these powerful columns by the two corps of Marshal Soult and Marshal Augereau ; this deadly fire must be stopped at all cost ; 60 pieces of artillery of the guard were placed in position ; the danger must have been great indeed for the guard to open the battle.

The cemetery of Eylau became the centre of the battle, the dead in the tombs would soon give a cold embrace to other dead who were falling under the grape-shot ; the sky was black, the snow fell so fast that the soldiers could hardly see a few paces in front of them. The artillery which broke through this gloom was like thunder during a storm. Gusts of icy wind drove the snow into the faces of the French and favoured the Russians. Augereau's corps went astray by a false movement and these old regiments were trampled under the feet of the Russian cavalry. The whole of Desjardins' division was slashed to pieces ; the brave soldiers fell after a heroic defence. Of a company containing a hundred and twenty men, only five answered to the roll-call in the evening ; Augereau received a shot in the face, and was carried off the battle-field seriously wounded.

This reverse was perceived by the emperor, it was time to strike one of those blows which change the fortune of a battle, and Napoleon knew how to improvise them ; he said to Murat, "Charge that cavalry" ; cuirassiers and carbineers pierced the Russian squares, but such was the passive strength of these soldiers — walls of iron — that after having given way before the cavalry, they reclosed their ranks as if the damasked blades had not opened them. These fine cuirassiers were rallied vigorously, nearly all the generals commanding them remained on the battle-field. For the first time perhaps a double charge was held, forward and backward ; the cuirassiers were obliged to break the ranks to penetrate into the middle of the squares and to break them again to get out.

The Russians, emboldened by this splendid defence, took the offensive, and in their turn attacked the cemetery occupied by six battalions of the old guard ; the emperor had placed himself on a cippus shaped like a column,

surmounted by a funereal urn, so as to watch the progress of the battle; the Russian columns deployed round the walls, a strong division was detached with fixed bayonets for the purpose of entering the cemetery. Napoleon, deeply agitated, drew his sword and ordered the service squadron, with a strong battalion of the old guard to support it, to charge this column. The issue of this *mêlée* was about to become terrible; the six battalions of the guards were already setting out under Napoleon's glowing eyes, when Murat arrived on the scene and charged the Russian infantry which was deploying under the right and left fire.

At midday the ultimate success of the battle was in peril: the emperor, his field-glasses turned towards the right, waited for Marshal Davout to extricate the army from so difficult a position; Davout had promised to arrive at eleven o'clock, but he had found himself face to face with picked brigades of the Russian army which had stopped him suddenly; he had been fighting for two hours. Augereau's defeat had left a Russian corps unemployed; full of victorious enthusiasm, Bennigsen sent it to charge Marshal Davout. Overwhelmed by numbers, the marshal retreated, his regiments were broken up, driven a league from the battle-field; he was met by the bayonets of the Prussian general Lestocq; the marshal was then obliged to concentrate his forces on the heights which dominate Eylau.

This was the state of affairs at four o'clock, when Ney, manœuvring at haphazard, arrived on the funereal field of Eylau; night was coming on, and only a few cannon-shots were heard between the two armies in the distance. All were exhausted after that day of slaughter; Ney's corps were not capable of charging, and blows were spontaneously stopped. Thus the armies ceased firing through sheer exhaustion. Napoleon and Bennigsen dated their despatches from the same field of carnage, to state that victory was equally divided. Eylau was a great slaughter, with no result whatever. Upon a narrow space of ground more than 30,000 men lay stretched on the battle-field; victory was gained by neither side. General Bennigsen was received with vigour and had attacked with boldness. What men! What troops! All day the cannon had fired within musket-shot, the discharges shook the ground, and this went on under heavy snow, in ten degrees of biting cold.

There was little strategy displayed in this battle: Napoleon had not shown his manœuvring genius; close attacks followed each other, man to man. The very reserve squadron was obliged to fight; Napoleon took his sword at the head of his old grenadiers of the guard; bullets rained around him, grape-shot thinned the ranks; if the Russian column which was bearing down upon the cemetery had not been stopped by the movement of the old guard and by Murat's charge, the fate of the emperor himself would have been compromised.

The next day the sun had hardly risen, red and cloudy, when the emperor visited the battle-field of Eylau. Napoleon was there, thoughtful and dejected, on a war-horse, with difficulty picking a way through the corpses; the field was covered with snow, reddened by long streams of blood for about a league and a half; here and there fir trees with their black leaves rose like sepulchral urns; then clouds of ravens alighted on the corpse-strewn earth with joyful croaking.

The aspect of that field of carnage was a sufficient proof of an encounter between picked troops; entire ranks, fallen under fire, lay there with the same firmness of bearing as if they were still fighting erect. There was something both grand and horrible in the appearance of that plain of Eylau.

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What men! what gladiators had fallen in the circus proclaiming Cæsar's glory! Napoleon never forgot that spectacle; and in his despatch he described vividly the aspect of the plain of Eylau. He then added the following cruel but artistic phrase to his despatch: "All this stood out in relief on a background of snow." It required familiarity with such a spectacle and a hard heart to be able to send an artistic description of this desperate battle of Eylau, where seven generals were killed at the head of their glorious procession of proud soldiers. Since the battle of Novi, no such desperate battle had been fought with such ruthless and indomitable courage.

For this reason the battle of Eylau was not forgotten, and left an ineffaceable impression of sorrow on the army. Russians and French returned of their own accord to their winter quarters, thoroughly worn out and exhausted. On either side the army was in a deplorable state of disorganisation; entire corps had disappeared; the four divisions commanded by General Augereau could not, when united, form a brigade; in some companies of light infantry and grenadiers, out of a hundred men, eighty-five had been killed; all these details were known in Warsaw and Paris; in Warsaw where M. de Talleyrand still held his diplomatic court, a partisan of peace, he was deeply affected by the deplorable turn the campaign was taking; he believed in Napoleon's genius, but he could not disguise the danger of his position on the banks of the Vistula 400 leagues from his frontier, face to face with Russia.<sup>b</sup>



NICHOLAS CHARLES OUDINOT  
(1767-1847)

#### THE BATTLE OF FRIEDLAND (JUNE 14TH, 1807)

The Russians had not yielded their ground on the day of battle; but they had been dreadfully cut up, with no succour to expect, while Bernadotte's fresh division was still behind Napoleon's. Bennigsen, therefore, retreated on the following day. The emperor had contemplated making the same movement; but on the disappearance of the Russians, he remained at Eylau an entire week, and then retired to occupy with his army the line of the river Passarge, his headquarters being established at Osterode. Here he despatched a messenger with offers of peace to the king of Prussia; whilst, on the other hand, he took measures for reducing Dantzic, for calling up reinforcements and supplies for his army.

The tidings that a battle of doubtful success had been fought towards the extremities of Prussia filled the Parisians with alarm. The funds experienced a considerable fall. So miraculous indeed had been the good



fortune of Napoleon, that people looked to its breaking like a spell, and considered reverses as probable. The same feeling prevailed in the army; and more than one general counselled a retreat behind the Vistula, all looking with a distaste little short of presentiment to prosecuting war in such distant and inhospitable regions. Napoleon, however, persisted in remaining on the Passarge, where he tarried until the month of May, when Dantzie surrendered to General Lefebvre, giving its name to its captor, henceforward called the duke of Dantzie. Reinforcements had reached both armies. Bennigsen commenced the summer campaign by attempting to force his way over the Passarge on the 5th of June. He was worsted on one point by Bernadotte, who was wounded in the head.

The French then became aggressors in turn, and drove the Russians behind the Alle. After an action at Heilsberg, both armies marched northwards, the Russians on the east side, the French on the west side of the Alle. It became necessary for the former, however, to pass the river, as they wished to preserve Königsberg, and at Friedland was the bridge and road which led thither. The French had but one division, that of Ney, immediately opposite to Friedland. Bennigsen pushed over forces to attack it. Napoleon was at Eylau; he hurried, however, to Friedland with the rest of his army.<sup>g</sup>

It was the 14th of June, the anniversary of the battle of Marengo; and, as is well known, Napoleon loved to celebrate such anniversaries by fresh victories, so that his army and the nations might see in him the man elect. But it is difficult to explain why he was so slow, on that day, in opening the attack. As at Marengo, he allowed himself to be forestalled by the movement of the enemy. The day before, his army had crossed the Alle and taken Friedland. The corps which occupied it was driven out in the evening; this slight success excited Bennigsen and rendered him less circumspect than usual. He, in his turn, did not fear to cross this river which supported his defence; a terrible mistake which placed him in a most dangerous position, however it might succeed; for the emperor, who had not foreseen this movement, had remained at his headquarters at Eylau, eight leagues from the battle-field.

Lannes and Oudinot, who were to bear the entire brunt of the exertions of Bennigsen's army, could not understand the emperor's delay. The latter did not hurry, so improbable did it appear to him that Bennigsen, ready to engage in a decisive battle, would place the river at his back. All the morning, Lannes and Oudinot, with prodigious exertions, kept at bay an army which they estimated at eighty thousand men; and Bennigsen was discouraged at the failure of his efforts. It was only at one o'clock in the afternoon that Napoleon arrived on the battle-field.

The victory for Bonaparte always dated from the moment the enemy committed a mistake; it was the triumphant glance of a clever player at a game of chess. "I can hardly believe my eyes and your reports," he said to his generals; "what! — Bennigsen, crossing the Alle, has fallen into that trap? We shall see how he is going to extricate himself." "It is perfectly true," answered General Oudinot, "and if my grenadiers were not exhausted, I should already have made them take a bath in the river."

Napoleon dictated his plan of battle under the double inspiration of the sp and the faults of the enemy. He traced it with the same precision with which he would presently see it carried into execution. It was a fine monument of military skill, fit to adorn works of instruction upon military art; then, in place of those fine and fiery proclamations by which he often

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prepared and began his victories, he summoned his generals around him. He spoke to each such words as reward and redouble heroism.

Three great generals, Soult, Davout, and Murat, were on the Königsberg road. Napoleon had, in the first instance, intended to order them to rejoin him, but it meant postponing a battle whose success appeared to him assured. It would mean the loss of a marvellous opportunity given by fortune, or rather by Bennigsen's imprudence. The victory would be more sudden and more glorious, if perhaps less decisive. At five in the evening, Ney opened the battle with an impetuosity which remained unabated throughout. He reached the gates of Friedland; his vigorous attack was seconded by Lannes, Oudinot, and Victor. The Russian imperial guard hastened to defend Friedland; for a moment they forced two of Marshal Ney's divisions to give way, but Dupont's division sustained the shock without wavering and soon drove them back into Friedland, where the Russians were crowded together, obstructed the ways, and were unable to manœuvre. They allowed themselves to be exterminated with their usual patience, whilst continuing their vigorous fire. Bennigsen recognised that it was now time to make use of the three bridges he had thrown across the Alle to save his artillery, which was in danger. He succeeded to a certain extent; but the troops who were fighting in front of that river, which proved so fatal to them, remained exposed to all the fire and steel of the French army. Some had the good fortune to find a ford which facilitated their retreat; others, rather than surrender, threw themselves into the water. A great number were drowned. Ney at last reaped the reward of his stubborn exertions; he entered Friedland with Dupont and ended the battle he had so gloriously begun.

Nightfall, fatigue, and great losses prevented a vigorous pursuit. However, the Russian army, weakened, it was said, by the loss of twenty thousand men, met with other obstacles in its retreat on the Niemen. Murat, guided by the roar of the cannon, had set out to harass the retreat of that army, whilst Soult captured another spoil of the battle at Königsberg where the enemy had left valuable stores. To expect further battles after such butcheries would have been inhuman. If this slaughter went on the two empires were threatened with the prospect of leaving all their population fit for war on these awful battle-fields and in these relentless climates. Friedland, without doubt, was a victory in every way, but one of those victories which tell the victor to proceed no farther. Prussia, abandoned by her defenders, seemed to be blotted from the political map of Europe.



CLAUDE PERRIN VICTOR  
(1766-1841)

At the earliest opportunity Napoleon issued a proclamation to his army. "In ten days' campaign," said he, "you have taken 120 pieces of cannon, killed, wounded, or taken prisoners 60,000 Russians, and Königsberg has surrendered. . . . From the bank of the Vistula you have flown to the Niemen with the rapidity of the eagles. Soldiers, you are worthy of yourselves and of me." The battle of Friedland closed the campaign.<sup>a</sup>

#### THE PEACE OF TILSIT

As soon as Alexander beheld the French upon the Niemen, and Russian Poland about to be invaded, he determined to ask for peace, "in order," says Buturlin<sup>j</sup> the historian, "to gain the time necessary for preparing to maintain the struggle, which, as was well known, would one day be renewed."

The two emperors agreed to meet and the first interview took place upon a raft built in the middle of the river (June 25th). "I detest the English," said Alexander, embracing Napoleon, "as much as you do, and I will uphold you in anything you attempt against them."<sup>1</sup> "In that case," Napoleon replied, "peace is concluded."

The two sovereigns took up their abode in Tilsit, admitted the king of Prussia to their conferences, and treated each other with marks of the liveliest affection for twenty days. Napoleon felt flattered at being acknowledged by the most powerful monarch in Europe. Alexander, who to great duplicity added a chivalrous exaltation carried to the extreme of mysticism, believed he was participating in the glory of the "man of the century, and of history." As for the king of Prussia, he was disregarded by the two newly made friends, and already saw himself sacrificed; in vain did the queen come in person to beseech the conqueror, who had insulted her in his bulletins, and to soften him used all the charms of her beauty and wit; Napoleon was insensible to the point of harshness. The war with Prussia had been a war of passion, and the treaty which ended it was a passionate one.<sup>k</sup>

There is much inexplicable in the French emperor's severe treatment of Prussia, contrasted as it is with his lenience and respect towards Austria. The latter had been at the head of three coalitions against France; the former, after one brief expedition, had remained neutral, and by so doing had procured the ascendancy of France; yet, when at last driven to resist, she is punished more than the inveterate and unflinching enemy. Bignon,<sup>l</sup> as we have seen, attributes this to Napoleon's having at first set his heart on an intimate alliance with Prussia, and to his having been disappointed in this object. The reason is not sufficient. Bonaparte had warred as a general against Austria; in that inferior grade he could not but respect an illustrious enemy; and this early impression he never altogether shook off. But Prussia was the enemy of Napoleon, of the emperor, who had condescended to personal vituperation, and who scribbled against Frederick, his queen, and court, in the *Moniteur*.

The reason given by Bignon was, however, to a certain degree influential. The French sovereign had need of one ally amongst the three great powers of the north and east; he could afford to be friendly and merciful to that one. He first looked to Austria, which, having no seaports, could

[<sup>1</sup> The English ministry then in power, the successors of Fox, had departed from the Pitt system of subsidising largely, and the Russian monarch thought it fit and just to execrate Great Britain for not paying him to defend himself. The sentiment, however, was eminently calculated to conciliate the conqueror.<sup>a</sup> Of Fox, the Baron de Norvins<sup>d</sup> said, "Fox has carried to the tomb with him every hope of the world's peace."]



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not support him against England, and indeed would not. He then turned towards Prussia, whose mean and vacillating policy disgusted and alienated both him and Great Britain. Now he flung himself into the arms of Russia; anon we shall find him recurring to Austria again.

The terms now granted to the king of Prussia were stated publicly to be concessions made to Alexander, rather than to Frederick. They deprived him of all his territories westward of the Elbe, Magdeburg included; whilst on the east, he was curtailed of his acquisitions from Poland, which were erected into an independent state, to be called the duchy of Warsaw. Dantzic was also declared a free town; free, however, after Napoleon's fashion, with a garrison of French troops. The king of Prussia by this treaty lost upwards of four millions of subjects, preserving not more than five millions. Yet even what was preserved was not generously ceded. By an unworthy chicane, Bonaparte refused to evacuate the country till the arrear of contributions was paid; and this he estimated at an extravagant sum, triple of what his own intendants reckoned. Under colour of this, French garrisons were kept in the towns of Küstrin, Stettin, and Glogau. The duchy of Warsaw, with the shadow of a constitution, was given to the new king of Saxony, and Prussia was to allow their monarch communication between his two states by a military road across Silesia. Moreover, Prussia was bound to adopt the continental system, and shut her ports against the English. This, indeed, Bonaparte enforced, commanding the course of the Oder by Stettin, that of the Elbe by Hamburg. The queen of Prussia begged in vain for Magdeburg.

Prussia, as well as Russia, acknowledged the right and titles of Joseph Bonaparte, king of Naples and Sicily—Alexander thus abandoning the Italian Bourbons, whom he had so long protected. At the same time Louis Bonaparte was recognised king of Holland, and Jerome king of Westphalia. This last sovereign was to hold his court at Cassel, the old capital of Hesse, and was to include in his dominions the old territories of Brunswick, part of Prussia west of the Elbe, and part of Hanover. The principal stipulations at Tilsit were between Napoleon and Alexander, lords of the Old World, the one from the Atlantic to the Niemen, the other from the Niemen to the Pacific. They had enormous interests to discuss. Alexander had not hitherto raised himself above the moderate and traditional ideas of European courts. Coming in contact with Napoleon, whose mind embraced the globe, and teemed with gigantic projects, the Russian emperor was infected and caught with the high ambition which he found so eloquent, and saw so successful, in his great rival. Napoleon was to subdue the west of Europe, of which Spain alone remained to subdue, and Austria, perhaps, to humble somewhat more; whilst Alexander was to crush Sweden on one side of her, Turkey on the other. Sweden deserved, indeed, the enmity of France; but to plot against Spain, which had sacrificed its navy to Napoleon, and whose army was at this very moment in his service in the north, was atrocious. We must defer notice of this perfidy. That towards Turkey was equally unjustifiable. That court had every cause of resentment against France. Nevertheless, on the instance of Sébastiani, she quarrelled with her allies, England and Russia, and exposed herself to the peril of their hostilities. It was at this moment, in this critical situation, that France abandoned her to Russia.

These stipulations, avowed or secret, of the Treaty of Tilsit, were nothing less than a league to enchain the world. They actually annihilated Prussia, Alexander's late ally; they menaced Spain and Sweden with the same

imminent fate, Turkey and Austria prospectively. England was of course devoted to ruin. History may add the striking moral that it was here, in this very league of perfidy, that Bonaparte laid the trap into which he himself inextricably fell.<sup>9</sup>

#### THIERS' COMMENT ON THE PEACE OF TILSIT

Napoleon now returned into France, where he was impatiently awaited and which had been deprived of his presence for nearly a year. Never had such matchless splendour surrounded the person and name of Napoleon, never such apparent omnipotence been acquired to his imperial sceptre. From the straits of Gibraltar to the Vistula, from the mountains of Bohemia to the German Ocean, from the Alps to the Adriatic Sea, he ruled either directly or indirectly, either by himself or by princes who were, some his creatures, others his dependants. Beyond this vast circuit were allies or subjugated enemies, England alone excepted. Thus almost the entire continent was held by him; for Russia, after having resisted him a moment, had adopted all his designs with eager warmth, and Austria found herself constrained to allow their accomplishment and was threatened with compulsory co-operation in them. England, in fine, protected by the sea from this universal domination, was to be placed between the alternative of peace or war with the world. Such were the outward aspects of this colossal power—well calculated in truth to dazzle the universe, as it effectually did; but the reality was less solid than corresponded to its brilliancy.

In the intoxication produced by the prodigious campaign of 1805 to change arbitrarily the face of Europe; and instead of being content to modify the past, which is the greatest triumph accorded to the manipulation of man, resolving to destroy it; instead of continuing the old and beneficial rivalry between Prussia and Austria by advantages granted to one over the other, to tear the German sceptre from Austria without giving it to Prussia; to convert their mutual antagonism into a common hatred against France; to create under the title of "confederation of the Rhine" a pretended French-Germany, composed of French princes, objects of antipathy to their subjects, and German princes ungrateful for all the benefits they received; and after rendering, by this inequitable displacement of the limit of the Rhine, war with Prussia inevitable, a war as impolitic as it was glorious, to give way to the torrent of victory and be carried to the banks of the Vistula there attempting the reconstruction of Poland with Prussia in the rear vanquished but quivering with anger and Austria sternly implacable—all this, admirable as a military exploit, was in its political bearings imprudent, excessive, and chimerical!

By the aid of his surpassing genius Napoleon maintained himself in these perilous extremities, triumphed over all the obstacles of distance, climate, mud, and cold, and consummated on the Niemen the subjugation of the continental powers. But at bottom he was solicitous to bring his audacious march to an end, and all his conduct at Tilsit bore the impress of this exigency. Having forever alienated the good will of Prussia, which he had not the fortunate inspiration to retrieve forever by a striking act of generosity, enlightened touching the sentiments of Austria, and experiencing, all-victorious as he was, the necessity of forming an alliance, he accepted that of Russia which offered at the moment and devised a new political system founded on a single principle—the concurrence of the Russian and French ambitions to do what they liked in the world: a fatal understand-

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ing, for it behoved France to keep a curb on Russia and much more to keep a curb on herself. After aggravating through this Treaty of Tilsit the rankling animosity of Germany by creating within it a French royalty, destined to cost France in the waste of men and money, in invincible hatreds to surmount and in unheeded counsels, all that hitherto those of Naples and Holland had cost her; after reconstituting Prussia fractionally instead of restoring or demolishing her bodily; after in like manner reconstituting Poland by a half creation—and all finished in an incomplete manner because at so great a distance time pressed and strength began to dwindle, Napoleon gave himself irreconcilable enemies and powerless or doubtful friends; in a word, reared an immense edifice, an edifice in which all was new from the base to the summit, an edifice constructed so rapidly that the foundations had not time to settle nor the cement to harden.

But if so much censure may be heaped in our opinion upon the political work of Tilsit, however brilliant it may appear, all is found admirable on the contrary in the retrospect of military operations. This army of the camp of Boulogne—which moving from the shore of the Channel to the sources of the Danube with an incredible rapidity enveloped the Austrians at Ulm, repulsed the Russians on Vienna, accomplished the annihilation of both at Austerlitz, and after reposing a few months in Franconia soon recommenced its victorious march, entered Saxony, surprised the Prussian army in retreat, crushed it by a single blow at Jena, pursued it without intermission, outflanked it, outstripped it, and took it to the last man on the extreme edge of the Baltic—this army turning from the north to the east hastened to encounter the Russians, hurled them back on the Pregel, paused only because impracticable quagmires impeded its movements, and then presented the wondrous spectacle of a French army tranquilly encamped on the Vistula. Being suddenly disturbed amidst its quarters it subsequently emerged from them to punish the Russians, reached them at Eylau, waged with them, although perishing of hunger and cold, a sanguinary battle, returned after that battle into its quarters, and there again encamped on the snow, in such a manner that its repose alone covered a great siege, being supported and recruited during a long winter at distances in which all the efforts of administration usually fail; resumed its arms in the spring; and now nature seconding genius interposed between the Russians and their base of operation, reduced them with the view of regaining Königsberg to cross a river before it, precipitated them into it at Friedland and thus terminated by an immortal victory on the banks of the Niemen its far protracted and audacious course—not across a defenceless Persia or India like the army of Alexander of Macedon, but across Europe covered with soldiers as disciplined as brave. Behold what is unexampled in the history of ages, worthy the eternal admiration of mankind, showing in combination all qualities of human mind, promptitude and procrastination, audacity and prudence, the science of battle and the art of marches, the genius of war and the tact of administration, and these virtues so various, so rarely united, always appropriately developed and at the moment when they were needed to insure success! The reader will ask how it came to pass that so much prudence was manifested in war and so little in policy. And the reply will be easy; it is that Napoleon directed war with his genius and policy with his passions.<sup>m</sup>





## CHAPTER XX

### THE RUSSIAN DISASTER

[1807-1810 A.D.]

Like the giant of fable who piles mountains one on top of another, Napoleon had heaped victory on victory. His military glory surpassed all glories. The inebriate public believed in the grand alliance which crowned all these triumphs and was going, they said, to impose peace upon the world and wring from humbled England the liberty of the seas.

This colossal and splendid edifice was built upon the sand.

— HENRI MARTIN.

FROM the events of Napoleon's reign one consolatory reflection, at least, can be drawn — the impossibility of lasting conquests and extended empire in the present stage of civilisation. So strong has grown the force of public opinion, even in the most despotic states, that any great, inhuman, and effectual system of oppression, such as that which founded conquest in the Middle Ages, has become impracticable. Less than this is inefficient for conquest. Napoleon conquered Austria and Prussia. Why did he not dethrone their monarchs and place himself or his vicegerent, in their stead? Because he durst not excite the whole population to arms against him. His talk, therefore, at St. Helena, of forbearance is wild and unfounded. Had he dethroned the king of Prussia altogether, his armies could not have existed on the Oder and the Niemen, except continually fighting, continually reinforced; and sources of recruiting were already beginning to fail. Napoleon did all that he durst in the way of usurpation. North Italy, indeed, weary of the Austrian yoke, underwent the French yoke readily, as did the southern part of the peninsula when gratified with a local king. In the smaller states on the other side of the Rhine, and within a march of the French frontier, he was able to adopt the same plan. Jerome

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reigned in Westphalia, Louis in Holland. With the old kingdoms of Germany he dared not attempt it. The feats of divers insurgent parties, such as that under the brave Schill, taught him what was to be expected from such an attempt. His own regrets, therefore, and those of his partisans, that he did not crush altogether the house of Brandenburg, are idle. He acted unwisely, putting justice and generosity out of the question, in oppressing Frederick; he would have acted madly in dethroning him. Spain offers itself a pregnant example.

## ENGLISH POLICY VS. FRENCH

Napoleon far overpassed the limits of vengeance and retaliation, which the independence, the honour, or security of France demanded; pursuing selfish schemes, unhailed as uncalled for by the nation, or even by its soldiers. In English policy, on the contrary, however the honest selfishness of patriotism may be apparent, that of the individual at least is never perceived; whilst France, also, set the example in that contempt for neutral rights in which England came to participate. But saying thus much against France, we cannot but allow England's own nautical maxims to be violent and arbitrary. The custom of anticipating a declaration of war by the seizure of ships which had entered English ports in peace, is in itself barbarous and unjust. As the war advanced, the English maxim of blockade became more strict. Engaged in a deadly struggle with a power that knew no tie or restraint, the English ministry soon unfettered itself equally, and committed acts which naught but the imperious necessity of national defence, could excuse. An expediency became sufficient to cover, with the house of commons, some of the grossest acts of injustice. One step of the kind led to another. The attack on the Spanish galleons, ere peace was broken, was an egregious outrage. And now necessity came to prompt one still more flagrant.

Denmark was situated somewhat as Holland had been — unable to resist or withhold its resources from France. To seize the Danish fleet was the order of the British commander. It was demanded, indeed, as a deposit during the war, to be restored at the conclusion of peace. But an independent sovereign could not listen to such conditions; and, melancholy to relate, Copenhagen was laid in ashes by the British, in order to compel their acceptance.

This of course closed the ports of Denmark henceforth against England. It gave Russia also ample pretext to proclaim its adoption of the continental system, already acceded to in secret. And now it may be said that the whole civilised world was engaged in war with the solitary islands of Britain. America was hostile from north to south. Russia, Austria, Prussia, France, Italy, and Spain, were in arms against her. Even Turkey, the "ancient ally," was ingrate, and — except Sweden, ruled by the feeble hand of a maniac, about to let go his sceptre, and Portugal — all Europe was hostile ground. British commodities were still landed in the Tagus, from whence they were circulated through the peninsula. In order to stop this last source of gain, as he imagined, to English merchants, Napoleon turned his forces to the peninsula. Thus the conferences of Tilsit did not even interrupt the struggle between France and Britain, but merely changed its scene from north to south. In July, 1807, the treaty was signed. In September, Copenhagen was bombarded. In October, Junot marched with an army from Bayonne against Portugal.

French historians agree in allowing that Bonaparte was now in the zenith of his glory. Victorious on every side, no power seemed capable of withstanding him for an instant upon land. England, on the contrary, was low as misfortune could reduce her, but still unabashed in spirit. In 1807, however, the public opinion of Europe was completely turned even against her probity, by the affair of Copenhagen. It cast a dark shade over the justice of her cause; and Napoleon had the advantage in fair character, until he meddled with the peninsula, and showed himself equally rapacious to the Spanish as individually selfish to the French, sacrificing the resources of his country to the elevation of his own family. Hence his decline may be dated. The hour of his highest triumph was signalised by a final blow given to the principles of the Revolution. A shadow of liberty still existed in the tribunate: Napoleon now suppressed it. A vestige of equality still remained; his dukes and princes forming an aristocracy, indeed, but not an hereditary one. The descent of titles and honours was now established by decree; and, as usual, the last measure excited most reprobation. He reimbursed the country not only with glory, but by salutary institutions. The code completed the Revolution in one of its most important aims, that of simplifying law.

Of the organic laws of Napoleon, the most useful to him was the conscription. This true source of his despotism he derived from the republic. It placed the whole youth of the country at his disposal. They were raised without cost, and supported by the contributions of the conquered countries. Up to 1805, no very immediate use was made of this power. According to Foy,<sup>c</sup> but seven in the hundred of the population were called each year to arms. But from that epoch the conscription knew no limits. Under one pretext or another, the entire generation, not only of youth, but of manhood, were transported to the armies. There was no longer a fixed term of service. "Natural death to a Frenchman became that found on the field of battle. Napoleon went so far, at last, as to demand 1,100,000 soldiers in one year, and that, too, from a population already exhausted by 3,000 combats." According to General Foy, the emperor supported, towards the end of the year 1807, upwards of 600,000 soldiers, besides the military forces of his allies.

#### NAPOLÉON IN SPAIN AND PORTUGAL

The sovereign of this tremendous force, master of one-half of Europe, and aided by the rest, now turned his attention to the apparently diminutive object of excluding English cottons from the Tagus. An army of nearly 30,000 men marched, under Junot, to Lisbon to effect this. It was necessary to pass through Spain. Charles IV, king of Spain, was governed by his queen, who was governed in turn by her favourite, Manuel de Godoy.<sup>1</sup>

Junot continued his march towards Lisbon, and at the advance of the French army the Portuguese court was thrown into agonies of terror and irresolution. It determined to close all ports against the English, but the concession was of no avail. A few weeks later (November 30th, 1807) Junot entered Lisbon with his advance-guard. But the house of Braganza had ceased to reign; the royal family had embarked on board their own and the British fleet, and set sail for the Brazils, and Junot was only just in time to fire a few cannon-shots at the last ships of the fleet. Napoleon had now

[<sup>1</sup> For the details of the elaborate plots, battles, and insurrections, of the Peninsular affair, as for the later Peninsular War, in which the duke of Wellington engaged, the reader is referred to the volume on Spain and Portugal. The story will be merely outlined here.]



[1807-1808 A.D.]

realised his expectations with regard to Portugal, but there still remained Spain. And all the unoccupied forces of France were secretly poured into that devoted country. Charles IV and his son Ferdinand, prince of Asturias, were plotting and counter-plotting one against the other, both craving the friendship of Napoleon. He gave both parties promises of protection, and meanwhile seized the forts of Barcelona. This opened the eyes of Charles and even of Godoy. A few months before they had plotted with Napoleon for the overthrow of the house of Braganza. They had fled, and the same fate now seemed to await Charles. Preparations were made to retire to Cadiz but the populace stopped the royal carriages and prevented the flight. Charles was made to abdicate, Ferdinand was proclaimed king in his stead, and Godoy nearly fell a victim to popular vengeance. But this arrangement did not suit Napoleon and on the 6th of May the prince was made to yield back to Charles the crown that he had assumed on the 19th of March, 1808. Napoleon summoned 150 Spanish nobles to assemble at Bayonne. They met in June, and they were then informed that Joseph Bonaparte was to be king of Spain. Louis having refused the post, Joseph Bonaparte's place on the throne of Naples was given to Murat.<sup>d</sup>

This crime,<sup>1</sup> as clumsy as it was monstrous, brought on that great popular insurrection of Europe against the universal monarchy which has profoundly modified all subsequent history, and makes the anti-Napoleonic Revolution an event of the same order as the French Revolution. A rising unparalleled for its suddenness and sublime spontaneousness took place throughout Spain, and speedily found a response in Germany. A new impulse was given, out of which grew the great nationality movement of the nineteenth century.

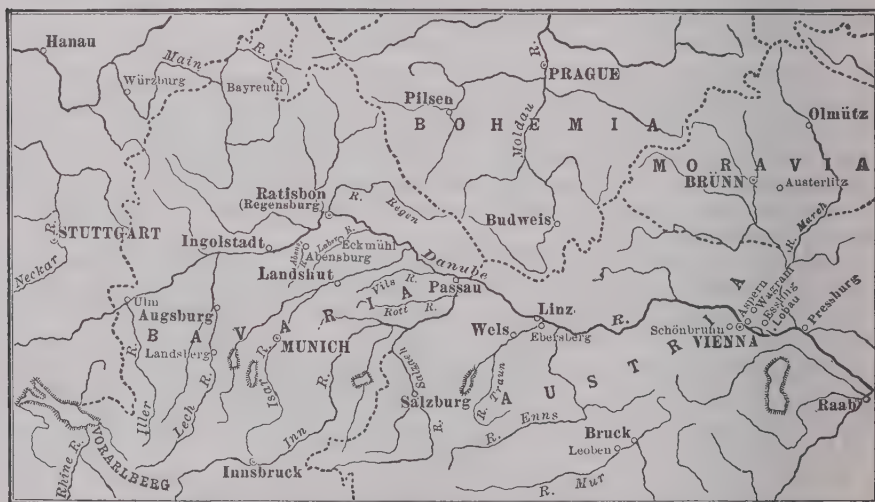
Instead of gaining Spain he had in fact lost it; for hitherto he had been master of its resources without trouble, but to support Joseph he was obliged in this same year to invade Spain in person with not less than 180,000 men. With Spain too he lost Portugal, which in June followed the Spanish example of insurrection, and had Spain henceforth for an ally, and not for an enemy. Hitherto he had had no conception of any kind of war not strictly professional. He had known popular risings in Italy, La Vendée, and Egypt, but had never found it at all difficult to crush them. The determined insurrection of a whole nation of 11,000,000 was a new experience to him. How serious it might be he learned as early as July when Dupont with 20,000 men surrendered at Baylen in Andalusia to the Spanish general Castaños. In August he might wake to another miscalculation of which he had been guilty. An English army landed in Portugal, defeated Junot at Vimeiro, and forced him to sign the convention of Cintra. By this he evacuated Portugal, in which country the insurrection had already left him much isolated. This occurrence brought to light a capital feature of the insurrection of the peninsula, *viz.*, that it was in free communication everywhere with the power and resources of England. Thus the monarchy of Tilsit suffered within a year the most terrible rebuff.<sup>e</sup>

Whilst Bonaparte was completing this act of Machiavellianism, his brother of the north was accomplishing his balance of usurpation. Finland was invaded by the Russian armies in February (1808); and on the very day that the Spanish king was forced to sign away his rights at Bayonne, the ancient province of Sweden was annexed to Russia.

[<sup>1</sup> Napoleon himself called it his "tragedy of Bayonne," and said at St. Helena "that cursed war destroyed me: it divided my forces, opened a wing to the English soldiers, and attacked my moral standing in Europe."]

## A NEW WAR WITH AUSTRIA (1809 A.D.)

The court of Vienna also began to display signs of returning spirit. She armed, increased her regular force, and organised a militia. Napoleon, in the month of August, took the opportunity of a public levee to reproach Metternich, the Austrian envoy. But tidings of the Spanish resistance and of English successes in Portugal gave hardihood to German independence. Napoleon resolved at once to menace and insult Austria. He had a meeting, September 27th, 1808, with the emperor of Russia at Erfurt, in Germany, where, as at Tilsit, the great European interests were of course discussed, and Austria excluded as a secondary power. The sovereigns of the confederation of the Rhine all appeared at Erfurt paying court to Napoleon, who, thus acting Charlemagne, quite usurped the place of the modern cæsars. Her pride being thus trampled on afresh, Austria determined, though alone, although even opposed by Russia, once more to renew the struggle with France.



MAP ILLUSTRATING NAPOLEON'S CAMPAIGN OF 1809

Amidst the few civil occurrences drowned in the tumult of arms, a circumstance indicative of Napoleon's ideas of government occurred in the pages of the *Moniteur*. In November, the legislative body thought fit to present their congratulations to the empress Josephine on a victory in Spain, near Burgos. She thanked them, and assured them of the emperor's respect towards the "representatives of the nation." The journals repeated the expression: it reached Napoleon in his camp; and an immediate note transmitted to the *Moniteur* informed the French public of their master's code of government, and at the same time betrayed a symptom of ill humour towards Josephine:

As to the legislative body representing the nation, her majesty the empress could not have uttered any such words: she knows too well our institutions; she is aware that the only representative of the nation is the emperor. In the time of the convention France had a representative assembly; and all our misfortunes have proceeded from this exaggeration of ideas. It is at once chimerical and criminal in any to pretend to represent the nation before the emperor.

[1808-1809 A.D.]

Such was the language held to the French public in eight years after the fall of the republic. Let it, however, not be supposed that the French received such affronts in apathy: on the contrary, the enthusiasm for Napoleon now died away; and even his ardent followers allow that success survived his popularity, the latter languishing since the epoch of Tilsit. The first hostilities of Austria excited neither astonishment nor resentment in Paris. The French, themselves oppressed, began to consider their foes as fellow-victims. The car of Juggernaut, however, once put in motion, is not to be stopped even by those who first impelled it. Austria armed: Napoleon called for fresh conscriptions; his guard was recalled from the pursuit of the English, to combat the Austrians on the Danube. War seemed interminable; the prophecy of Talleyrand was fast realising itself.

The court of Vienna had made most incredible exertions: an army of nearly 200,000 men, commanded by the archduke Charles, menaced both France and Italy; another army in Galicia opposed whatever forces the emperor Alexander might think himself called upon to send in order to support his ally. Austria determined to crush her enemy by the magnitude of her exertions. In her first campaign against France, in concert with the duke of Brunswick, she had equipped but a wretched army of 40,000 men; yet then 100,000 would have decided the question. England made precisely the same blunder. Both countries were now compelled to keep 500,000 men each in pay, in order to compete with their giant antagonist.

On the 10th of May, 1809, the archduke passed the Inn. Napoleon had hurried from Paris on the first tidings; he met the king of Bavaria at Dillingen, whither he had fled from his capital. Bonaparte had scarcely a French soldier with him: he put himself at the head of the Bavarians and men of Würtemberg, visited their lines and bivouacs, addressed them, and stirred them to emulate French valour. His efforts were successful: on the 20th of May, whilst Davout advanced from Ratisbon, Napoleon attacked, at the head of the German troops, and defeated the Austrians at Abensberg. Davout being almost between them and the archduke's main body, at Eckmühl, the routed wing was obliged to retreat in another direction, to Landshut, where it was forced to surrender on the morrow. It was in these first moments of rencontre that Napoleon so happily knew how to seize an advantage.

From the field of Abensberg, Davout had been ordered to advance straight towards the archduke Charles at Eckmühl, whilst Napoleon followed the routed Austrian wing to Landshut. The latter foresaw that the archduke would direct his forces against Davout. He did so; but whilst in the act of attacking, the portion of the army under Napoleon came from Landshut, on the left flank of the Austrians, who were totally unprepared, and who thought Napoleon far away; the consequence was a complete victory. The archduke made the best retreat possible to Ratisbon: there crossed the Danube to join the Austrian corps on the side of Bohemia, and left the right bank, together with Bavaria, free.

Thus, after the campaign of a week, in which two actions and divers combats had been fought, the French emperor was enabled to send forth one of his astounding proclamations. "An hundred pieces of cannon, 50,000 prisoners, forty stand of colours:" so great already was the amount of his trophies; and these were achieved principally by Germans, by the soldiers of Bavaria and Würtemberg. The general here made the army. Davout was created prince of Eckmühl on the field of battle. Napoleon on this occasion received a contusion on the right foot from a spent ball. "That must have been a Tyrolese," said he, "by his long aim."



The archduke Charles having crossed the Danube at Ratisbon, retreated into Bohemia, no doubt desiring to draw the French after in pursuit. Napoleon preferred marching on the right bank to Vienna. A respectable force under General von Hiller alone opposed him here, and took its stand in a strong position at Ebelsberg near Linz. Masséna, eager to rival Davout's recent glory, attacked it, and Ebelsberg was also marked with French victory. Towards the close of the combat the town was set on fire, and all the wounded burned to death. "Figure to yourself," says an eye-witness, "all these dead baked by the fire, trodden under the feet of the cavalry and the wheels of the artillery, all forming a mass of mud, which, as it was removed by shovels, emitting an indescribable odour of burned human flesh, caused a sensation, horrible even amongst the every-day horrors of war." In passing Coehorn's Corsican regiment, that had headed the column of attack, the emperor inquired respecting its loss, which had been about one-half of its number. "We have just one more charge left," replied the officer, pointing to the surviving half of his battalion.

Precisely in a month after the Austrians had commenced the war, by passing the Inn on the 10th of May, Napoleon was at the gates of Vienna. The archduke Maximilian refused to surrender; the French accordingly occupied the suburbs, and mortars being placed near the beautiful promenade of the Prater, the bombardment began. A flag of truce soon appeared; but it was merely to mention that the archduchess Marie Louise, confined by indisposition, had been left behind in the imperial palace. Napoleon immediately ordered the guns to play in another direction, thus sparing unconsciously his future empress. On the 12th Vienna capitulated, and received the French troops on the following day.

The favourite triumph of Napoleon was to date some startling order from the conquered capital of an enemy. He now sent forth from his imperial camp at Vienna a decree, setting forth that "Charlemagne, emperor of the French, our august predecessor, bestowed upon the bishops of Rome divers countries, not in property, but as a fief, to be held upon certain spiritual services; but by no means intending that these territories should cease to make part of his empire." The conclusion from these logical premises was the annexation of Rome and its territories to the French empire; the pope being allowed still to remain there as bishop, with a revenue of two millions of francs.

#### NAPOLÉON DEFEATED AT ESSLING<sup>1</sup>

The archduke Charles had in the meantime reached, by a circuitous march through Bohemia, the bank of the Danube opposite Vienna. More wary than in 1805, the Austrians had destroyed every bridge over the river, whilst it became indispensable for the French to cross it, and put an end to the war by a victory, ere insurrection or diversions could be formed in their rear, — ere the want of subsistence or accident should compel them to retreat. There were no materials for forming a bridge; and, instead of anchors for attaching the boats, the French were obliged to make use of Austrian cannon. On the 21st of May, Napoleon passed with the greater part of his forces to the left bank of the Danube, occupying the two villages of Gross-Aspern and Essling, but not without considerable loss from the artillery of the enemy.

By the morning of the 22nd, about 40,000 French were on the left bank, and against them the archduke marched with all his forces. Masséna was

[<sup>1</sup> This is also called the battle of Marchfeld or of Gross-Aspern.]

[1809 A.D.]

intrusted with the defence of Gross-Aspern, Lannes with that of Essling. The Austrians penetrated into the village, where the French still preserved their position, and every house and wall became a fortress and entrenchment, attacked and defended with obstinate valour. As the combat slackened on the part of the Austrians, towards Essling, Napoleon advanced into the plain, brought forward his cavalry, and menaced the centre of the enemy. The archduke Charles flew instantly to the threatened point, rallied in person his faltering troops, and seizing a standard with his own hands, led them back to the charge. The French were repulsed; and at the same time a want of ammunition made itself felt, the stores being still on the island. At this critical moment the bridge was carried away, either by the stream, or by the impediments which had been purposely sent down the river. The tidings of this accident, which cut off all hopes of reinforcement, produced an involuntary movement of retreat towards the bridge, which the workmen hastened to refit. As the French in their retreat converged to the one point, the bridge, the enemy's cannon made dreadful slaughter amongst them.

Essling was taken, but retaken by Mouton, now count de Lobau. To keep possession of it was absolutely requisite to protect the retreat. Lannes quitted his horse to command the defence, and he held out while the cavalry was crossing the temporarily refitted bridge. A cannon-shot carried off his legs. General Saint-Hilaire was slain. But the French were enabled to retreat from the left bank back into the island of Lobau. Thither Bonaparte had retired. Thither the shattered Lannes was borne. This brave man now bewailed his fate, cast imprecations on the surgeons who could not save him, and invoked Napoleon as a deity to grant him life. Lannes regretted the glories and triumphs of life, more than he feared death. Napoleon was greatly moved.

The French had been beaten, certainly by forces vastly superior. The loss was enormous: Bonaparte sat between Berthier and Masséna, on the brink of the river in the island, contemplating the broken bridge; his army shut upon the island of Lobau, separated too widely from Davout and from succour, too narrowly from the foe. All counselled a retreat to the left bank, which could only be done by abandoning artillery, horses, and wounded. This was acknowledging defeat. The emperor knew the dreadful consequences of this. "You may as well bid me retire to Strasburg at once," said he. "No; Vienna is now my capital; the centre of my resources. I will not abandon it, nor retreat." The troops in the isle were, in consequence of this giant resolve, ordered to hold their ground.

The news of the French defeat immediately spread, and insurrection began to menace. That of the Tyrol against the Bavarians was most serious. These brave mountaineers surpassed the inveterate Spaniards in hardihood, and no efforts or force could subdue them. Napoleon pressed the arrival of aid from Italy, from Dalmatia, and from Saxony.

#### THE BATTLE OF WAGRAM (JULY 6TH, 1809)

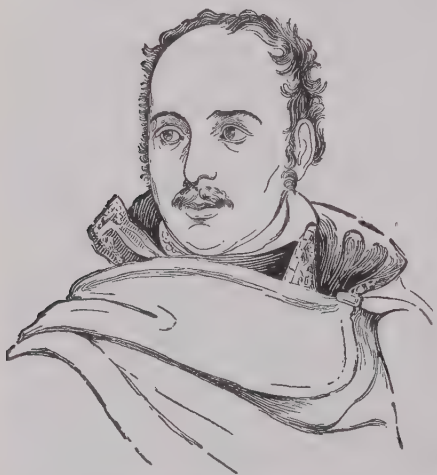
The emperor had fortified his position in the island of Lobau, and busied himself with preparing another bridge. The archduke Charles still occupied the opposite bank, but remained tranquil, satisfied with having repulsed the French. His brother, Prince John, was recalled from Italy, and was closely pursued by Eugène Beauharnais, who defeated him at Raab. Bonaparte chose the moment when he was joined by Eugène, and before the

archduke Charles could be joined by his brother, to pass the Danube once more to the attack.

On the 4th of July, the French, reinforced by the Saxons, the army of Eugène, and that of Marmont from Dalmatia, were concentrated in the island of Lobau, to the number of 150,000. There was scarcely room for the troops to repose. Napoleon ordered the original bridge opposite Essling to be repaired, as if he intended to cross by its means. This was but to deceive the Austrians. In the night three more bridges, ready prepared, were fixed lower down, and the French army crossed on the night of the 4th and the morning of the 5th. The archduke instantly found his batteries and preparations idle. Instead of fronting the Danube, he was obliged to extend his line perpendicular to it, from behind Gross-Aspern to Wagram, and from thence behind a little river on his left. The 5th was spent in manœuvring and cannonade, the Austrians retiring from Essling. Towards evening Bonaparte wished

to dislodge them from their commanding position at Wagram, but his troops were beaten back and routed. Both armies slept on the field, the French without a fire, Napoleon in a chair.

On the morning of the 6th commenced the famous battle of Wagram. The Austrian centre was on the high ground near that village. Davout, on the right, was able to resist. But on Masséna's side the battle seemed lost. That general, from the effects of a fall, was in a carriage, not on horseback; his troops, unanimated by his presence, shrunk from the enemy, whose cannon enfiladed the line. For a long time Napoleon was in doubt, riding on a white charger in the midst of this raking fire, which Savary calls "a hail-storm of bullets." At length he resolved to allow his wings to resist as they might, and to fling all his disposable force upon the Austrian centre at Wagram. He sent Lauriston against it with 100 cannon, the infantry under Macdonald,



PRINCE EUGÈNE BEAUHARNAIS  
(1781-1824)

Bessières supporting both with the cavalry of the guard. Macdonald's charging columns arrived just as the artillery of Lauriston had made large breaches in the Austrian bodies. The French rushed into the gaps. A diversion from the extreme right aided them, and the centre, at Wagram, was driven in, routed, and the wings abandoned. It was then an easy task to take in flank the corps already victorious over Masséna.

In short, the several portions of the Austrian army fled from the field in disorder, separated from one another. The French, however, had suffered too much to follow them. The guard did not charge with their wonted alacrity. Masséna's hurt, Lannes' loss, Bessières' accident, had each an untoward effect at Wagram. Napoleon sought to replace Lannes by Macdonald, whom he created marshal on the field of battle.<sup>1</sup> The Saxons, under

<sup>1</sup> Oudinot and Marmont also were created marshals after Wagram.



[1808-1809 A.D.]

Bernadotte, had not shown any excess of courage in the action; still their commander, in a bulletin, attributed to them a great share in the success. Napoleon was so discontented with this, that he deprived Bernadotte of the command; an additional cause of quarrel between them.

Wagram was a victory, but it was not a victory like Marengo or Austerlitz. The hostile army was defeated, but neither destroyed nor intercepted. The archduke Charles, formidable in force, and still more in military talents, had withdrawn into Moravia, awaited the army of his brother, and might have prolonged the campaign. Napoleon deemed it prudent to make peace. An armistice was concluded about the middle of July. Napoleon took up his quarters at Schönbrunn, an imperial palace near Vienna, where he was at hand to control the course of the negotiation that ensued.<sup>d</sup>

#### RUPTURE WITH THE POPE (APRIL 2ND, 1808)

It was on the question of the continental blockade that the contest with Pius VII began. The pope intended to remain neutral, but as a temporal prince he could not evade the measures imposed on all the continental powers. He wanted to, nevertheless; moreover, he refused to recognise Joseph as king of Naples, and he steadfastly opposed the policy of France in Italy. Napoleon had not expected this resistance; tired out with a war of diplomatic negotiation, threatened with excommunication, he caused Rome to be occupied on April 2nd, 1808. But this capital which was so easy to take could be guarded only with great inconvenience, and this old man who had neither a soldier nor a cannon was more difficult to conquer than the innumerable troops of Austria. The sword of the conqueror was to be blunted against this intangible power which commanded consciences rather than armies. It was in vain that Napoleon had declared the temporal dominion of the pope suppressed after Wagram, made Rome and its territory into two French departments, and kept the pontiff in honourable captivity at Savona; he found himself weakened by these extreme measures because from that time a redoubtable opposition was formed against him in the ranks of the French clergy and Catholics. The great services he had rendered the church, the re-established altars, the restored cult, France brought again by him into Catholic unity, all was forgotten; only the persecutor of the pontiff was seen in the author of the concordat.<sup>1</sup> In signing this famous document the first consul had said: "The clergy is a force; I wish to seize it." He did not know that that force never allows itself to be held. At the end of a few years, it had turned against him.<sup>s</sup> The pope made the resistance that became his station, and assumed the character of a suffering martyr. Miracles were said to be worked by his voice. "Thus the year 1809," says Norvins,<sup>g</sup> "seemed to belong more to the Middle Ages than to the nineteenth century. It presented nothing but war, violence, excommunication, miracles, peasant insurrections, captivity, and treason, the oppression of the strong, the rebellion of the weak."

There had been some fighting in Westphalia, against insurgents. The gallant Schill had fallen. Hofer, more successful in the Tyrol, beat back the French under Lefebvre, and refused to acknowledge the armistice.

<sup>1</sup> At Savona the pope refused to act in any manner, Napoleon nominated 27 bishops which the chapters refused to receive. He suppressed certain festivals, closed convents, demanded an oath of canons and curés. Over two hundred refused and were exiled. Napoleon sequestered church property estimated at 250,000,000 francs and entered them in the state treasury at 150,000,000.<sup>f</sup>

Towards Warsaw, Austria had had the better of Napoleon's allies, the Poles under Poniatowski. An expedition from England, under Lord Chatham, at the same time sailed to the Schelde; but, instead of boldly aiming at Antwerp, it began with Walcheren and Flushing, and turned every way to the triumph of Napoleon. One circumstance connected with it nevertheless stirred his temper. Fouché had summoned the national guards of the northern departments to defend Antwerp. He gave the command to Bernadotte, but lately dismissed from the army at Vienna. In an address to his new army, the latter, an awkward courtier, bade it show that "the presence of the emperor was not indispensable to victory." The first act of Napoleon on learning this, was to dismiss Bernadotte from his command; and Fouché shared his friend's disgrace.

Conferences for peace continued between Napoleon at Schönbrunn, and the Austrian court then established in Hungary. There was no submissiveness on the part of the conquered. The power of Napoleon was in fact shaken. His army was no longer invincible. The day of Essling counterbalanced that of Marengo, and the emperor Francis felt that whatever might be the aspect of the present, the future was more threatening for his foe than for him. Napoleon made much the same reflections; even in his proudest day he acknowledged the necessity of having one great and cordial ally. Alexander had not proved such. He had played the lukewarm, temporising friend; and Napoleon recoiled from his alliance. The apparently indomitable power of Russia it was, that gave Austria confidence. To make himself master of Europe, Napoleon saw now that Russia must be humbled. What alliance and cajolery could not effect, victory should. Such were Napoleon's views at Schönbrunn; and, with these, to join with Austria, and make her rather than Russia his intimate, became his policy. It was requisite not to betray it; therefore, chaffering and bargaining were continued, and negotiations were drawn out. The apparent articles of the final treaty were the cession of Salzburg and other territories of the Rhenish confederation, that of Trieste and some adjacent lands to France, Cracow, and part of the Austrian spoil of Poland were given to the duchy of Warsaw; another small portion of it to Russia: adroit conditions, calculated to set Austria more at variance with the latter country. Napoleon affected to grant these moderate terms to the conquered, out of deference to Russia; on the contrary, they sprang out of pure enmity.

The memoir-writers of the day imagine that an attempt or plan made to assassinate the French emperor had the effect of inclining him to peace. A young German named Staps, the son of a Protestant clergyman, was seized in the attempt to approach him. A large knife was found in his breast; he avowed and gloried in the purpose. Bonaparte offered him pardon if he would profess contrition. The stubborn enthusiast scorned even these terms, and perished. Napoleon, it is said, immediately after this event, relaxed in the severity of his conditions, and peace was concluded; but it is more than probable that he wished to keep secret, from even his own negotiators, his new views respecting Russia, and that he seized on a pretext to fulfil a previous determination. Napoleon had tried every means hitherto, except that of justice and forbearance, to attach to his alliance one of the great powers of Europe. Prussia, Austria, Russia, all had proved insincere, naturally enough, because ill-treated. But Bonaparte, with the self-partiality of his country, did not see the outrageousness and injustice of his own ambition: nevertheless, as this alliance was necessary, he resolved to recur to the old cement of European monarchies, *viz.*, marriage.<sup>d</sup>

[1808-1809 A.D.]

## SIR WALTER SCOTT'S ACCOUNT OF THE DIVORCE OF JOSEPHINE (1809 A.D.)

There is perhaps no part of the varied life of the wonderful person of whom we treat, more deeply interesting, than the change which took place in his domestic establishment, shortly after the Peace of Vienna.

It was impossible that the founder of so vast an empire as that of Napoleon, could be insensible to a feeling which is so deeply grafted in our nature, as to influence the most petty proprietor of a house and a few acres — it is of a character to be felt in proportion to the extent of the inheritance; and so viewed, there never existed in the world before, and, it is devoutly to be hoped will never be again permitted by providence to arise, a power so extensive, so formidable as Napoleon's. Immense as it was, it had been, moreover, the work of his own talents; and, therefore, he must have anticipated with the greater pain, that the system perfected by so much labour and blood, should fall to pieces on the death of him by whom it had been erected, or that the reins of empire should be grasped after that event "by some unlineal hand."

The sterility of the empress Josephine was now rendered, by the course of nature, an irremediable evil, over which she mourned in hopeless distress.

She turned her thoughts to seek a remedy, and exerted her influence over her husband, to induce him to declare someone his successor, according to the unlimited powers vested in him by the imperial constitution. In the selection, she naturally endeavoured to direct his choice towards his stepson, Eugène Beauharnais, her own son by her first marriage; but this did not meet Bonaparte's approbation. A child, the son of his brother Louis, by Hortense

Beauharnais, which appeared, during its brief existence, more likely to become the destined heir of this immense inheritance, died of a disorder incident to childhood; and thus was broken, while yet a twig, the shoot, that, growing to maturity, might have been reckoned on as the stay of an empire. Napoleon showed the deepest grief, but Josephine sorrowed as one who had no hope.

As age advanced every year weakened the influence of the empress. By the time of the meeting with the czar at Erfurt, September 27th, 1808, divorce seems to have been a matter determined, since the subject of a match betwixt Bonaparte and one of the archduchesses, the possibility of which had been anticipated as far back as the Treaty of Tilsit, was resumed, seriously treated of, and if not received with cordiality by the imperial family of Russia, was equally far from being finally rejected. It seems probable that the



EUGÉNIE HORTENSE DE BEAUHARNAIS

(1783-1837)



idea of substituting an archduchess of Austria was started in the course of the Treaty of Schönbrunn, and had its effects in providing lenient terms for the weaker party. Napoleon himself says, that he renounced his purpose of dismembering Austria when his marriage was fixed upon.

Upon the 3rd of December, 1809, Bonaparte attended the solemn service of *Te Deum* for his victories. From the cathedral Napoleon passed to the opening of the legislative body, and boasted, in the oration he addressed to them, of the victories which he had achieved, and the trophies which he had acquired. He alluded to the obstacles which he had surmounted, and concluded, "I and my family will always know how to sacrifice our most tender affections to the interests and welfare of the great nation." These concluding words, the meaning of which was already guessed by all who belonged to the court, were soon no riddle to the public in general. Two days afterwards, Napoleon made Josephine acquainted with the cruel certainty, that the separation was ultimately determined upon. She fell into a long and profound swoon. Napoleon was much affected, but his resolution could not be altered.

On the 15th of December, Napoleon and Josephine appeared in presence of the full imperial council. In this assembly, Napoleon stated the deep national interest which required that he should have successors of his own body, the heirs of his love for his people, to occupy the throne on which providence had placed him. Josephine arose, and with a faltering voice, and eyes suffused with tears, expressed in a few words sentiments similar to those of her husband. The imperial pair then demanded from the arch-chancellor a written instrument in evidence of their mutual desire of separation; and it was granted accordingly, in all due form, with the authority of the council.

The senate was next assembled; and on the 16th of December, pronounced a consultum, or decree, authorising the separation and assuring to Josephine a dowry of two millions of francs and the rank of empress during her life. Addresses were voted to both the imperial parties, in which all possible changes were rung on the duty of subjecting our dearest affections to the public good; and the conduct of Bonaparte in exchanging his old consort for a young one, was proclaimed a sacrifice for which the eternal love of the French people could alone console his heart. The union of Napoleon and Josephine being thus abrogated by the supreme civil power, it only remained to procure the intervention of the spiritual authorities. The diocesan of the officiality, or ecclesiastical court of Paris, did not hesitate to declare the marriage dissolved. Josephine took up her residence in the beautiful villa of Malmaison, near St. Germain. Here she principally dwelt for the remaining years of her life, which were just prolonged to see the first fall of her husband. Napoleon visited her very frequently, and always treated her with the respect to which she was entitled. He added also to her dowry a third million of francs, that she might feel no inconvenience from the habits of expense to which it was her foible to be addicted.

#### NAPOLEON REMARRIES

Eugène, the son of the repudiated Josephine, was now commissioned by the council to propose to the Austrian ambassador a match between Napoleon and the archduchess Marie Louise. Prince Schwarzenberg had his instructions on the subject; so that the match was proposed, discussed, and decided in the council, and afterwards adjusted between plenipotentiaries on

[1810 A.D.]

either side in the space of twenty-four hours.<sup>1</sup> The espousals of Napoleon and Marie Louise were celebrated at Vienna the 11th of March, 1810. The person of Bonaparte was represented by his favourite Berthier, while the archduke Charles assisted at the ceremony, in the name of the emperor Francis. A few days afterwards, the youthful bride, accompanied by the queen of Naples, proceeded towards France.

With good taste, Napoleon dispensed with the ceremonies used in the reception of Marie Antoinette, whose marriage with Louis XVI, though never named or alluded to, was in other respects the model of the present solemnity. Near Soissons, a single horseman, no way distinguished by dress, rode past the carriage in which the young empress was seated, and had the boldness to return, as if to reconnoitre more closely. The carriage stopped, the door was opened, and Napoleon, breaking through all the tediousness of ceremony, introduced himself to his bride, and came with her to Soissons. The marriage ceremony was performed at Paris by Bonaparte's uncle, the cardinal Fesch. The most splendid rejoicings, illuminations, concerts, festivals, took place upon this important occasion. But a great calamity occurred, which threw a shade over these demonstrations of joy. Prince Schwarzenberg had given a distinguished ball on the occasion, when unhappily the dancing-room, which was temporary, and erected in the garden, caught fire; several persons perished. This tragic circumstance struck a damp on the public mind, and was considered as a bad omen, especially when it was remembered that the marriage of Louis XVI with a former princess of Austria had been signalised by a similar disaster.<sup>h</sup>



MARIE LOUISE  
(1791-1847)

#### THE CONTINENTAL BLOCKADE AND ANNEXATION OF HOLLAND (1809-1810 A.D.)

What was the real situation of the French Empire and of Europe after the peace with Austria and the marriage of Napoleon?

[<sup>1</sup> There is one fact which we think should not be omitted, because, though of trifling importance in itself, it shows what pains Napoleon was at to give predominance to the French nationality. He was just as anxious to assert the superiority of his language as of the empire. It was an ancient custom in Austria to draw up all documents concerning the royal family in Latin. All the world knows how hard and fast are such legal rules; but they were compelled to yield to a stronger power. Napoleon insisted that the acts relative to his marriage, which were to be signed in Vienna, should be written in the language of that imperial house of which the young archduchess was about to become a member, of that nation in which she was henceforth to dwell. The emperor Francis consented to this, but on condition that the exception should form no precedent. — BIGNON.<sup>1</sup>]

In spite of the terrible political blunder of the war with Spain, Napoleon, thanks to his military genius, had nevertheless triumphed over the diversion which the English had aroused against him in Austria. The coolness caused between France and Russia by the Austrian marriage by no means made a new war inevitable with the emperor Alexander, who did not wish it. Napoleon thus found himself confronted only by England and the Spanish insurrection. If he concentrated the immense forces he had at his disposal against these two enemies, there was no doubt that he would succeed in driving the English out of Portugal, and that he would eventually break the resistance of Spain or at least reduce it to a petty partisan warfare which would extinguish itself little by little. Austerlitz had killed Pitt; Wagram, if Napoleon knew how to profit by it, would kill the successors of Pitt. What Napoleon ought to do was evident to all. We shall see what he did.

Napoleon continued to press heavily only on Prussia and on the Hanseatic towns. Ruined as it was, Prussia was behindhand in the payment of heavy war taxes, which she had promised. Napoleon took advantage of this delay to keep his garrisons in the strongholds of the Oder and at Dantzic. As for the Hanseatic towns, Hamburg, Bremen, Lübeck, Emden, he continued to occupy them also in order to force them to observe the continental blockade, which drove them to despair. England succeeded in evading this blockade by a vast and skilful contraband organisation. Neutral ships, reduced to engaging in contraband trade or else giving up all commerce, were obliged to come to her ports to get provisions and to pay high duties to the English. Some of these ships then unloaded the English merchandise by night on points along the coast where receivers came to get it; others entered into the ports of the French allies and even into French ports, denying that they had had any communication with the English and pretending that they were bringing colonial produce from the proper sources. Most of these contraband ships were American or Greek, subject to the Ottoman Empire, which made immense profits by thus acting as intermediaries for the English.

The government of the United States was not their accomplice. Irritated at the violence committed at will by the emperor of the French and by the English government, it had forbidden its subjects to trade with Europe, and the American contrabands thus stood without the pale of their own law. Napoleon caused all the American and Greco-Turkish boats in French ports to be seized and derived great profit from their rich cargoes. He urged his allies to do the same in their own ports. He found with all of them a very lively resistance to this radical and decisive measure, and nowhere was the opposition more decided than in a country from which he had expected passive obedience—in the kingdom of his brother Louis, in Holland.

Napoleon made such oppressive demands from the states which were in fact French vassals, that his brothers and brothers-in-law whom he had made kings all tried to a greater or less degree to resist him in favour of their subjects. This opposition, however, was much more pronounced in the case of Louis, the king of Holland, because of his character and the situation of his people. He nourished towards his imperious brother depths of bitterness, which came from his unhappy marriage; and his upright and humane soul, his moral sense which distinguished him from all the Bonapartes, revolted against the thought of being an instrument of oppression towards the people over whom he had been placed to rule. The truth is that Holland was in a most deplorable state. Her commerce and marine were ruined, and all the sources of her ancient prosperity were exhausted. Napoleon had become supremely unpopular.



[1810 A.D.]

Napoleon wished to force Louis, not only to give up to him all the American ships found in the ports of Holland, but also to reduce the public debt of Holland by two-thirds—in other words to become bankrupt, so as to find money for the army and fleet which he demanded from Holland as her contingent. Louis came to Paris to try to move the emperor. Napoleon at first treated him very roughly and declared that he was resolved to ruin Holland for the sake of France. Louis refused to abdicate. Napoleon hesitated to employ force. The attempt at a negotiation proved abortive.

The marriage with Marie Louise took place soon after. Spring had come. People were waiting to see Napoleon start for Spain and direct a decisive campaign there. He did not start. He was too much occupied in perfecting the continental blockade and wished to watch over its being carried into effect on the shores of the North Sea, from close at hand. But above all, the real reason which kept him from returning to Spain was that no Austerlitz or Jena was possible there, no new thunder-clap which might increase the prestige of his glory. It was a war of patience, in which it was necessary to destroy, one at a time, insurgents difficult to seize, and to dislodge the English from their defensive positions in Portugal by forcing them to re-embark. His pride considered such operations beneath him. He sent Masséna.

Napoleon now exceeded the exorbitant conditions which he had imposed on Holland and caused his soldiers and custom officers to invade not only the borders but the whole of Holland. The French customs exercised an insupportable tyranny. When French troops approached Amsterdam Louis talked of opening the flood gates and of inundating the country, as in the war of 1672 against Louis XIV, and of calling on the English for assistance. The Dutch notables gathered about the king, themselves dissuaded him from an act of despair which would only have added to the miseries of their country. Louis abdicated in favour of his son, and left *incognito* to seek refuge in Germany. The place of his retreat was unknown for some time. The abdication of Louis did not save the nominal independence of Holland. Napoleon had already decided on uniting it to France and issued a decree to this effect (July 29th, 1810).

Napoleon ordained extensive operations of maritime construction at Rotterdam and at Amsterdam, and thus reanimated somewhat these two large cities, which were almost dead. Holland submitted to the annexation in silence. On the northeast France now exceeded the boundaries of ancient Gaul; it reached no longer to the frontier of the Rhine but to that of the Ems. It was felt that Napoleon would not halt there, that he would soon need all the coasts of the North Sea. A concession made to Dutch commerce in regard to the introduction of colonial produce was soon made general throughout the empire (August 5th, 1810). It was not possible in fact to suppress the contraband trade; the result was merely to make the contraband traders gain an enormous premium. Napoleon conceived the idea of getting this premium for himself by authorising everywhere the entrance of the colonial product in return for a tax of 50 per cent. payable in money, in bills of change, or in natural produce. At the same time that they admitted all the colonial produce they would confiscate and burn all merchandise of English manufacture, cotton goods, hardware, etc. This measure, very well conceived, and very adroit, was applied at once throughout the French Empire, and in all the countries neighbouring, or those occupied by French troops. Enormous masses of English merchandise were destroyed while quantities of colonial produce were spread through the

country and caused a fall in the exorbitant price of sugar, coffee, and a large number of consumable articles the lack of which had been cruel for the people. The French treasury gained 150,000,000 francs from the tax of 50 per cent., besides a large quantity of merchandise. England began to suffer greatly.

In respect to the United States, also, the situation was improving for France, and becoming worse for England. Napoleon had acted as skillfully there as in the affairs of the colonial produce. He had revoked the vexatious measures of the decisions of Berlin and Milan in regard to the Americans, and had given them full neutral rights on condition that they would impose respect for this neutrality on the English. The president of the United States announced by a proclamation that, if England had not revoked her paper blockade by February 2nd, 1811, America would re-establish her commercial relations with France and would rigorously interdict them with England. The Americans thus entered on a path which would lead them to war with the English.

The matter of the continental blockade progressed thus during the year 1810, and Napoleon began to obtain tangible results; but the solution depended chiefly on the war with Spain.<sup>b</sup>

#### AFFAIRS IN SWEDEN AND THE PENINSULA

A more important change took place in Sweden. The impolitic king of that country had been dethroned by his subjects, for compromising the integrity of the state, and sacrificing it to his enmity against France. The influential men of Sweden were compelled to look abroad to find the stock of another royal race, and preferred to choose one of Napoleon's generals, in order to acquire the favour of France, and to be secure from the encroachments of Russia. Singular enough, their choice fell upon the only marshal between whom and the emperor there was a secret enmity. Bernadotte had commanded at Hamburg, and had displayed there his lenience and sense of justice. In the campaign of Prussia he had captured a Swedish division, treated and dismissed it with kindness. He was accordingly preferred, and prayed to accept the Swedish throne. Napoleon covertly opposed the election. Bernadotte, however, played his part at once with firmness and sagacity. He accepted the bright offer, and, wresting Napoleon's assent, departed to enter upon his rule; for, although but crown-prince, he was already called to exercise the functions of government.

In Spain, after the retreat of Wellington subsequent to the battle of Talavera, the French succeeded in defeating the regular forces of their adversaries. The south at length owned the rule of Joseph Bonaparte who, in the beginning of 1810, entered Seville. There now remained but to chase the British from Portugal. The enterprise appeared too trivial, as we have said, to demand the presence of Napoleon. Masséna was intrusted with the task, and given 80,000 men to execute it. Before such an army, Lord Wellington retired, but the impregnable lines of Torres Vedras brought him as much honour as his previous victories. He secured there the independence of Portugal.

The French, from the soldier to the general, were fighting in a cause and field that they disliked. Marmont succeeded Masséna; but not to repair his fortune or supply his talent. Soult, who loved war for war's sake, was the most formidable enemy; yet, in the sanguinary battle of Albuera, Beresford, with a few thousand British, wrested victory from his hands.

[1807-1810 A.D.]

## THE RUSSIAN QUARREL

We now approach the quarrel betwixt France and Russia; the last act — the grand *dénouement* of the drama. There is no lack of causes. Although the flexible mind of Alexander forgot, in his admiration for the conqueror of Friedland, those conditions of the Treaty of Tilsit that were imposed upon Russia, his aristocracy, his people, who were far from sharing their monarch's personal esteem for the French emperor, could not fail to remind him of their sentiments. At Tilsit much had been promised and held forth on the part of Napoleon to dazzle Alexander and to captivate his friendship.

No sooner, however, did he part from Alexander, than Bonaparte revised his thoughts, and altogether changed his views respecting Turkey. He would no longer listen to the prayer of Alexander's ambition on this head; and at Erfurt the Russian monarch was obliged to abandon the plan. This disappointed him, and proved the first cause of the rupture. It is also the cause most honourable to Napoleon, who dwells on it accordingly. At St. Helena, he asserts, that his resistance to Alexander's views upon Turkey was the origin of the quarrel; and Bignon *i* affirms the same thing.

"From the conference of 1807 at Tilsit," says that historian, "sprung the germ that was to be fatal to Napoleon. To force England to peace conformably to the alliance of Tilsit, Russia was to act against Sweden, France against Portugal; or, to translate more largely the ideas of the two emperors, Russia left Napoleon full liberty of action over the south of Europe, France abandoning to Alexander similar liberty in the north with respect to Sweden, moreover allowing him to have a certain degree of tolerance on the side of Turkey. In consequence of these reciprocal concessions, France found herself engaged in the horrible Spanish war; Russia in one of which the dangers were insignificant, the advantage being the acquisition of Finland. Napoleon then imagined that Finland might content Alexander; no such thing. For a moment Napoleon had admitted the possibility of partitioning the Ottoman Empire. This contingency Alexander assumed as a certainty. His constant demands were on the subject of the partition. But Napoleon ever refused, and for a double motive: the first political, because the lot of France, magnificent as it had appeared, was but a source of peril and embarrassment, whilst that of Russia had proved all substantial and positive value; the second military, in that he looked on the Turkish Empire as a marsh, which prevented Russia attacking him on his right. Hence the gradual coolness betwixt the two emperors."

What is chiefly evident from this is the complete Macchiavellianism of both parties; nothing like justice entering into the contemplation of either, except such justice as robbers may invoke in order to secure a fair division of the spoil. In these calculations of interest evaporated the imperial friendship, the solemn amity of Tilsit.

There were other griefs. Napoleon, in the campaign of Wagram, had perceived the lukewarmness of Russia. He had mentally abandoned the hopes of close alliance with that country. Austria became his friend, his ally, by marriage; and Russia was menaced by this very act. The duchy of Warsaw, the nucleus apparently destined to agglomerate into an independent kingdom of Poland, was swelled with part of Galicia, sufficient to make Russia tremble for Lithuania. Griefs continued to amass. Secretaries and envoys with hostile notes preluded to war.

Napoleon had determined on it: to humble Russia, and reduce it to that obsequiousness towards him that Prussia and Austria displayed, was the



requisite completion of his system. Without this, all the rest was insecure. To talk of Napoleon's injustice and ambition at this time was vain; his empire was built on the two words, and was to be completed by them. His policy was profound, well calculated; it was his task that was difficult. He played for the game of universal empire; he made a false move with respect to Spain. He was compelled to that of Russia, unavoidable in time; and that he would have willingly deferred, had it been possible without retracting. The preparations of Bonaparte were gigantic: he drew from the soil of France the last soldier that conscription allowed him.<sup>d</sup>

#### THE GRAND ARMY

The *grande armée* was composed of a first army corps of 96,000 men, increased to 140,000 by the division of Prussian auxiliary under Davout, with its headquarters at Hamburg; a second army corps of 40,000 under Oudinot at Münster; a third of 39,000 plus 9,000 cavalry under Ney at Mainz. A fourth army corps of Italians under Prince Eugène [de Beauharnais] was to collect in Bavaria; a fifth, the Polish army of 36,000 under Poniatowski at Warsaw; a sixth, formed of Bavarians and commanded by Gouvion-Saint-Cyr, had its centre at Bayreuth; a seventh, of Saxons to the number of 17,000 at Dresden, under Reynier; an eighth, of Westphalians, under King Jerome at Magdeburg. The reserve cavalry and the imperial guard under Mortier and Lefebvre counted 62,000 men. Finally came the sappers and miners, the train soldiers and a corps of pontoniers. The whole amounted to 423,000 men, not including the Austrian corps from Galicia.

After this army, composed of the best troops, Napoleon organised a reserve army of at least 130,000 men including two new army corps, the ninth and tenth, under Victor and Augereau, and a certain number of separate divisions. This second army was intended to support the first and to guard Germany; many recruits and foreigners, such as Germans and Danes, were put into it.

Then the enormous figure of 600,000 soldiers was reached and, adding to it the Spanish troops and those which were to remain in other parts of the empire, the fabulous figure of 1,100,000. Such was the force with which Napoleon boasted that he would oppose Europe. It is true that 150,000 men of the grand army alone were troublesome auxiliaries, if not secret enemies, embittered at heart and only awaiting a favourable opportunity to abandon the French.

In the meantime a distressing famine was raging in France. The preceding harvest had been poor, at least for grain, wheat rose to the excessive price of 70 francs a hectolitre. This unparalleled dearness caused disturbances in the large towns. Napoleon organised a *conseil des subsistances* and spoke of nothing less than of putting a tariff on grain and of doing violence to the farmers as in 1793. Cambacérès succeeded in dissuading him from it only in part. The emperor wished that bread should be kept at a low price in Paris, that the bakers should be indemnified from the treasury, and the farmers obliged to bring their grain to market, which threw trade into a state of perturbation. Beginning to dread the popular murmurs which were getting louder he went to St. Cloud to pass the weeks preceding his departure.

The levies of men were another cause for complaint. Napoleon decreed the levy of 120,000 national guards, at the rate of 30,000 for those released from each conscription of the last four years. He had imagined what he

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called "a military classification of the nation," divided into 3 *bans* which would serve, the first at the frontier, the second in the *département*, and the third in the *commune*. The council of state became alarmed at this indirect method of levying more soldiers. Napoleon persisted, saying that "he would thus have a nation built of lime and sand, capable of defying men and centuries." However, only a part of his project was put into execution and violent murmurs greeted this demand of "flesh for cannon." For a long time an opinion, which was only too well founded, had prevailed, that people who entered military service did not come out of it alive. Mutiny broke forth in the large towns, in the schools. The number of refractory persons, which the severity of prosecution had at first diminished, increased to an alarming degree. In the annexed territories the mutinies became riots. There were uprisals in Italy and in Holland, where the delinquents were fired upon. In the Hanseatic departments desertion took place in large numbers.

Napoleon without absolutely ignoring this state of mind disdained it, and saw in it only the more reason for pursuing the great success which in his opinion was to change the face of Europe. Only he omitted the convocation of the legislative body that year. He did not even address any official communication to the state bodies and contented himself with informing the senate before his departure of some of his last transactions.

#### THE WAR WITH RUSSIA

In front, Alexander saw all Europe armed against him—Poland the foremost, expecting her independence, and calling Lithuania, the spoil of Catherine, to join her. On each side were Sweden and Turkey: Russia, at war with the latter, had not long since robbed the former of a fine province. Yet both these precious allies France lost at this critical moment. The jealousy of Napoleon and Bernadotte alienated Sweden. The emperor, with his arrogant ideas, sought to reduce the sovereignty of his former lieutenant into vassalage. Bernadotte's language, as an independent monarch, was even more galling to the emperor than his acts. When he asked Norway as the price of his co-operation against Russia, Napoleon fell into a paroxysm of rage at the insolence of such a demand. Personal feelings smothered the suggestions of policy; and he ordered Pomerania, the only possession of Sweden on the continent, to be invaded. He thus flung the actual ruler of Sweden into the arms of Russia. Bonaparte's conduct with respect to Turkey was not more happy. British influence prevailed at Constantinople. Napoleon, in truth, began to be egregiously ill served, especially in the civil and diplomatic line. He mistrusted men of all schools—the ancient noblesse and the Jacobins alike. He owned at St. Helena that had he kept Talleyrand, the Russian war might have been avoided; he might have added, the Spanish war also.

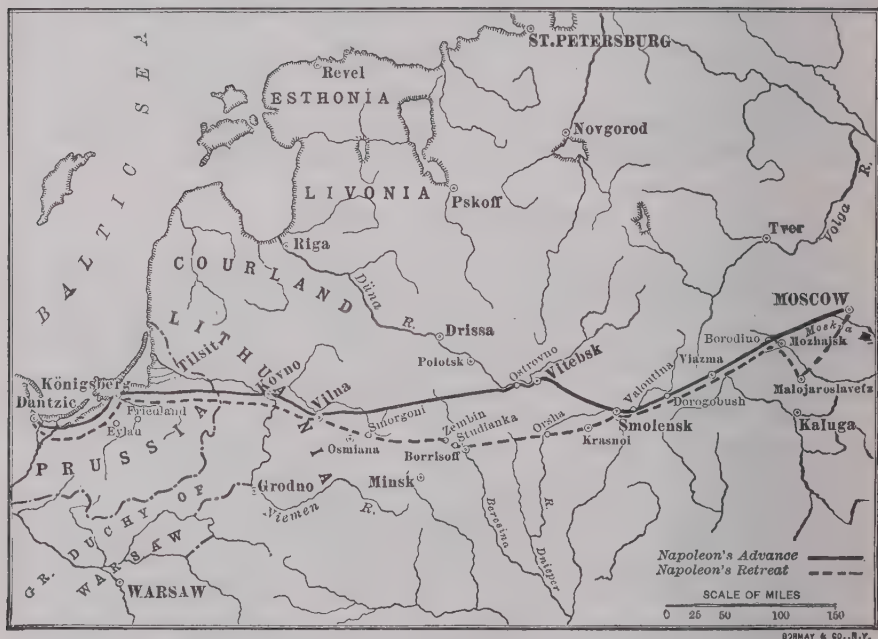
After two years of prelude and preparation, with armies on either side of the Niemen, the rupture became imminent at the commencement of 1812. Napoleon left Paris on the 9th of May for Dresden. At this town he had given rendezvous to his allies; and never certainly did Europe see such a court: the emperor of Austria, the king of Prussia, were amongst those who waited on Napoleon. Kings and princes of inferior rank crowded his ante-chamber and saloons, and stooped before the mighty emperor of yesterday. Certes, here the French Revolution retaliated its vengeance on the pride that had scorned and endeavoured to crush it. Its representative trod beneath his feet all that was regal and illustrious in Europe. The reunion

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of Dresden seemed a parting pageant, given to Napoleon by fortune ere she abandoned him. He quitted Dresden, and in a few days was in the midst of his army beyond the Vistula. It required all, and more than all, the energy and talent of Napoleon to feed this mass; and even if he possessed the means, it became evident that the mere distribution could not be always effected. Ere the army had marched fifty leagues into Russia, several of the very guards died of hunger. The old system of preying and living upon the enemy's country, was here, as in Spain, impossible.

#### NAPOLEON ENTERS RUSSIA (JUNE 24TH, 1812)

It was too late, however, for reflection. On the 24th of June, the French army crossed the frontier river Niemen. A solitary officer of Cossacks was



MAP ILLUSTRATING NAPOLEON'S RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN AND RETREAT

the only enemy that appeared to challenge them; but a tremendous thunderstorm burst forth over the French as they first trod the Russian soil. It appeared as if the elements promised to supply the weakness of the men of the north in defending their territory. The Russians did not even appear: their plan was to retreat, avoid a battle, still drawing the French far from support and resources, to fall on them at last, when winter, famine, and fatigue had daunted their confidence and diminished their strength. This is said to have been the plan of Barclay de Tolly, the Russian commander. Napoleon thus entered Vilna without a blow; and here was his last opportunity for declaring the ancient kingdom of Poland re-established.

Immediately before Napoleon, the Russians composed two armies: the greater one, under Barclay, had retired from Vilna to Drissa, on the river Düna [southern or western Dwina], where an entrenched camp defended



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the road to St. Petersburg ; the lesser, under Bagration, was at Grodno, and, by the French advance, had been separated from Barclay. This was a sad blunder on the part of the Russians ; such a one that, had it been committed before Bonaparte commanding a small and manageable army, by a force of proportionate numbers, not one would have escaped : but, with the masses which he had now to move by word or writing, not by personal order, all depended upon lieutenants. Some were tardy, some inept ; others, active and skilful, had jealousies which paralysed them. It was thus that the French lost now the first opportunity which the chance of the war afforded, —that of cutting off Bagration,—by the differences betwixt Davout and Jerome Bonaparte, and the consequent inertness of both. Jerome was disgraced, and sent back to Westphalia ; but this could not restore lost time : Bagration had made good his retreat.

Napoleon now moved with his main body from Vilna to the banks of the Düna, to occupy Vitebsk, on the Düna ; Smolensk, where the Russian armies had united, was on the opposite side of the Dnieper. Napoleon carried the two first weeks of August at Vitebsk. Such long delay, in such a man, is inconceivable ; so much so, that some of his followers have attributed it to the decline of his health : but, in fact, he was overpowered by the enormity of affairs ; the difficulties of moving and providing for his immense army, the disorder of which he saw, and vainly exerted himself to remedy. He now resembled the spirit of an eagle put to vivify and move the body of an elephant, forced to plod, when its nature was to fly. Emboldened by his inaction, the Russians at Smolensk prepared to brave him and beat up his quarters. Learning the Russian advance upon Vitebsk, he moved off his army from the Düna to the Dnieper, changing his whole line of operations, and braving the inconvenience of this for the sake of getting to Smolensk before the enemy and intercepting them. In this, too, he failed : the Russians retreated in time ; whilst the troops covering Smolensk fought with that dogged indomitable courage which the French could not overcome. Their cavalry charged the Russian squares, entered them even ; they slew, but could not rout. The Russians, in whatever confusion thrown, refused to fly ; unlike the Austrians, who, “when turned,” or spying an enemy even on their flank, thought themselves released from the task of resistance. But war with the Austrians had become a profession ; with the Russians it was waged with national feeling and inveteracy.

Barclay, having succeeded in entering Smolensk before the enemy, resolved to defend it long enough to allow of a measured retreat. Napoleon's impatience impelled him to an assault ; it was ordered. But the Russians, from behind their ancient walls, defied all the efforts of the French, and repulsed them with the slaughter of six thousand. The attack was given over. Napoleon pitched his tent before the town, when, at night-fall, the towers and buildings of Smolensk were seen in a flame. Barclay, in evacuating it, had set it on fire.<sup>d</sup>

Napoleon left his tent to contemplate the terrible spectacle ; he bestrode a chair, according to his usual custom, leaning his head upon his hands ; the glow of the fire was reflected in his pale and cadaverous features. No one slept that night, and the army remained under arms ; a thousand fires illuminated the bayonets with a sinister gleam, all this made a fantastic and ominous picture. It was still dark, when a Polish division was the first to succeed in entering Smolensk ; silence reigned on every side ; not a soldier, not a single inhabitant to be seen ; all had fled. Here was a new Necropolis, a new city of the dead, and when the army crossed the streets of

Smolensk amidst ringing strains, they found only skeletons, and ruins — not one single living creature. Indescribable sorrow filled every heart, and was portrayed on every visage; never, in any campaign, had the army experienced like consternation on the day it placed its eagles in a conquered capital.<sup>k</sup>

#### THE BATTLE OF BORODINO OR THE MOSKVA

Still, amidst these ruins, the emperor might have halted, strengthened his communications, brought up provisions and reinforcements, and organised his army. But to check his advance in the month of August, and within but eighty leagues of Moscow, was too much to expect of Napoleon's impatience. His generals, who looked on the conduct of the campaign merely in a military point of view, dissuaded with earnestness, that swelled to choler, all idea of further advance. Napoleon, who was not blind to their views, but who joined with them those of the statesman and the monarch, decided on penetrating to Moscow.

In search of an engagement, as well as of the capital, Napoleon held on his march. Nor was he wrong in his calculations. In obedience to the cry of the Russian army, Barclay was superseded by Kutusoff; and this general chose the place of his stand near Borodino, on the Moskva. The Russian retreat, even so far, was not such as gives courage to the pursuer. At Valoutina, not far from Smolensk, Barclay made a stand, in order to preserve some baggage and cannon, resolving to leave no trophies to the enemy; and Ney was severely repulsed. Junot, who should have taken the Russians in flank, hesitated on this occasion, and showed a want of courage;<sup>1</sup> and yet Junot was continued in the command of his division.

On the 5th of September the French came in view of their enemies, posted on heights extending southward from the village of Borodino. Each army was about 120,000 strong, so much had the French numbers dwindled: the Russians were perhaps more. The 6th of September was the day long sought by Napoleon. He was on horseback before daybreak, and saw the sun rise in splendour, like that of Austerlitz. Two fresh arrivals from Paris were announced: the one a chamberlain, with a portrait of the young king of Rome;<sup>2</sup> the other, Fabvier, with tidings of the loss of the battle of Salamanca by Marmont. Shaking off the ideas excited by both, Napoleon issued a short address: "Soldiers! here is the battle you have so much desired. Victory must depend on you. We need one, in order to have abundance, good quarters, and a speedy return to France. Conduct yourselves as at Austerlitz and Friedland. Let people say of each of you with pride — 'He was at that great battle in the plains of Moscow!'"

The French, as usual, had the disadvantage of attacking. The general of the attacking division, Compans, was wounded; Rapp, who succeeded him, was wounded also, and Davout himself hurt by the fall of his horse, which was killed under him. The attack on the right, in consequence, faltered; but victory came from the left, where Napoleon least expected it. The viceroy of Italy, Eugène Beauharnais, instead of holding back, according to his orders, pushed forward into Borodino, got possession of it, and, improving his advantage, dashed across the river, to the attack of the great

[<sup>1</sup> According to Daresté *J* Junot was without orders and at too great a distance to be culpable. He calls this battle "one of the bloodiest battles of the empire," each side losing over 6,000 men.]

[<sup>2</sup> Marie Louise had borne Napoleon a son March 20th, 1811, and he was given the title "King of Rome." "Napoleon had now," says Daresté, *J* "a dynasty and a future. Providence seemed to consecrate his work."]

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redoubt. The column of Davout had, in the meantime, rallied; its second effort drove Bagration from his batteries. What Fain<sup>l</sup> calls a third battle was fought towards evening on the contested points. Finally, the Russians abandoned the field. It is said that, by ordering forward his guard, which he held in reserve, Bonaparte might have changed the Russian retreat into a rout, intercepted and cut up their army. But Bagration had shown the stubbornness of the Russians on such occasions; and Napoleon would not risk his guard, nor advance his reserve when the consequence was doubtful.<sup>d</sup>

"There is in the art of lying a degree to which not all nations can attain," says Capefigue<sup>k</sup>; "never could a general of old Europe, driven from his entrenchments and forced to retreat, have dared, when writing to this court, to proclaim himself victor. But Kutusoff, writing after the lost battle, did not hesitate to say that he had won it." In a transport of joy Alexander ordered *Te Deums* to be sung. He made Kutusoff a field-marshal and loaded him and his family with honours.

The losses of the two armies were great; those of the Russians, however, far exceeded those of the French.<sup>1</sup> Possibly the reverse might have been the case, if, after being compelled to evacuate their trenches, they had not returned to try and retake them. It was during this audacious undertaking that the masses of troops, motionless under the thunder of French artillery, experienced the most terrible losses. Of all the battles yet fought by Napoleon the battle of the Moskva was undoubtedly the most bloody. Among the others only two approach it in any degree in the magnificence of the sacrifices by which victory was bought—the battles of Eylau and Wagram. Marengo, Austerlitz, Jena, were less costly and had better results.<sup>i</sup>

The battle was won, but dearly. Eight generals fell on the side of the French; the heroic Bagration killed, was a loss as severe to the Russians. The honour of the day fell to Ney. He was created prince of the Moskva, this river, which runs to Moscow, being a short space in the rear of the action; its name sounded better to fame than the Kalocza, on whose banks it was really fought. The night of victory was one of sadness to Napoleon. "Seven or eight hundred prisoners, and a score of broken cannon, were all his trophies won." The discouragement of his army was excessive. We believe, in opposition to Ségur,<sup>m</sup> that moral despondency, but too well founded, influenced his spirits, not that disease or corpulency benumbed his faculties [yet much might be said in favour of the opposite view].

#### MOSCOW TAKEN AND BURNED (SEPTEMBER 17TH, 1812)

Moscow, however, was won. Kutusoff reluctantly abandoned the hope of defending it. The governor, Rostoptchin, took his measures, if not for excluding the French, at least for rendering the possession useless to them. But Moscow remained, apparently in all its original splendour, when the French entered it on the 14th of September. Napoleon took up his residence at the Kremlin, the ancient palace of the czars. He was not long left in peaceable possession of it. From the first day of occupation, fire had appeared in different quarters. It was either neglected or renewed; but on the 17th the flames, fanned by a strong wind, spread rapidly, and showed themselves masters of the whole city. The Kremlin was surrounded by the fire, its windows burst with heat, and it required all the efforts of the guard to pre-

[<sup>1</sup> Seeley <sup>e</sup> places the French loss at 30,000, the Russian at nearly 50,000. He accuses Napoleon of showing "unwonted indecision," which he justified by saying that "at 800 leagues from Paris, one must not risk one's last reserve."]



serve the quarters of Napoleon. At length, when a way was cleared for him through the burning city, he left it, and established himself at the country-house of Petrowskoie, not far from the gates of Moscow.<sup>d</sup>

On the first intelligence of this catastrophe the destruction of Moscow was attributed in Russia to the French themselves, and was not by any means regarded as a crushing blow dealt at Napoleon by Russian patriotism.

It is indeed not clear that this event had any decisive influence upon the result of the war. Nor does it seem to have been the deliberate work of the patriotism of Moscow. The beginner of it was one man, Count Rostoptchin, governor of Moscow, who is shown by many public utterances to have brooded for some time over the thought, and is proved to have made preparation for carrying it into effect before leaving the town.<sup>1</sup> It is, however, supposed that what was begun by him was completed by a rabble which had no object but plunder, and partly by French soldiers. The immediate effect of it was to deepen the alarm of the Russians, and, when this feeling passed away, to deepen their hatred of the French.<sup>e</sup>

The first object of the expedition over, and Moscow, or its ruins, in the power of the French, what was to be the next aim? Napoleon's instant conception was to march upon St. Petersburg, menace or cut off Wittgenstein, and be reinforced by the army of Macdonald. It was a giant resolve, and required giant efforts. It was the wisest, too, except that of immediate and direct retreat, which had many disadvantages. But, without the concurrence of his chiefs, such an enterprise was impossible. They counselled retiring by a new and circuitous road to the south. And betwixt both opinions, resolve rested in suspense, and neither was prosecuted: this was the most fatal step of all. The French remained at Moscow, waiting, like victims, for the winter to immolate them. A little more courage would have followed the emperor's idea; and if ever Alexander was to be brought to terms, it was by marching towards him. On the contrary, however, Napoleon sent Lauriston with proposals of peace, and vainly awaited in the Kremlin, which had been preserved from the fire, an answer never to return.

At length, after a month's lingering and debating and incertitude, Moscow was evacuated by the main body of the French on the 19th of October, a rearguard remaining with orders to blow up the Kremlin. The imperial wagons were laden with trophies, those of the army with spoil, and all the carriages and calèches of Moscow travelled with their captors. It seemed merely a return from a party of pleasure. A month was yet to elapse ere the middle of November, the general period for the frost's setting in. To arrive at Smolensk, and take up winter quarters before that time, seemed feasible and certain. The army of Kutusoff in the meantime, after evacuating Moscow, had turned, still within sight of the burning city, towards the south. Murat had followed it, but was defeated. Napoleon, on leaving Moscow, adopted the original plan proposed by his chief officers, to march first to the important town of Kaluga, and thence by a fresh unwasted road to Smolensk. The French numbered 100,000 men, almost all on foot; artillery and cavalry were without horses; and there was every prospect of being obliged to abandon some, if not the greater part, of the former.

#### THE GREAT RETREAT BEGINS

The chief motive for choosing this southern road was that it had not the appearance of retreat, so anxious was Napoleon to conceal his failure even

[<sup>1</sup> This, however, was denied by Admiral Tchitschakoff.<sup>f</sup>]

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from his own eyes. The Russian general reached Malojaroslavetz in time to oppose the French march. A sanguinary engagement took place between the advanced guard under Prince Eugène and the Russians October 24th; the village, taken and retaken seven times, at length was kept by the French.

The French army in three corps now turned their faces to France, and to Smolensk as the nearest rallying-place. They looked there for the support of Victor's fresh corps; but Victor was busied elsewhere. Wittgenstein, reinforced by the ever-swelling levies of Russia, had beaten Gouvion-Saint-Cyr on the Düna, and taken Vitebsk. This was cutting the retreat off from Vilna, and Tchitschakoff, commanding the army returned from the Turkish war, had received orders to advance from the south, and, by seizing Minsk, cut off the only other practicable road westward. Such were the tidings that saluted Napoleon on his entry into Smolensk. The viceroy Eugène and Ney each led a corps in the rear of Napoleon, and were dreadfully harassed by the Russians, who, now driving their enemies before them, felt the spirit of success animating their previous stubbornness. Not only pursuing, but often anticipating the march of the foe, they hung upon his rear and flank, delayed his flight, by forcing him to turn and fight, whilst clouds of Cossacks swept away the stragglers, or deferring to slay, from a savage spirit of amusement, drove the famished wretches before their spear points as a pastime.<sup>1</sup>

Winter, too, set in, — that dreaded foe, — this year peculiarly severe and premature. The snow already fell in October; but on the 6th of November it descended, driven like a *tourmente* of the Alps, with a force, fury, and denseness unknown except in these northern climates. Amidst such weather the progress of the French, more especially of Ney, was a dire combat against the foe, and the elements as pitiless. The army foundered ere it reached even Smolensk, abandoning piecemeal its artillery, its deeply venged plunder, the cross of Ivan, and the other trophies of the Kremlin. Even at that town, where it arrived November 9th, famine still awaited it. The magazines had been devoured.

Winter became more fierce, the enemy menacing both in front and rear; whilst the French numbers, at least its fighting numbers, did not exceed one-third of the army that had evacuated Moscow. This scanty force was now divided into bands, for the sake of procuring some sustenance, and preserving some order. It was actually surrounded by armies. Tchitschakoff stopped its passage by the Minsk road, Wittgenstein by Vitebsk; whilst Kutusoff was behind, and in flank. The marvel is that a single French soldier escaped. Ney was completely intercepted in his march and summoned to surrender in a position where even the "bravest of the brave" might despair. No feat of the twenty years of war surpasses Ney's retreat.<sup>d</sup>

#### CRUELTY OF THE RUSSIANS

The barbarity of the Russians indeed passed belief. In the midst of a cold of thirty degrees, they stripped such of the prisoners as they did not kill, and drove them along by thousands. As most dropped upon the road, their numbers were filled up by the gathering of other fugitives, and columns of

[<sup>1</sup> According to Duruy's Napoleon had only 50,000 men in the ranks when he returned to Smolensk. He had left Moscow with only 80,000 fighters and 800 cannon, but had a following also of 50,000 workmen, women, and children, and a multitude of carriages. With these the Cossacks played havoc, and in Napoleon's own words "even before the battle of the Moskva the army lost more stragglers every day than if a battle had been fought."]

wretches were thus driven to death by the spears of the Cossacks. Those who escaped such fatal driving suffered no less from the bands of peasants, who as mercilessly massacred every captive. The Russian women vied with the men in such barbarity. Great as had been the provocation, one cannot but be disgusted at the total absence of anything like a Christian feeling in the population. We do not hear of any general or authority in any town who made the least effort to stop the barbarity of the peasants. The emperor Alexander issued a proclamation giving a reward for the captives brought in alive. But the love of slaughter was greater than that of money.<sup>2</sup>

The English general Wilson who was with the Russians has testified as follows: "All prisoners were immediately and invariably stripped stark naked and marched in columns in that state, or turned adrift to be the sport and the victims of the peasantry, who would not always let them, as they sought to, point and hold the muzzles of the guns against their own heads or hearts, to terminate their sufferings in the most certain and expeditious manner; for the peasantry thought that this mitigation of torture would be an offence against the avenging God of Russia, and deprive them of his further protection. A remarkable instance of this cruel spirit of retaliation was exhibited on the pursuit to Viazma. Milaradoich, Bennigsen, Korf, and the English general, with various others, were proceeding on the highroad, about a mile from the town, where they found a crowd of peasant women, with sticks in their hands, hopping round a felled pine tree, on each side of which lay about sixty naked prisoners, prostrate but with their heads on the tree, which those furies were striking in accompaniment to a national air or song which they were yelling in concert; while several hundred armed peasants were quietly looking on as guardians of the direful orgies. When the cavalcade approached, the sufferers uttered piercing shrieks, and kept incessantly crying, '*La mort! La mort!*'"<sup>r</sup>

#### DE CHAMBRAY'S ACCOUNT OF NEY'S RETREAT

On the 17th of November, at two A.M., Ney left Smolensk. His corps was composed of 6,000 infantry, 300 cavalry, and 12 small cannon; about 7,000 stragglers followed and embarrassed the march of the columns. His rearguard had not gone half a league from Smolensk when they heard the mines explode one after the other. The shock was felt afar; lurid flames suddenly lighted the horizon, showing Smolensk for a last time to the French as a mass of ruins. No surgeons had remained with the 5,000 wounded and sick who had been left behind; and they had not been recommended to the mercy of the Russians, but abandoned as worthless instruments, henceforth useless. They were the victims of a senseless and brutal vengeance.

Ney bivouacked at Kovitnia. Next day he resumed the march; the Cossacks appeared in large numbers, and had cannon, which necessitated marching in closer column. The advance-guard reached Katova, and stopped at the sight of the corps of Miloradovitch, which was posted beyond a ravine. Ney hurried forward to the advance-guard. As soon as the French infantry came out of the ravine they experienced the sweeping fire of the numerous Russian artillery. Attacked on all sides, charged by the cavalry, half their men dead, they were repulsed and recrossed the ravine in the greatest disorder. If Miloradovitch had pursued them nothing could have saved Ney. He rallied what remained of the two divisions which had been engaged, behind the one which had not yet fought, and retired in the direction of Smolensk, having decided to cross the Dneiper, so as to put

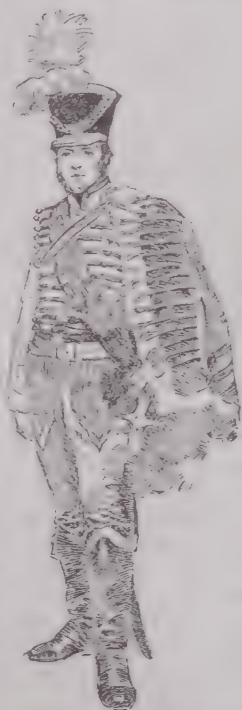


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the river between himself and the Russians. The approach of night favoured his retreat. An officer was sent to him on two separate occasions by Miloradovitch, to tell him that the armies of Eugène and Davout had been annihilated—that Krasnoi was occupied entirely by the Russian army, and that further resistance would be useless. Not only did Ney reject all proposals, but, the officer being sent a third time, he made him prisoner, stating that he could not consider him an envoy merely because the enemy had fired a few cannon-shots; his object in detaining this officer was to prevent him from carrying information as to his position and force.

In the dusk of evening Ney bore towards the right to approach the Dnieper, and stopped at the village of Danikowa; he lighted camp-fires as though he intended to pass the night there. The Russians, not dreaming he could escape them, did the same. After some hours of repose, Ney started again as silently as possible and gained the Dnieper; he had been assured that at this season the river was nowhere fordable between Smolensk and Orsha, and that the least depth was about twelve feet, so his only hope of safety was to cross on the ice. The ice could hardly bear the weight of the men, and soon became broken on the two shores; baggage, artillery, and horses had to be abandoned, and the foot-soldiers were obliged to wade waist deep in water to reach the ice, and to leave it. This extraordinary crossing took place on the night of the 18th–19th of November. The enemy offered no hindrance; only a few Cossacks were there watching. The French corps thus put the river between themselves and the Russian army; but they were reduced to 3,000 men. Platof, who had continued his march on the right bank of the Dnieper, was at a little distance, so new perils succeeded those he had just escaped. On leaving a wood, Ney came out on a wide plain, bordered by the river; it was already occupied by the Cossacks led by Platof in person. Ney engaged immediately. His columns, in serried ranks, kept the Dnieper on their left, while sharp-shooters on the right flank kept off the Cossacks.

As soon as the fight began in the plain, numerous artillery appeared suddenly on the right of the column and cannonaded furiously. In this extremity Ney ordered a quick march to reach a wood which was in front of him; they were just about to gain it when a battery, ambushed in the wood, fired a round of grapeshot on the foremost troops, and scattered destruction and disorder. Sudden despair fell on the soldiers. They threw away their arms, crying out for the first time that they must submit. Ney, who was almost alone on horseback, foamed with rage; he tore along the columns, rousing his men with his terrible voice; he showed them France on the one hand, a frightful captivity on the other; and succeeded in inspiring them with his own audacity. They again seized their arms and with loud cries dashed on the battery, which had barely time to fly. Thus Ney and his men reached the wood, but found no path; they crossed a ravine which presented so many difficulties that they were obliged to leave what horses remained.



OFFICER OF HUSSARS, TIME  
OF NAPOLEON

At daybreak November 20th they were again on the march. As daylight faded, they stopped at a village situated near a wood. Not being more than a day's march from Orsha, Ney sent on two officers to inform Napoleon of his dire distress: then, at nine o'clock at night, he set out again in silence so as to get in front of the enemy. They hoped at last to reach Orsha when, on coming out of a wood, they saw at a little distance camp fires that seemed to indicate the presence of an army of 20,000 men. Were they French or were they Russians? Ney, to make sure, sent on a reconnoitring party who were received with shots and a heavy roll of drums. Yielding to despair, Ney ordered a charge and dashed on to the enemy's bivouac to cut a way through. What was his astonishment to find the camp empty save for a few Cossacks who were fleeing. Thus the intrepidity of the French general unveiled a stratagem that Platof had planned to make them imagine the presence of a corps of infantry.

However, Ney continued his march on Orsha, though he was not sure that this town had not already fallen into the hands of the Russians. The country was sheltered, and the Cossacks only harassed his rearguard. The highway from Vitebsk to Orsha was reached at midnight on the 21st of November, at about three leagues from the latter place. Here he found French videttes of the 4th corps, and soon after joined Eugène, who had started to meet him as soon as the officers who had been sent on the day before had informed him of Ney's arrival on the right bank of the Dnieper and of his extreme distress. So ended this remarkable retreat. Ney seemed safe, but constantly recurring evils awaited his unfortunate soldiers and scarcely one of them regained his native land.<sup>n</sup>

Napoleon now led the paltry 12,000 who remained of the 250,000 who had entered Russia forward to the river Beresina which he reached near Borissoff. Here he met the corps of Victor and of Oudinot which had been left to hold the river Düna. These 17,000 gazed in bewilderment at the debris of the grand army, which showed all its trials, as the greater part had suffered all the agonies of famine, not as in a besieged city, but on the march through a winter bitter beyond the wont even of Russian winters. The cold was, however, the least of the horrors; as Charras<sup>o</sup> has said, "it but finished the work of death and dissolution nearly achieved by the enemy by hardship, and chiefly by famine." The crossing of the river Beresina was the final curtain on the most stupendous military tragedy in the world's history.<sup>a</sup>

#### CAPEFIGUE ON THE PASSAGE OF BERESINA (1812 A.D.)

The muster-roll drawn up on the eve of the passage is terrible to contemplate; the old guard, which alone preserved its attitude and personnel numbered barely 3,500 men; Bessières' brilliant and splendid cavalry, those magnificent corps of the guard, now mustered 1,400 men. Beyond these picked troops, there was nothing; Davout commanded a bare thousand bayonets; Ney, 3,000; Eugène, 1,200; Junot had not one single soldier and, most terrible of all, the cavalry reserve, formerly numbering 32,000 horse, was now declared on the muster-roll as but 100 men, commanded by Latour-Maubourg. Thus the highly coloured accounts of the losses sustained at the passage of the Beresina are as incorrect as the accounts of the disasters occasioned by the cold. Napoleon no longer possessed an army; therefore he could not lose one; the only two corps which engaged in the conflict were those of Victor and Oudinot, the one 10,000 men strong

[1812 A.D.]

the other 7,000, neither of which had gone through the campaign of Moscow. As to the obsequies of that great giant, known as the army of Russia, they were finished and the huge bones scattered before the intense cold arrived or the passage of the Beresina took place; at the Beresina there were only the guard and the corps of Victor and Oudinot, which gloriously repaid their welcome.

Scarcely had the emperor entered into communication with Oudinot when he wrote to him to seize immediately the head of the Borrisoff bridge—he must have a passage at any cost; there were points which were but inadequately defended—these must be taken. An indescribable impression of sadness prevailed in the army; it was known that Wittgenstein lay on the right, and Tchitschakoff on the left, and that they had cut off the bridges; thus everything would depend upon the bold and impetuous manœuvring of Oudinot. He commenced demonstrations at Borrisoff to put the enemy on the wrong scent. Victor repelled Wittgenstein by heroic efforts, and Napoleon arrived in person to hasten the construction of the bridges.

On the morning of November 26th, all was completed; the zeal of the pontooners was boundless; they flung themselves into the floods, and swam in those muddy, icy, deadly waters; nothing daunted them, for it was a question of saving the miserable remains of the grand army. The enemy had appeared in all directions round the Beresina; upon the craggy heights, amidst the clustering trees. The first bridge built, Oudinot crossed over to the right bank, and threw himself with desperate courage upon the enemy; one road was now open to him. A second bridge was thrown across, destined for the carriages and artillery.

On the 27th a portion of the army was upon the right bank, only the corps under Victor's command remained facing Wittgenstein; they protected the confused crowds scattered in the marshes and crowding up to force their way across. The most fainthearted, the most heavily laden with plunder were not the last; those very men who had compromised the safety of the army, the laggards and pillagers, made the passage slow and dangerous; the narrow bridge was contested in the midst of anguish and strange cries like that of death in the *Divine Comedy*. However, the remnant under Eugène, Latour-Maubourg, and Davout passed over to the right bank, and there only remained Partonneaux's and Gérard's divisions on the left. An indescribable confusion reigned on all sides; the fugitives prevented all order in the steady ranks of the army, they invaded the regiments, and broke up the battalions; it was for this reason that Partonneaux was swept away, surrounded by Wittgenstein's corps, and forced to surrender.

Then it was that the Russian scheme revealed itself in all its energy; the hostile generals allowed half the troops to pass over to the right bank; they wished to separate them, and overcome them more easily by attacking them in sections. When Ney, Oudinot, Napoleon, and the guard were on the right bank, suddenly the thunder of cannon was heard. Tchitschakoff appeared and fell upon two columns with the greatest impetuosity; Oudinot was wounded, and Ney alone remained in command; the action lasted two hours. Then arose another danger: Victor was still on the left bank, Partonneaux had surrendered, Gérard's division mustered barely five thousand men; it was vigorously attacked by Wittgenstein and the army of Finland.

At this moment the throng of fugitives from Moscow were seized with panic, and it was by their cowardice that the bridge was obstructed, and they were crushed beneath the hoofs of horses, or pushed into the Beresina: some of Wittgenstein's bullets had rebounded into their serried ranks. The



plunderers refused to be separated from their conveyances or their money ; they clung to their booty. Whilst Victor on one bank, Ney and Oudinot on the other, sacrificed their brave followers, the cowards broke into the ranks, destroyed the order of the divisions, and obstructed every road.

At last, it became necessary for the safety of the army that the bridges should be destroyed ; so the frail work of the engineers was set alight, and there remained on the other bank, after Victor had defiled, about five thousand

persons, in a state of the greatest confusion. The hosts of Platof's Cossacks surrounded this swarm, which held out entreating hands ; no harm was done them, for the sight of these crowds was pitiful ; there were women and children amongst them, but they were mostly composed of those men whom the soldier brands with the name of marauder. The Russian bulletins testify to the sentiments of pity which were manifested even by the Cossacks at the sight of such miserable terror.

The active army had crossed the Beresina after unheard-of difficulties and glorious actions. It is impossible to describe the brilliant courage displayed by Victor and Oudinot's two corps ; it appeared marvellous. Ney left wonderful souvenirs, Eugène distinguished himself ; Davout had been nerveless and Junot absolutely null. Must it be confessed ? — the roll call, a few leagues beyond Beresina, numbered but 8,800 men ! the nucleus of proven troops, for they had withstood much. Around them shapeless masses constantly



CLAUDE FRANÇOIS DE MALET  
(1754-1812)

hovered, in a condition of complete disorganisation, a pell-mell of soldiers, officers, and generals.

There was no longer any such thing as rank ; they dwelt in an intimacy most injurious to discipline ; the general stretched out his hand to the soldier if the latter had more supplies than he. Here and there were stupefied creatures whose intelligence had fled, and who now possessed no instinct other than that of the brute beast.<sup>k</sup>

#### END OF THE CAMPAIGN

The Beresina froze completely in a short time after, forming a huge grave in which the dead did not decay. In the spring the Russians had leisure to count the bodies. They amounted to an army's number, about 20,000.<sup>l</sup> From the Beresina, crossed in the last days of November, the French pursued the road to Vilna, their first Russian conquest, presenting the appearance

<sup>l</sup> According to Duruy<sup>s</sup> the governor of Minsk burned 24,000 corpses.<sup>1</sup>

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of a complete rout, the corps of Victor as disorganised as those of its more wearied comrades. Here a stand might be made—at least, a momentary one. But to repair the great disaster without another army, such as Napoleon's personal presence and exertion could alone command from France now reluctant and despondent, was impossible.

The political tidings from the capital were also disquieting. A conspiracy for the overthrow of the imperial power had nearly succeeded.<sup>d</sup> General Malet, imprisoned for a plot in 1808, had managed to escape; by announcing that Napoleon had died in Moscow and showing a forged order from the senate making him commander-in-chief, he had seized the heads of government and obtained a following in the national guard. At length he had met resistance, however, and this put an end to his hopes. He had been tried and shot with fifteen of his accomplices. Paris had known nothing of this till its failure, and as Martin<sup>b</sup> says, "learned simultaneously of the overthrow and the re-establishment of the empire." Ludicrous as the fiasco was in many ways, it came so near success that Napoleon exclaimed, realising how personal was his hold on France, "Is one man, then, everything—are institutions, oaths nothing?" He resolved to return to Paris at once.<sup>a</sup>

Napoleon left the wreck of his army at Smorgoni on December 5th (as he had left his Egyptian army thirteen years before), travelling in a carriage placed upon a sledge and accompanied by Caulaincourt and Duroc. He had an interview with Maret outside Vilna, and then travelled to Warsaw, where he saw his ambassador De Pradt, who has left an account of his confused talk. Here, as in the famous 29th bulletin, published a little after, we observe that he consoles himself for the loss of his army by reflecting that his own health was never better—he kept on repeating this. Then he said, "From the sublime to the ridiculous there is but one step"; for the retreat from Moscow struck him as ridiculous! From Warsaw he passed to Dresden, where he saw his ally the king of Saxony, and wrote letters to the emperor of Austria and to the king of Prussia. He then made his way by Erfurt and Mainz to Paris, where he arrived on December 18th. The bulletin had appeared two days before.<sup>e</sup>

Murat, to whom Napoleon had left the command, had neither the authority nor the energy which such circumstances required. Besides, the cold reached twenty degrees and 20,000 men perished in three days. The enemy, which could march only very slowly, caught up with the French at Vilna. Ney held them in check for a long time at the head of a handful of braves; again he defended the bridge of Kovno fighting like a grenadier, gun in hand; he was the last to pass the Niemen, December 20th. That ended the retreat and the fatal campaign. Behind the river the French left dead or captives 300,000 soldiers. And yet they had not really been defeated once. It was winter and hunger, not the enemy that killed the grand army. The Russians themselves, accustomed as they were to their terrible climate, suffered horribly; in three weeks Kutusoff had lost three-fourths of his effective forces.<sup>f</sup>

Alison comments on Kutusoff's policy as follows: "Justice requires that due credit should be given to the Russian mode of pursuit by a parallel march: a measure which was unquestionably one of the greatest military achievements of the last age. Had Kutusoff pursued by the same road as the French, his army, moving on a line wasted by the triple curse of three previous marches, would have melted away even more rapidly than his enemy's. But caution was the great characteristic of the man. By acting a bolder part, he might have gained more brilliant, but he could not have

secured more lasting success : he would have risked the fate of the empire, which hung on the preservation of his army : he might have acquired the title of Napoleon, but he would not have deserved that of saviour of his country.

But it would have been in vain that all these advantages lay within the reach of Russia, had their constancy and firmness not enabled her people to grasp them. Justice had not hitherto been done to the heroism of their conduct. We admire the Athenians, who refused to treat with Xerxes after the sack of their city, and the Romans, who sent troops to Spain after the defeat of Cannae ; what then shall we say of the generals who, while their army was yet reeking with the slaughter of Borodino, formed the project of enveloping the invader in the capital which he had conquered ? what of the citizens, who fired their palaces and their temples lest they should furnish even a temporary refuge to the invader ? and what of the sovereign who, undismayed by the conflagration of Moscow, announced to his people, in the moment of their greatest agony, his resolution never to submit, and foretold the approaching deliverance of his country and of the world ? Time, the great sanctifier of events, has not yet lent its halo to these sacrifices.”<sup>t</sup>

Napoleon had said to Pradt that he intended to raise 300,000 men and be on the Niemen again in the spring. The first part of this intention he fulfilled, for in April he reappeared in the field with 300,000 men ; but the campaign was not fought on the line of the Niemen, nor of the Vistula, nor of the Oder, and he had to fight a battle before he could even reach the Elbe. For a great event took place less than a fortnight after his arrival in Paris, the defection of the Prussian contingent under York from the grand army ; this event led to the rising of Prussia against Napoleon.<sup>e</sup>







## CHAPTER XXI

### THE REVOLUTION OF EUROPE AGAINST NAPOLEON

[1812-1814 A.D.]

The winter of 1812-1813 had been very sombre for France; the winter of 1813-1814 opened full of presages yet more dismal. After the great generation of soldiers that had been swallowed up in the snows of Russia, a second generation was to be devoured by the battle-fields of Germany.—HENRI MARTIN.<sup>b</sup>

THERE was now no pretext for war except the so-called maritime tyranny of England; but yet the magnitude of wars had increased beyond all measurement. The campaign of 1812 left everything in civilised history far behind it. All the abuses of the old monarchy and all the atrocities of the Revolution put together were nothing compared to this new plague, bred between the Revolution and the old monarchy, having the violence of the one and the vainglory of the other, with a barbarous destructiveness peculiar to imperialism superadded. But what was Napoleon's position? Any government but the strongest would have sunk under such a blow, but Napoleon's government was the strongest, and at its strongest moment. Opposition had long been dead; public opinion was paralysed; no immediate rising was to be feared. Should he then simply take the lesson home, and make peace with Alexander? This was impossible; he must efface the disaster by new triumphs. But, as this was evident to all, Alexander could not but perceive that he must not lose a moment, but must hasten forward and rouse Germany before Napoleon should have had time to levy a new army; 1813 must be filled with a war in Germany, as 1812 with a war in Russia.<sup>c</sup>

#### THE SIXTH COALITION

The coalition began to make ready for the grand struggle which seemed likely to be the last. England strengthened her alliance with Russia, and made a treaty with Sweden, by which she undertook to take in her pay the

30,000 men commanded by Bernadotte.<sup>1</sup> She sent proclamations all over Germany, and subsidised secret societies; she summoned the king of Prussia to enter the coalition, threatening to establish a provisional government in his states; she entreated Austria to avenge her former defeats, offering her Italy, and assuring her that Germany was ready to rise against France, and that France herself was on the eve of a great revolution. On the decisions of Prussia and Austria depended the success of the struggle.

Prussia, to gain time, proposed a truce between Russia and France, and even offered to mediate. Napoleon rejected this. Then Frederick William signed a secret treaty of alliance (February 22nd, 1813) with Alexander "to insure the independence of Europe and re-establish Prussia within her limits of 1806." Russia could command 150,000 men, and Prussia 80,000; they were not to make peace separately, and Russia promised to get subsidies from England for Prussia. Prussia continued, nevertheless, to negotiate with France on the basis of alliance, then suddenly declared war (March 17th, 1813). Two days later Alexander and Frederick concluded the convention of Breslau, by which all the German princes were called to concur in the enfranchisement of their country, under penalty of being deprived of their states. The confederation of the Rhine was declared dissolved; a council was appointed to administer the conquered provinces for the benefit of the allies, and to organise a simultaneous rising in the states of the confederation. Orders were given to the *Landsturm* to harass the enemy, to kill isolated soldiers, to destroy provisions, etc.

Then the great movement of German independence, so skilfully manœuvred by the sovereigns, began. The Germans had looked on Napoleon only as a conqueror, and on his acts as war, and they had suffered the most in the war between France and old Europe, without deriving any profit. "That they should hate me," said Napoleon, "is natural enough. For ten years I have been forced to fight while treading on their dead. They have never known my real intentions." So they believed that by taking arms against France they would obtain their liberty; their movement was purely revolutionary; courts and cabinets were carried away by them and had to simulate the enthusiastic passion of Prussian and Westphalian students. Kings, ministers, generals became demagogues, borrowed the style of '93, promised to grant constitutions in order to excite the people against the modern Attila. "People—" ran their proclamations, "be free, join with us! God is on our side. We will defy hell and its allies! All distinctions of rank, birth, and country are banished from our ranks; we are all free men!" "Germans," said Wittgenstein, "we open the Russian ranks to you; there you will find the labourer side by side with the prince. All distinctions of rank are effaced before the great ideas of king, liberty, honour, and country." "Liberty or death!" cried another; "Germans, from 1812, our genealogical trees shall count as nothing. The exploits of our ancestors are effaced by the degradation of their descendants. The regeneration of Germany alone can produce fresh noble families, and restore their splendour to those who formerly possessed it."

Thus the revolutionary weapons which Napoleon had refused to employ against kings were used by the kings themselves against him, and he had nothing more to employ against them than the regular resources of ancient

[<sup>1</sup> Napoleon said of Bernadotte, who owed to France his crown, "In taking a wife it is not necessary to renounce a mother: still less need one pierce her bosom and tear out her entrails." <sup>d</sup> Seeley, <sup>c</sup> however, credits Bernadotte with a desire to appease France and succeed Napoleon as monarch.]



PIUS VII AND NAPOLEON AT FONTAINEBLEAU





[1813 A.D.]

monarchies. While Austria ordered Schwarzenberg to return to Galicia and signed an indefinitely prolonged truce with Russia, she declared to France that she would remain unshaken in her system; that the alliance was founded on interests most natural, most permanent, and essentially necessary, and would last forever. "We engage," she said, "only to act as convenient to the emperor Napoleon, to do nothing without his knowledge, and, if the Russians refuse peace, to employ all the forces of the monarchy against them." At the same time Francis counselled the king of Prussia "not to arrest the noble enthusiasm which had led him to second the efforts of the emperor of Russia for the maintenance of the independence of Europe." Never had any European cabinet shown such shameful duplicity; but Francis was not yet ready for war, and while preparing his armaments he waited to see the result of the first hostilities so as to be ready either to sell his alliance to Napoleon, or to complete the ruin of the latter.<sup>e</sup>

It was fortunate, perhaps, for Napoleon that there was danger as well as sorrow to excite the people. The thought of France being invaded had never entered anyone's mind since the alarms of 1793. The military enthusiasm of the nation prevailed over the grief of individuals, and by the end of April, 1813, 300,000 soldiers were on their way to the Rhine.<sup>1</sup> The emperor was fully awake to the perils of his situation. He resolved to put his house in order before he joined the army, and entered into negotiations with a prisoner whom he had seized some years before, and tried to coerce into obedience to his will. This was the venerable Pius VII, the pope of Rome. After keeping him at Savona for some time he brought him to Fontainebleau, and now forced or deluded the old man into a concordat (January 25th, 1813) which allowed him, indeed, to execute the spiritual offices of the chief pontiff, but restored him the domains of the church shorn of their independent rights. He was to be pope of Christendom, but no longer sovereign of an earthly state. Having thus got quit of a rival potentate in his kingdom of Italy, he hurried to the frontier.<sup>f</sup>

#### THE WAR WITH PRUSSIA AND RUSSIA (MAY-JUNE, 1813 A.D.)

Napoleon left St. Cloud on the 15th of April. In a few days he was with his army, now once more on the Elbe and the Saale, reduced to fight near the field of Jena those Prussians whom it had conquered there. The emperor brought to the 40,000 men under the viceroy a new army of upwards of 80,000 — all, however, young soldiers that had never yet seen fire. "What shall we do with such sucking pigs?" exclaimed an old general on beholding them. The allies were in possession and in advance of Dresden. They marched on the 1st of May to prevent Napoleon from occupying Leipsic, and met him a short distance from that town, at Lützen, the scene of the last victory and death of Gustavus Adolphus. The Prussians, under Blücher, led the attack. The quarrel being now more German than Russian, it was for the Germans to bear the brunt. The Prussians were not backward to measure themselves with their enemies, and avenge their former defeats: but this they vainly attempted at Lützen.<sup>2</sup> Napoleon's young

[<sup>1</sup> Seeley *e* says, "Infatuated France furnished more than 400,000 men, to perish in a contest where there might be chances, but could be no probabilities of victory." He places the force of the allies at nearly 500,000.]

[<sup>2</sup> The Germans sometimes call the battle of Lützen by the name of the village of Grossgörschen.]

army, encouraged by his presence and words, repulsed every effort, and remained masters of the field. Then 16 battalions of the young guard, supported by the old guard in échelons, and covered by 24 pieces, dashed headlong on Kaya, took it, and forced the enemy to retreat, leaving on the field of battle 15,000 men.

Napoleon was intoxicated with victory. "In all the twenty years that I have commanded the French army," he said, "I have never seen more bravery and devotion. My brave young soldiers! Honour and courage filled their every vein!" But his victory cost him 12,000 men, and the result of so much effort was only 2,000 prisoners, and, lacking the cavalry lost in Russia, there was no pursuit of the vanquished. The allied army retired on Dresden, and after some rearguard skirmishing on the Mulde it repassed the Elbe. Napoleon followed it and entered Dresden, where he re-established the king of Saxony, who gave him a contingent of 15,000 men, May 9th. The enemy went by Bautzen to Silesia, abandoning the defence of Berlin so as to remain near to Bohemia.<sup>e</sup>

At Dresden Napoleon received the envoy of Austria, who now proposed to change her character of ally for that of mediator. She demanded certain augmentation of territory, still not extending her views to Italy, and the independence of the smaller German states. Concession to these not arrogant demands would, in the words of the emperor Francis, have consolidated the dynasty of Bonaparte. He would not admit them, however. A bridge had been thrown over the Elbe, and he marched to attack the Austrians and Prussians at Bautzen. They were in a position of great strength, occupying those hills which form the natural boundaries of Silesia. Napoleon forced the passage of the Spree in their front, and occupied Bautzen. He was obliged to spend the whole of the 20th in so fighting and manœuvring as to get within reach of the allies.

On the 21st the battle was fought. He commenced by simultaneous attacks on the wings; the line however, was so extended, embracing many leagues, and intersected with hills, that it was impossible to watch the success of these movements. Till assured of this, Napoleon would not advance his centre. He was himself with it in the midst of the cannonade,\* and fell asleep, overcome by fatigue. At length, upon hearing fresh sounds of artillery in the distance, his officers awoke him. By the direction of the sound he knew his wing to be victorious, and instantly ordered forward his centre and guard. The allies were beaten, and obliged to evacuate their line of defence, which covered Silesia, and retire into Bohemia. But their retreat was orderly, leaving not a cannon nor a prisoner.<sup>1</sup> At the close of one of the combats which followed up the action, some of the emperor's staff, Duroc, Kirchener, and Lebrun, went to water their horses at a brook: it was then that one of the last cannon fired by the retreating enemy cut Kirchener in two, and struck Duroc. He was considered the only friend of Napoleon. The latter, whatever must have been his inward grief, did not display those theatrical signs of it which divers memoir writers have imagined and described.

The victory of Bautzen opened to the French a passage to the Oder. Glogau was relieved, Breslau occupied, Berlin itself threatened. The Rus-

[<sup>1</sup> It was a splendid victory, but as fruitless as that of Lützen. The enemy had lost 18,000 men, but they had inflicted on the French a loss of 12,000. They (the allies) retired in good order, burning their baggage, ravaging the entire route, fighting at each stream, at each ravine. Weissenberg and Reichenbach were taken by hard fighting, and beyond this last village the enemy was still found posted, May 22nd. "What!" said the emperor. "After such a slaughter, no result — no prisoners? Those men have not left me a single pin!"<sup>e</sup>]



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sian and Prussian armies retreated towards Austria, imploring its aid. It was at this moment that the emperor Francis interposed with his mediation. A message, proposing an armistice, reached the French camp the day after the battle of Bautzen. After some conferences, Napoleon consented to it,<sup>1</sup> in order that negotiations might commence.

## AUSTRIA JOINS THE COALITION (1813 A.D.)

If ever the hand of fate was visible, it was in the fall of Napoleon. Had he been repulsed from Bautzen ere Austria had entered into stipulation with the allies, this power would not have pressed for more than the independence of Germany; and Napoleon might and ought to have granted it. Now she made the same request; the abandonment of the duchy of Warsaw to the three powers, of Illyria to herself, the re-establishment of the Prussian monarchy, and the dissolution of the confederation of the Rhine. But now Bonaparte could not, would not yield; and Austria was flung into the alliance of his enemies. "How much did England give you to make war upon me?" asked he of Metternich, imprudently insulting that statesman.

And, in truth, Great Britain did put forth all her powers on this occasion, and at the right time. Sweden was in her pay; and now subsidy treaties were concluded with Russia and with Prussia. Her victories, as well as her purse, contributed to rouse and push to its conclusion that European reaction against France, which otherwise might have languished. The tidings of the battle of Vitoria, in which Wellington and the British showed that their powers and talents were not confined to defensive warfare, came at the very epoch to strengthen the confidence of German courts and ministers. Austria insisted with firmness that Napoleon should be contented with the Rhine for his frontier. He, in evading the demand, required merely the neutrality of his father-in-law. This was declared impossible; and the accession of Austria to the allies was announced by brilliant fireworks on the 10th of August, 1813. In a few days after, the armistice expired.

The French, hitherto secure from attack on the side of southern Germany, had now to expect the Austrians, 200,000 strong, on the side of Bavaria, and in Italy. The Russians and the Prussians themselves were reinforced. Napoleon's chief officers advised him to retreat at once to the Rhine. In answer, he bade them this time obey. He had fortified Dresden, and distributed his force in eleven small armies or divisions round it; himself, with his guard as a reserve, holding Dresden, ready to unite, in any emergency, the separate but not disjointed portions of his force. Bernadotte, crown prince of Sweden, menaced from the north; Blücher [now seventy years old] with his army from the east; Schwarzenberg with the grand army from the mountain of Bohemia, southward. It was singular enough that the motions of this army of European reaction against France should have been directed by two old generals of the French Republic—Bernadotte and Moreau: the latter was now in the service of Alexander, directing Russian and Austrian columns against his countrymen. No jealousy or injustice of the present ruler of France could warrant the hero in acting the renegade.<sup>2</sup>

On the first expiration of the armistice, Napoleon had hastened from Dresden with his guard, and joined some of his divisions, to surprise Blü-

<sup>1</sup> This is called the armistice of Poischwitz, June 4th–August 10th, 1813.]

<sup>2</sup> Seeley credits Moreau, fresh from the United States, with a probable desire to see France again a republic "ruled by a series of Washingtons each holding office for a short term."]

cher. But that general, according to the plan agreed on, retreated ; and he had the satisfaction to see two regiments of Westphalians desert the French ranks. In the meantime Schwarzenberg had descended upon Dresden, and commenced pressing upon it on the 21st. Saint-Cyr had but 20,000 men to oppose to the Prince's formidable army : he still kept it at bay. On the 25th the attack became general, and there were few hopes of holding out till the evening, when Napoleon's columns appeared hurrying from the pursuit of Blücher ; and entering the city, they did but traverse it to meet the enemy, who, already victorious, were at the gate with hatchets, shouting "Paris ! Paris !" as the next object of their march. The unexpected sally of the French repulsed the enemy. On the following two days the battle was renewed, and Napoleon succeeded in routing Schwarzenberg.

The battle of Dresden was more decisive than either Lützen or Bautzen. The Austrians left their cannon and twenty thousand prisoners. This was some consolation to Napoleon. Fortune had prepared him another, in the death of Moreau, mortally wounded in the day's action. The victory of Dresden was soon, however, to be counterbalanced by defeat. Vandamme, who pursued a division of the retreating army into Bohemia, with his whole division was obliged to surrender (August 30th) at Kulm.

The defensive plan of the allies, said to have been recommended by Bernadotte, now proved fatal to Napoleon. Their rule was always to retreat from him, but always to make head against his lieutenants. Thus Oudinot, sent against Berlin, was defeated by the prince of Sweden, in the battle of Gross-Beeren (August 23rd) ; and Ney, despatched to repair this loss, could not master fortune (September 6th). His Saxon regiments deserted in the action, and it was evident that none of the auxiliaries could be depended on. Napoleon himself more than once marched to encounter Blücher ; but that wary Prussian fled at the approach of the arch-enemy, and avoided measuring himself with Napoleon. Not so when Macdonald presented himself. Blücher fell on him and his division, and fought the battle of the Katzbach (August 26-29th), in which the French were defeated with great loss. The campaigns round Dresden resembled what Homer recounts of the siege of Troy. When Achilles rushed forth, all was rout, flight, and slaughter : when he retired, his enemies showed courage, and failed not to gain the advantage. Still, though beaten in detail, the plan and resolves of Bonaparte were unyielding and giant-like. But he was obliged to succumb to circumstances. The allied force, daily increasing, soon came to double that of the French, hourly diminishing. Bavaria was obliged to declare against him ; Leipsic was menaced in his rear ; and at length, in the middle of October, Napoleon transferred his quarters from Dresden to that town.

#### THE BATTLE OF LEIPSIC (OCTOBER 16-18TH, 1813)

Napoleon determined with all the troops available, numbering about 190,000 men, to take up as firm a position as possible round the town, and thus prevent the two armies of the enemy from joining. Thus the battle of Leipsic began on the 16th of October, the "battle of nations" according to the Germans, and the "battle of giants" according to the French, practically a succession of battles on the surface of a square mile. The first day the forces were equal, as at one time only Schwarzenberg, with 120,000 men, and Blücher, with 70,000, were at hand ; but after Bernadotte and Bennigsen had joined on the 17th, there was a crushing superiority of the allies on the 18th. The sharpest fighting was carried on by the Silesian army and

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above all by York, who on the 16th, at Möckern, completely annihilated Marmont's corps after a severe struggle; moreover the issue of the battle and campaign was decided by the position, and on the 18th Napoleon fought only for the safety of his retreat.<sup>h</sup>

It was time. On the very next day, the 16th, the allies approached; Bernadotte and Blücher from the north, Schwarzenberg from the south, the Russians joining him. Napoleon himself opposed Schwarzenberg, and held his post the entire day on the verge of the hills which border the plain of Leipsic. Ney was not so fortunate on the north. Blücher and his Prussians fought with inveterate audacity; and Ney, after dreadful loss, was obliged to retire behind the Partha. The only decided success was on the western side of Leipsic, where General Bertrand drove back Gyulai and thus cleared the road towards France.

Whilst Napoleon was arranging his posts, and occupying a line of defence nearer to Leipsic, the Austrian general Meerfeldt, the same who had come with the flag of truce after Austerlitz, was brought in prisoner. Him Napoleon now sent to the emperor of Austria with a similar message, and a demand of an armistice. "The word," said he, "must awaken recollection." But the Austrian was not to be touched by association; no answer was returned: and preparations continued on the 17th for fresh attack on one side, for honourable defence and now inevitable retreat, on the other.

The allies, despite their advantages and numbers, awaited the fresh corps of Bennigsen [78,000 strong]. On the night of the 17th, Bertrand was ordered to commence the retreat, and to secure the passes of the Saale. On the 18th the battle commenced on the north, east, and south of Leipsic. The French were hemmed in by a circle of fire and bayonets, dealt by treble their numbers. Still they remained firm. Poniatowski and his gallant Poles kept Schwarzenberg in check. Macdonald fought the Russians; and when sorely pressed, Napoleon and his guard came to his aid, and repelled the enemy.

To the north of this attack Bernadotte advanced upon Reynier, whose division consisted partly of Saxon corps: these troops, being ordered to march, obeyed indeed, but it was instantly to desert and join the enemy. Bernadotte turned their cannon instantly against the French; and as it swept away whole files by a raking fire, the name of Saxon and of Bernadotte were muttered with curses of execration.<sup>1</sup> Even in this unlooked-for disaster Napoleon preserved his calm — filled up the void left by the Saxons with his guard, and fiercely continued the combat. It was the afternoon. The allies, despairing to force the French ranks, retired and commenced a cannonade; which produced every desired effect of slaughter, and of forcing the defenders to risk their force in offensive movements.<sup>g</sup>

Night alone separated the combatants and put an end to the carnage. So ended the famous battle of the 18th of October. The allies opposed 300,000 soldiers to the 120,000 of Napoleon. The élite of the French army was mown down in the fields of Leipsic. The enemy also lost 60,000 men, and they would have hesitated to attack the French on the ramparts of Leipsic if the latter had had munitions to defend themselves. But in the last five days the army had used 250,000 cannon balls, and there were only 10,000

[<sup>1</sup>The baron de Norvins,<sup>z</sup> who was present, comments: "This military crime, the most odious that the annals of war present, fittingly took place under the flag of the French ex-marshal, Bernadotte, who came, as crown prince of Sweden, to deal a blow at his country. The enemy, even, did not disguise their indignation at such perfidy." The Saxon king, who was with Napoleon, deeply regretted the perfidy of his men.]



cartouches in the ammunition chests — that is, hardly enough to keep up a two-hours' fire. The nearest reserves were at Erfurt and Magdeburg; it was therefore necessary to leave Leipsic, and a retreat was decided on. In the evening the guns and wagons filed to Lützen, the scene of Napoleon's first victory in the campaign! The cavalry, the guard, and part of the infantry followed in the night. The march was difficult through the pass, two leagues long, which separates Leipsic from Lindenau, and which is crossed by several rivers over which, in spite of Napoleon's reiterated commands, no bridges had been built.

At the unhopcd-for news of the retreat, the allies were exceedingly joyful and threw all their forces on Leipsic. Poniatowski and Lauriston defended the southern suburb. Two hours more of this resistance and the rearguard was saved, and re-united, with all the equipment, to the army, which Napoleon already had under cover; for the emperor, under whose direction the first bridge had been mined, had given command to the first engineer to blow it up at the approach of the enemy.

Passing through all obstacles, the emperor arrived at the last bridge, that of Lindenau Mill; here he dismounted, and saw to the placing of staff officers on the route to indicate to isolated men the rendezvous of each corps; he then dictated instructions to the duke of Tarentum, whom he put in command of the whole rearguard. Worn out with the fatigues of the night and the emotions of the day, Napoleon slept profoundly to the lullaby of echoing cannon's thunder. Suddenly a louder explosion was heard: the king of Naples and the duke of Castiglione entered the emperor's room and announced that the Elster bridge had been blown up. Thus, nearly 20,000 men were cut off. The rearguard gave way to despair; some swore to die rather than surrender; others laid down their arms; many, judging resistance useless, flung themselves into the Pleisse and the Elster, but for the greater number of these latter the muddy currents became a watery grave. Marshal Macdonald swam across, General Dumoutier was drowned. Ever since the morning Poniatowski had kept back the allies by prodigies of valour, and, on learning that all hope was lost, he said to his officers, "Now let us die with honour." So saying, he dashed, followed by a few horsemen, right into the enemy's ranks; wounded, surrounded, unable to break through, he crossed the Pleisse; he reached the shores of the Elster, already lined by Russian sharp-shooters, urged his horse into the waters, and there met death.

What was the cause of this horrible disaster? The allies had taken the suburbs, and the French rearguard had been driven back on the boulevards, when the defection of a Badois battalion, who abandoned the gate of St. Pierre, opened the city to the enemy, who dashed in. Then three French corps who were defending it, tried, while still fighting, to gain the highroad. Their heroic valour would have assured their retreat, if the chief engineer, charged with the destruction of the bridge after they had crossed, had not confided this important duty to a mere corporal of the sappers. The sapper, armed with the fatal fuse, thought that the whole of the enemy was approaching; he carried out his orders and cut off the only way of safety from the brave soldiers whose courage had kept back the bulk of the allies. Thus this heroic rearguard, 200 guns, and immense stores were taken from Napoleon. It is true that the enemy lost more than 24,000 men, but this enormous loss did not compensate for the disorganisation of the French army, the wreck of fortunes, and the ruin of French influence in Europe. The battles of Leipsic cost the French 30,000 men, of whom 20,000 were killed; 22,000 more were left wounded in the Leipsic hospitals, and 17

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generals were taken.<sup>1</sup> The king of Saxony was made prisoner. They proclaimed him a traitor to the allies for not having betrayed his ally. He was taken to Prussia.

Napoleon was behind the last bridge of Lindenau when the Elster bridge was blown up. He formed his guard into battle array and fixed his batteries, being obliged to protect the débris of his army as far as the Saale. Ere he reached the Rhine with his shattered troops, he had to encounter a glaring instance of political ingratitude. If he had bestowed benefits on any land, it was Bavaria, which he had amplified, honoured, and made a kingdom of. Now an army of Bavarians crossed his path, and barred his entry into France. They occupied Hanau. A charge of the remnant of the old imperial guard sufficed to punish and to rout the Bavarians.

The revolutionary tide that twenty years previously had overflowed the Alps and the Rhine, changing the face and destroying the old landmarks of Europe, devastating some regions, but, it must be owned, fertilising others, was now rolled back into its ancient bed; and the monarchs, like the cultivators of Egypt after an inundation of the Nile, began again to claim and mark the properties. Germany had already freed itself. Hanover resumed its allegiance to England. Holland dismissed its French governor, and recalled its ancient stadholder. Bernadotte in the north, and Murat in the south, alone held their regal stations by joining the allies against Napoleon. The king of Naples advanced in concert with the Austrians against the prince Eugène and aided in expelling the French from Italy. The emperor himself now set free the pope and Ferdinand of Spain, both to retake possession of their dominions. The English, under Wellington, had already driven the French to the north of the Pyrenées.

In the meantime the victorious sovereigns at Frankfort answered the demand for peace made by Napoleon. They offered him France, imperial France, with the Rhine for its boundary. Not to have accepted this fair, this generous offer, was madness. Even if he intended to renew the struggle at another time, he should have closed with such an offer, that left him Mainz, Antwerp, France, and years to recruit his exhausted resources. Pride and honour both forbade; he could not bear the idea of rendering the realm less than he had received it from the republic, whose unextinguished partisans might well call him to account. In addition to this he possessed that character, so common, of a hard bargainer, and carried his pretensions far beyond either right or reason, nay, believed in their justice. In answer to the offer of the allies, he declaimed against the maritime superiority and laws of England, and called on her to abate them, precisely as if the balance of victory were reversed. But fortune had spoiled him. His faculties (we must except his military talents) had been developed in prosperity, and could not suit themselves to the hard laws of misfortune.

[<sup>1</sup> There is bound to be discrepancy in the figures of such a conflict of the numbers engaged and the losses. Seeley says: "Perhaps nearly half a million of men were engaged in these final battles. It is reckoned that in the last three days the Prussians lost 16, the Russians 21, and the Austrians 14,000 men—total, 51,000. Napoleon left 23,000 behind him in the hospitals and 15,000 prisoners; his dead may have been 15,000." Von Sybel sums up the result as follows: "The three days' battle had cost the allies 42,000 men, the French 38,000 killed and wounded, and 30,000 prisoners. In the retreat all precipitated themselves towards the Rhine regardless of discipline, and as now a fatal epidemic increased the losses of the war, the destruction of the powerful army was almost as great as the preceding year. The imperial might for the second time was now irretrievably and irreparably lost." Whitef calls the battle of Leipsic "the greatest battle of which any record is kept. The huddled millions of Xerxes, or any Indian invader, present nothing to the mind but confusion and disorder. But at Leipsic the numbers of those ancient and barbaric hosts were nearly equalled, and all the skill of modern warfare and the destructiveness of modern weapons were brought into play."]

Yet his enemies were not confined to the land beyond the Rhine. The old royalists stirred in the provinces; the republicans in the capital. The constitutionalists of the first national assembly began to raise their heads, and build hopes of seeing a representative government or a restoration of the Bourbons. This party, to Napoleon's astonishment, displayed itself in his legislative body. Five of its members, intrusted with the drawing up of an address, ventured to speak of the liberty of the subject; of the necessity of accepting peace, and being contented with the frontier of the Rhine, containing a territory more extensive than the "ancient monarchy." This last allusion excited all the indignation of the emperor; he called the members factious men, sold to England; accused them of talking of liberty when national independence was at stake; and concluded by dissolving the assembly and shutting up its hall of meeting.

Meantime the garrisons left in the fortresses of Germany surrendered one by one, and the allies had made preparations to pass the Rhine. Dearly were the French to pay the loss of that neutrality of Switzerland, which they had set the example of breaking. The Austrians now marched through this country upon a part of France undefended by fortresses, and turned, as it were, the flank of the Rhine; Blücher crossed the river; Bülow still more north; whilst Wellington advanced from the Pyrenees.<sup>1</sup> Napoleon was menaced in Paris with the same fate that had attended him at Leipsic; but he resolved to make a lion's fight of it; the memory of the great Frederick and his reverses cheered him. After naming Maria Louisa regent and intrusting his empress and her infant son to the national guards of his capital, Napoleon left the city for his forlorn campaign, on the 25th of January, 1814.

Schwarzenberg, having marched through upper Burgundy, had come upon the Seine; the course of which he pursued towards Paris. Blücher, from Mainz, passing the Vosges, had reached the Marne. Betwixt these two rivers lay the chief force of the attack, amounting to 150,000 men. Napoleon could not muster half the number; and few, very few, could be called soldiers, at least as yet. Advancing from Châlons, the emperor, throwing himself betwixt Schwarzenberg and Blücher, directed, as usual, his first blow against the latter. The Prussian commander occupied Brienne, the scene of Napoleon's school-days. Napoleon himself exchanged blows with the foe, and was obliged to parry the lances of the Cossacks. Blücher was driven back at length, but not routed, rallying to a position behind Brienne, called Rothière, where, in the space of a day, he was certain of being supported by the army of Schwarzenberg. This junction, which Napoleon had fought the battle of Brienne to prevent, now took place; and Blücher and Schwarzenberg attacked the French in turn, on the 1st of February, with vast superiority of force. Alexander and Frederick William were both present to encourage their army. The French wings resisted heroically, covering the retreat, which was effected in the night. A great number of cannon and prisoners was abandoned. Such was the ominous commencement of the campaign.

Blücher now was all eager to push on to Paris. Being joined by two fresh divisions, he separated from Schwarzenberg and the Austrians, tardy in their advance both from character and from policy. The emperor Francis still wished not to annihilate Napoleon's power; and under his influence the congress of Châtillon opened, to make another attempt at negotiation, whilst Blücher persisted in advancing along the Marne. Napoleon, with his eye on

[<sup>1</sup> The allies, on December 1st, 1813, declared that they warred not on France, but on Napoleon.]



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the Prussians, sent Caulaincourt to the congress assembled now at Châtillon. In these openings towards accommodation, some new gleams of hope ever occurred to distract the emperor from a sense of his forlorn condition. Blücher's rash advance now inspired him with the plan of surprising and defeating the Prussians. The idea took possession of him; and so full was he of it that he refused to sanction the *carte blanche* to treat, which a few days previously he had given to Caulaincourt. The Prussian general was thus unwittingly, and by his imprudence as much as his sagacity, the ruin of his sworn foe. Bent on defeating Blücher, Napoleon, on the 9th of February, refused to approve of the conditions sent to him from Châtillon by Caulaincourt; and thus nailing up the postern of safety, till then left open for him, he resolved to sally to the point, to conquer or to fall.

#### NAPOLEON'S LAST VICTORIES

He now abandoned even the important town of Troyes, and transferring his army by cross-roads and forced marches from the Seine to the Marne, he surprised the flank of Blücher, as that general was marching in all boldness upon Paris, confident that the day of La Rothière had been the last serious effort of the French. In this he was severely disappointed. Napoleon fell upon his centre at Champaubert (February 10th), composed of Russians; defeated, routed it, and took a great number of prisoners and cannon. The van, under Osten-Sacken, was thus cut off from its rear, under Blücher. Napoleon, losing not a moment, came up with the former at Montmirail (February 11th), and gained a victory over it equally decisive. It was thus that Blücher, by his rashness, lost two-thirds of his army: he redeemed the blunder, however, by the obstinacy with which, at the head of the remaining third, he retreated before Napoleon, until the advance of the Austrians on the side of the Seine recalled the emperor. The success of Montmirail—the despatch of captured Prussians, Russians, and their cannon to Paris—now elated Napoleon. Even after the first advantage of Champaubert, he had written to his plenipotentiaries at Châtillon to take a prouder attitude. Now, as he approached the Austrians, an officer of their army advanced to propose an armistice, and press the acceptance of the conditions of Châtillon. Napoleon, victorious, returned for answer that he was willing to accede to those of Frankfort; but Belgium he would not cede. “Recollect,” said he, “that I am nearer to Munich than my foes to Paris.”

Now took place the combat of Montereau. Schwarzenberg's advanced guard of Austrian and Würtemberg troops occupied it, and defended a position in advance of the bridge. On the 17th they were driven from this; but Victor, duke of Belluno, rendered inactive by age, or by the loss of his son-in-law, a general officer slain in the morning, failed to support the attack of the bridge. Napoleon was grievously offended with Victor for his remissness, and deprived him of his command, which he gave to Gérard. Victor confessed his fault, and was generous enough not to desert or retort upon his master in the decline of his fortune. “I will take a musket,” said the marshal, distressed even to tears. Napoleon himself was touched by the appeal: he embraced his lieutenant, and gave him another command.<sup>g</sup>

The cannon-balls rebounded on the frozen ground, and dismounted the guns of the guards. Napoleon was on foot in the midst of this park; in vain was he told that the danger was great—the grapeshot touched his boots, the veteran gunners and artillery-men were furious with him, and said with their soldierly familiarity, “Your place is not here.” Napoleon answered

smilingly, "There, there, my brave fellows — the bullet that will kill me is not yet cast!" Protected by the artillery of the guard, the infantry and cavalry flung themselves into Montereau, and the Würtemberg troops were cut to pieces in the narrow streets. Victory, then, once more Victory!

The battle of Montereau, a great day for Napoleon, was dearly purchased; the more the emperor exposed himself, the more ill-tempered, imperious, and exacting he became; he reproached everyone, for he did not spare himself. Duties were no longer performed with alacrity, ardour in the ranks was no longer what it had been; a certain general, formerly brave and daring, had badly executed a cavalry manœuvre; the Cossacks had seized some ordnance of the guard under the orders of General Guyot; at Montereau, Napoleon reproached General Digeon for allowing the artillery of the guard to lack bullets; Montbrun had permitted the Cossacks to seize the forest of Fontainebleau; Marshal Victor was not speedy enough in reaching the bridge of Montereau. Napoleon exacted great things because he himself performed them; misfortune had made him gloomy—he, the great magician, demanded more than miracles; he felt the need of a young army, of reconstructing it upon new foundations; the marshals were growing weary; only Mortier and Marmont were still in his confidence; Ney was becoming insubordinate and ill-tempered, Oudinot was covered with wounds and losing his activity; Victor was riddled with bullets;—they were in need of rest. Mortier and Marmont possessed his whole confidence; he cast his eyes over the young generals whom he wished to raise to the rank of marshal of France—Bertrand, Gérard, Bourmont, and Maison, all of incontestable ability. It was a happy idea to raise the tone of the personnel of his camps.

On the 23rd of February the French, following up the advantage of Montereau, re-entered Troyes. Some royalists had displayed their opinions in this town: one unfortunate gentleman was executed on this account. At Troyes came another flag of truce from the Austrians, wishing to establish an armistice. Napoleon would not hear of any that did not extend upon the whole line. Blücher, the beaten Blücher, appeared in the field again with a fresh army of 100,000 men, made up of reinforcements and reserves. He pressed Schwarzenberg to join him in giving battle: the Austrian persisted in retreating. Blücher then, with unexampled hardihood, resolved to renew the very attempt which had proved so destructive to him, *viz.*, to advance again towards the capital. He now chose another road, and other allies. Leaving Schwarzenberg and his Austrians to operate by themselves to the south of Paris, Blücher crossed the Marne, and drew near to the Prussian and Russian army of Bülow and Wintzingerode. With these he hoped to force his way towards the French capital, northward of the Marne.

Against this new manœuvre Napoleon was called to provide. The emperor now marched across the Marne, hoping once more to surprise Blücher. The Prussian, more wary this time, retreated opportunely to Soissons, which the Russians had already taken. Napoleon crossed the Aisne after them, and came up with the Russians, who occupied the heights of Craonne. The battle was fought on the morrow, the 6th of March. The Russians held their ground against the most furious and valiant attacks during the entire day, and then retreated in good order to Laon, where the Prussians united with them. The result, however it might claim to be called victory, was, in Napoleon's critical situation, a defeat. He had lost thousands, henceforth irreparable, and had merely repulsed the foe. Blücher, by adopting this mode of warfare, which had so well succeeded with the English in Portugal and Spain, *viz.*, taking up positions on eminences, and there awaiting the attack, now

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paralysed all the efforts of his impetuous foe. Another battle, similar to Craonne, took place not far from it, at Laon, three days after. Marmont, commanding the French left, advanced too far, was surprised by Blücher, and his whole wing routed and destroyed.

Here vanished Napoleon's last hopes of superiority and retrieval. He instantly despatched word to Caulaincourt to treat on any terms with the allies, but the message arrived too late. Austria, by a treaty concluded on the 1st of March, had agreed to join the allies in inexorable war with Napoleon, should he not consent to their conditions, and the negotiations were closed. The French were on all sides driven back upon their capital.

Disasters now thickened upon the doomed Napoleon—doomed indeed by his own obstinacy as much as by fate. The successes of Wellington enabled Bordeaux to display its royalism and attachment to the Bourbons. Talleyrand had grasped at the first chance of overthrowing him whom he rightly considered as a despot, and of establishing a constitutional government under the Bourbons. The leanings of Austria in favour of the wife and family of Napoleon were overcome, and the vague inclinations of Alexander were fixed in favour of the long-exiled race of French monarchs.

In the meantime Bonaparte, like the stag at bay, had turned from Blücher to Schwarzenberg; who, in his absence, had recovered the ground lost subsequent to the affair at Monterau. The emperor, to check him, fought his last battle on the 20th of March, at Arcis, where his troops, wearied and disheartened, at length gave up, and lost their long-supported energy and victory together. Napoleon now refused to retreat to his capital, but resolved to fling himself in the rear of his enemies, fall upon their straggling parties, cut off their communications, and distract them, if possible, from Paris. He liked the confusion consequent upon these audacious and anomalous manœuvres, which disturbed his enemies in their plans and calculations, and which afforded him the best chance of advantage. Sallying therefore eastward, betwixt the Aube and the Marne, Napoleon reached St. Dizier with a portion of his army. The divisions of Mortier and Marmont were ordered to join him; but these, intercepted by the allies, who did not allow their advance on Paris to be interrupted, were driven back upon the capital.

On Sunday, the 27th of March, the inhabitants heard the sound of war approach. The roar of cannon was in the direction of Meaux; and these portents were followed by the marshalling of national guards, the crowding in of frightened peasants, wounded and straggling soldiers. The gay boulevards were soon converted into a long bivouac. Terror and incertitude were in most countenances, indignant sorrow in some, joy in few. Marshals Marmont and Mortier had posted their scanty force round Paris, and scarcely removed from its frail walls, except where the heights of Montmartre and Belleville and the castle of Vincennes offered advantages of ground or support. Within the walls Joseph Bonaparte held the command. The empress, an amiable and affectionate wife, was not a heroine, and now fled with her son from the menaced scene of strife. The boy, it is said, showed extreme reluctance to depart. Joseph, on his part, showed a degree of confidence. It was hoped that the enemy were not in force, that Napoleon might arrive with aid. Prolonged defence was impossible; and a firm attitude was preserved merely lest any advantages, that time or the emperor could bring, might be lost.

On the 30th the allied troops commenced the attack of the several heights; but, the Prussians not having come up in sufficient force on the right, the brunt of the battle was on the heights of Belleville and at Pantin,



where the small number of French made a gallant resistance, but were, in the end, overpowered. The young pupils of the Polytechnic school plied the guns; and many perished in this their first essay of arms.<sup>1</sup> From the very first the sovereigns had proffered to spare the city by capitulation: it was now accepted by Marmont, who had received permission of Joseph to this effect. After the order that prince had fled. On the last day of March the emperor of Russia and the king of Prussia entered Paris in triumph at the head of their troops, welcomed with all the outward appearance of joy by the Parisians. The views of the monarchs were sufficiently evinced by their dining with Talleyrand on that day. Caulaincourt, who arrived from Napoleon, was obliged to wait for an answer.

That rejected child of fortune had found at St. Dizier that his eccentric march had failed in diverting the allies from their march upon the capital. He had made the great blunder of supposing that those generals who fought to the utmost whilst under his eye, or dreading his censure, were likely to exert themselves for victory when defeat would forever deliver them from an imperious and unfortunate master. Napoleon bent his steps back towards the capital by Troyes, and the main road of Fontainebleau. He had already passed that town, when he encountered, on the evening of the 30th, some of the troops of Marmont, retiring by virtue of the capitulation. He could scarcely credit the tidings. Joseph's flight, Marmont's surrender, seemed inexplicable to him. He persisted in advancing; and it was only by persuasion, almost amounting to force, that he was made to believe in the loss of his capital, and to return to Fontainebleau: thence he despatched Caulaincourt to Paris.<sup>g</sup>

#### NAPOLÉON'S ABDICATION

Napoleon was still to be feared, for he could raise seventy thousand men, and provoke civil war. Nothing was more pressing than the need of rallying the army round the provisional government, by demonstrating to it that peace was essential, and its conclusion was entirely in its hands. Moreover, the army was worn out and demoralised, the officers were doubtful, divided, and in despair. Discipline galled them. Napoleon was treated, even in the heart of his staff, as a raving lunatic.

Caulaincourt therefore went to Fontainebleau to tell the emperor that the powers were resolved not to treat with him, and that Alexander offered him the island of Elba as a place of retirement. He found him engaged in a scheme for driving the allies out of Paris. They had divided their forces; Schwarzenberg was established on the left bank of the river with eighty thousand men; the remainder were in Paris or on the right bank. Napoleon estimated that with his seventy thousand men who would be mobilised on 4th of April, he could crush Schwarzenberg's eighty thousand, surprise the troops occupying Paris, give battle again to them and force the sovereigns to a compromise. On the 4th he addressed the soldiers to this effect, to the amazement of the staff. Lefebvre, Ney, Oudinot, and Macdonald, respectful but incensed, above all at the idea of a battle in Paris, repenting like the senate of their prolonged compliance, at last yielded to solicitations which beset them on all hands. They entered the emperor's room, and revealed the true situation of affairs in regard to which he was deceived, and asserted that they were no longer able to count on the discipline of the troops. Napoleon bade them withdraw, and immediately drew up a state-

[<sup>1</sup> The total loss according to Dareste<sup>k</sup> was 6,000.]

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ment declaring that "having been proclaimed by the powers the only obstacle to the re-establishment of peace in Europe; true to his principles, he was ready to relinquish the throne, to leave France and even give up his life for the country, inseparable from his son's rights and those of the regency, the empress and the laws of the empire."

Ney and Macdonald undertook to take this document to Alexander, and plead the king of Rome's cause to him, which it seemed to them would reconcile their fidelity and the exigencies of the situation. During this time, Marmont, whose corps was camped on the Essonne and covering Fontainebleau, yielded to pressing solicitations, and allowed himself to be persuaded that he was called upon to play a military part equal to the political rôle of Talleyrand. He entered into negotiations with Schwarzenberg. His generals of division, incensed against Napoleon, and accusing him of being willing to let his last soldier be killed, refused to obey an order summoning them to Fontainebleau, led the 6th army corps to Versailles, and left the Essonne unprotected.

This movement was not carried through without protest and complaint. A military plot was feared, for officers and soldiers, influenced by different feelings, were speculating as to what they ought to do. Marmont, who was in Paris, returned to them, and controlled them.

Ney, Macdonald, and Caulaincourt, having obtained no concession from the sovereigns, returned and informed Napoleon that a simple abdication was insisted upon. Napoleon had disguised his expectation of it. He took Caulaincourt aside, and declared that he could prolong the war from the other side of the Loire, but that it would mean to turn a foreign into a civil war, and so he was resolved to abdicate. Realising the truth, he spoke of himself, of his generals, and of France with the clear insight and calm of fixed resolution. He asked only for conditions on behalf of the army and of France. He wanted even now an improved frontier. Caulaincourt pointed out that such a wish was useless, since they refused to make terms with him; so he called his marshals together and read them an act of simple abdication.

Since the flight of the government and the proclamation of its downfall, recriminations broke out. Napoleon was the object of the most unheard-of passion. It was one unanimous howl against the "Corsican Ogre," the assassin of the duke d'Enghien, the author of the ambushade at Bayonne, the man who had slaughtered so many thousands of men, and who, it was said, reserved for Paris, in wishing to attempt a battle within its walls, the fate of Moscow.

The excitement was at its height and the reaction unrestrained. The fallen idol was, as always, despised and insulted. The statue on the Austerlitz column was thrown down. And as every revolution has its vile side, there were not wanting those ready to flatter the sovereigns and even the émigrés who had served in the foreign armies. Another, but more natural movement, was the sudden enthusiasm for the cause of the princes. Each day it was felt more forcibly that the Bourbons were necessary, that they alone could reconcile France with the rest of Europe and restore her liberty. It is better, as Meaux<sup>1</sup> has rightly said, to bow before a principle than before a master.

The sovereigns signed, on the 11th, a treaty with Napoleon, by which they gave him the island of Elba and an income of two millions for himself, and two more for his family. To Marie Louise and her son, the duchies of Parma and Plaisance were given.<sup>2</sup>

## HENRI MARTIN ON NAPOLEON'S ABDICATION

Ney adhered to the new government as the majority of marshals, ministers, and officials of all kinds had already done. Caulaincourt and Macdonald declared that their duty towards Napoleon would not be accomplished until after the fulfilment of the conditions which had just been signed, and they returned to Fontainebleau which was becoming more and more deserted. The important personages of the army had left one after the other to carry their adherence to the new power. The conduct of Macdonald contrasted so much the more nobly with that of the men who owed their fortune to Napoleon, because the emperor did not like him and had put him aside. Napoleon, who had so little faith in disinterestedness and virtue, was touched as much as he could be by their unexpected generosity. He thanked Macdonald and at the same time offered him as a souvenir his Egyptian sword given him by Murad Bey on the banks of the Nile.

Napoleon had an interview that evening with Caulaincourt, who carried away lasting recollections of it. His language was of a surprising grandeur. He concentrated upon it all the forces of his genius to rise above the history of his time, and to judge men and things impartially. He posed before posterity as he wished to appear to it, perhaps with that kind of sincerity great actors possess when they put themselves into rôles. He made an effort to convince the sole auditor charged with conveying his words to the world, and he made an effort also perhaps to convince himself that he had acted only in the interests of France. He repeated this expression which had already escaped him once before; he repeated it with real and profound agony—"Ah, to leave France so little, after having received her so great!" What more could one add! It is the sentence of the 18th Brumaire pronounced by its author.

It was a solemn farewell to life which the fallen emperor had intended to make. He had always believed in destiny rather than in providence. Destiny had pronounced against him. He had none of those religious principles which forbid a man to take leave of life before God calls him. He dismissed Caulaincourt and swallowed a potion of opium combined with other deleterious substances. It was, it is affirmed, a similar potion to the one composed for Condorcet by Cabanis. He called back Caulaincourt, gave him instructions for his family, bade him farewell and embraced him. The death which he had summoned did not come. A violent vomiting spell saved him—unfortunately for himself and for the French. He returned to life to cause fresh troubles for France.

Resigned to living, he expected to find his wife and son on the path of exile which he was about to tread. He had previously made Marie Louise promise to seek an interview with the emperor, her father, in the hope that Francis I would give her Tuscany instead of Parma. Marie Louise accordingly went to see Francis I at Rambouillet; but she did not obtain Tuscany and her father persuaded her to leave for Vienna with her son instead of rejoining her husband during his dreary journey across France. She was made to believe that she could join him later on the island of Elba. Marie Louise, incapable of thinking and deciding herself, obeyed her father as she would have obeyed her husband. Napoleon never again saw either his wife or his son.

On the 20th of April, everything being ready for the departure of Napoleon, and the commissioners of the four great powers who were to accompany him having arrived, Napoleon assembled the national guard



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in a circle in the court of honour at the château of Fontainebleau and addressed to them his farewells. "Soldiers," said he, "one mission is left to me, and it is to fulfil that that I consent to live. It is to relate to posterity the great things which we have done together." Would to God that he had kept his word and had done nothing else! He kissed the flag of the old guard. These brave soldiers, who saw in him only the man who had led them so many times to victory, burst into tears. Seven or eight hundred of them were to form the army left to the man who had disposed of a million soldiers, the army of the sovereign of Elba. They had left in advance and Napoleon started without other escort than the generals Drouot and Bertrand, and the four foreign commissioners with their suites.

In the first departments they traversed, from the Seine-et-Marne to Allier, the people who had seen the invasion from close at hand forgot the evil Napoleon had done, and saw in him only the defender of the land. They cried: "*Vive l'empereur!*" Down with the strangers!" Beyond Lyons where the people had not seen the enemy the population became hostile. The old royalist and Catholic passions were aroused in proportion as they advanced towards the south, the crowd cried: "*Vive le roi!*" Down with the tyrant!" Some groups screamed, "*Vivent les alliés!*" At Avignon and at Orgon, a furious populace assailed the carriages, clamouring to have the tyrant delivered up to them to hang or to throw into the Rhone. This man, who had lived with indifference in the midst of bullets and balls, quailed before these ignoble perils. He masqueraded in a foreign uniform and without this disguise the commissioners of the allies could not perhaps have succeeded in saving his life at Orgon.

This sad journey ended at the gulf of St. Raphael on the coast of Provence—at Fréjus, precisely the same point where General Bonaparte had landed on his return from Egypt. An English frigate was waiting for him and carried him to the isle of Elba. He landed the 4th of May at the port of Porto Ferrajo.

While the empire was completing its ruin at Essonne and at Fontainebleau, and the fallen emperor was on his way into exile, the new government was working laboriously at the task of establishing itself at Paris.<sup>b</sup>



## CHAPTER XXII

### THE END OF NAPOLEON

[1814-1815 A.D.]

War is the condition of this world. From man to the smallest insect all are at strife, and the glory of arms, which cannot be obtained without the exercise of honour, fortitude, courage, obedience, modesty, and temperance, excites the brave man's patriotism and is a chastening corrective for the rich man's pride. It is yet no security for power. Napoleon, the greatest man of whom history makes mention — Napoleon, the most wonderful commander, the most sagacious politician, the most profound statesman, lost by arms Poland, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain, and France. Fortune, that name for the unknown combinations of infinite power, was wanting to him, and without her aid the designs of man are as bubbles on a troubled ocean. — NAPIER.<sup>b</sup>

ROYALISM was struggling with the party representing national sovereignty in the commission charged by the senate with preparing a constitution. The abbé de Montesquiou, the confidential man of the pretendant, did not succeed in causing the principle of a sovereign right superior to the will of the nation to be admitted. The formula adopted was the following: "The French people voluntarily calls to the throne of France, Louis Stanislas Xavier of France, brother of the last king, and, after him the members of the house of Bourbon."

The reign was not to commence until the day when he took oath to the constitution. Executive power was conferred on the king, who shared the legislative power with the senate and a chamber of deputies. The constitution sanctioned individual freedom, freedom of religion, freedom of the press, the sale of national lands, the public debt, and proclaimed forgetfulness of all acts committed since the commencement of the Revolution. The principles of '89 were preserved; in the sad position in which France was placed there was no better course than to rally around this constitution which was voted by the senate on the 6th of April and accepted by the legislative body.

The bourgeoisie received the prince well and he was gracious to them. He was conducted to Notre Dame, then to the Tuileries. It had been twenty-two years since his unfortunate brother Louis XVI had made his exit, and twenty-five since he himself had fled from France after the taking of the Bastille. Talleyrand and his circle feared that the public might remember

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the counter-revolutionary ardour of the prince who had been the leader of the émigrés. They thought it necessary to give some pledge that the old régime would not be brought back and in the *Moniteur* of the next day a happy expression was attributed to the count of Artois: "Nothing is changed in France, there is only one Frenchman more!" The count of Artois did not disown this invention of a clever man, the count Beugnot, but he held firmly to his desire of being recognised unconditionally as lieutenant-general of the kingdom just as he had entered Paris unconditionally. The emperor of Russia intervened and signified to the count of Artois that the allies were pledged to the senate and to the nation. The count of Artois had to yield.

The national tricolour cockade, at the moment when it was being abandoned in Paris for the white, was still honoured by numerous French soldiers from the banks of the Garonne to those of the Elbe and many deeds of war distinguished the last efforts of French arms even after Napoleon had laid down his sword. Carnot, at Antwerp, had shielded the city and fleet from the attacks of the English. At Bergen-op-Zoom the English lost 4,000 men in an attack which for them resulted in disaster. The allies were also rudely driven back at Maubeuge. Suchet, obliged by Napoleon to send the best part of his forces against Lyons, had re-entered France with the rest, trying to rejoin Soult. The latter had retreated upon Toulouse with 36,000 men, followed by Wel-



LOUIS GABRIEL SUCHET

(1770-1826)

lington, who had 60,000. Towards evening he abandoned Toulouse and retired on Carcassonne where he was certain of being rejoined by Suchet. An emissary of the provisional government finally arrived, too late to prevent the carnage of Toulouse; but too early in the opinion of the old French soldiers of Spain, who were hoping for a revenge.

The armistice was gradually established everywhere: it was now a question of fixing the conditions of peace. They were sure to be grievous in any case.

Talleyrand, the sceptical egotist who held the direction of foreign affairs in his hands, thought only of making himself popular for a few days by concluding as quickly as possible an agreement for the departure of the foreigners. He had a compact signed by the count of Artois on the 23rd of April, in accordance with which "all hostilities on land or sea were suspended between the allied powers and France," until the treaty of peace, which should be concluded as soon as possible. The foreign powers promised to leave French territory as it had been the 1st of January, 1792, as soon as the places without these limits still occupied by French troops should be



evacuated and returned to the allies. The total restoration of these places was to be effected by the 1st of June.

On seeing the feebleness and incapacity of the count of Artois from near at hand, everybody was looking forward to the arrival of the new king, in whom people tried to hope. On the 20th of April he left his retreat at Hartwell in the environs of London, where he had resided since he had left Russia, and made a solemn entry into London. The English, intoxicated with pride at having overturned Napoleon and having made a king of France, welcomed him with the white cockade in their hats. The new king, escorted by an English squadron, crossed that strait which Napoleon had for so long dreamed of crossing at the head of a victorious French fleet. He landed at Calais, the 24th of April, and was received with the acclamations which always greet a new power and which the satisfaction over a return to peace at that moment made sincere. From there he proceeded slowly to Paris.<sup>c</sup>

#### THE RETURN AND MISTAKES OF THE BOURBONS

The Parisians were somewhat disappointed when they saw in the person of their legitimate king an old man of prodigious obesity, with heavy brooding features and perpetual gout. Sitting by his side, however, was another resuscitation of the past, which awoke more painful feelings still. It was the duchess d'Angoulême, the unfortunate daughter of Louis XVI, and so long a prisoner in the Temple. She now advanced with withered countenance along the same road, covered with arches of triumph, leading to the Tuileries, over which her mother had been so pitilessly dragged to the scaffold. Now old names began to be heard again which had had a great sound before the Revolution, the possessors of which were only bent on making up, by insolence and superiority, for their humble position and scanty fare in Leicester square and other haunts of expatriated men. More respectable while submitting to their fate, and teaching languages or dancing to the citizens of London or Vienna, than when they tried to exert their ancient privileges over a people who had ceased to remember the old order of affairs, they quickly converted the compassion their protectors had felt for their sufferings into dislike. They reclaimed estates which had passed through great numbers of hands since they were confiscated in 1793. Houses had been built upon their lands, canals dug between their villages; rents had been paid to the intrusive proprietors, and Monsieur le Marquis would not be satisfied without a full and free restoration of all he had been defrauded of so long. And Louis XVIII was scarcely in a position to resist his claims, for he himself was playing, on a still greater scale, the same game.<sup>d</sup>

The new monarch—who called himself “king by the grace of God”<sup>1</sup> without making mention of the national will, who tore down the tricolour flag to replace it by the white flag which the French soldiers no longer recognised, who finally dated his accession from the death of his nephew, Louis XVII, and who called 1814 the nineteenth year of his reign—was but little disposed to make concessions. The czar did not love the Bourbons and already realised that the revolutions of France would not be finished nor the east of Europe established except by liberal institutions strong

[<sup>1</sup> The legal title with which Louis ascended the throne is very contradictory. “Through God’s grace he became king of France and Navarre”—“by the love of the people he was recalled to the throne.” The word of the Russian Alexander was proved good when he said that “the Bourbons did not improve themselves and could not be improved,” or in other terms that they forgot nothing and learned nothing. —KAISER. J]

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enough to render impossible the return of the old régime. He sustained the constitutional proposals drawn up by Talleyrand and the commission of senators and deputies. The king was obliged before entering Paris to make the declaration of St. Ouen, May 2nd, which promised a representative government and the maintenance of the first conquests of the Revolution. This declaration was replaced by the constitutional charter, "taken under advisement" May 27th, and "conceded" on the 4th of June.

These are its principal clauses: an hereditary royalty; two chambers, one electoral, the other—that of the peers—chosen by the king, both chambers having the vote on taxation and the discussion of laws; public and individual liberty; liberty of the press and of religion; the inviolability of property, even of the national properties that had been sold; responsibility of ministers; the permanence of the judges; the guaranty of the public debt; the maintenance of the pensions, ranks, and military honours of the old and of the new nobility, as well as of the Legion of Honour, whose cross should bear the image of Henry IV in place of that of Napoleon; the free admissibility of all Frenchmen to all offices, civil and military; the maintenance of the great institutions of the empire.

The czar Alexander had been unwilling to depart before the constitutional act was drawn up. When he knew it to be adopted, he and his allies signed the treaty of peace on the conditions accepted by Talleyrand, April 23rd, and the evacuation of France by the hostile troops began May 30th.

The charter specified the middle class. Since the empire had fallen, it was consoled for the glory and the power that had been lost by the hope of at least having found peace and freedom. But with the Bourbons came back the émigrés, who threatened the new interests gained by the Revolution. For minister of war General Dupont was chosen, though his name was attached to the disgrace of the first reverse, the capitulation of Baylen. Public honours were rendered to the memory of George Cadoudal and of Moreau, both notoriously culpable, the one for an attempt at assassination, the other for treason. The king closed his ordinances with the old formula of Louis XIV: "Since this is our good pleasure." Ranks and honours were lavished upon the émigrés, while 14,000 officers who had gained their epaulettes in the face of the enemy were reduced to half pay. Soldiers of the army of Condé and even men who had never worn a sword were made generals. Officers of the marine were restored with the rank immediately above that they had held the day of their emigration. Those who had served on the British fleet kept the rank which the English admiralty had given them. Campaigns of war made against France counted as "vacation" (ordinances of May 25th).<sup>e</sup>

One of the great errors of the Bourbons, an error that even the catastrophe of 1815 could not cure them of, was a belief in the existence of a numerous and powerful party that had never ceased to desire their return or to work efficaciously for it. These illusions might have been sanctified by history itself if the Bourbons had known how to reign and to justify, even imperfectly, public confidence. But this confidence soon took flight. Each day was marked by a fresh mistake. To make a clean sweep of the workers and works of the Revolution, to restore, as the saying was, "the continuity of the ages, interrupted by unhappy digressions," that is to say, to reconstruct, or rather parody the old régime—such was from the very beginning the ostensible and almost openly avowed aim of the ministers of Louis XVIII, and of the princes of his house, whom no law limited from meddling in the affairs of the state.

The barely promulgated charter was violated in its most essential principles. It guaranteed liberty to all religious cults, but as early as June 7th a famous law forbade Sunday labour. It granted liberty of the press, but the first law framed by the ministry re-established a censorship. Public irritation and mistrust came to a head at the spectacle of a cabinet minister, Ferrand, confirming all the fears which, with blind and culpable recklessness, were kept alive in the numerous body of purchasers of the national properties.

Four months from the date of the restoration of the Bourbons the evil done was almost irreparable. Public opinion had nothing to feed on but the unconstitutional acts of authority. The very army, for which sheer common sense claimed consideration—the army, still wet with its own blood and the blood of its enemies, was subjected to contemptible insults. It seemed as though men desired by dishonouring the army to dishonour not the emperor's person and reign alone, but the Revolution and the whole of new France. The reorganisation of the Hundred Swiss was a yet graver error. It seemed like a distinct and menacing protest against the Revolution. The charter having safeguarded the Legion of Honour, everything possible was done to bring discredit on that noble institution which committed the unpardonable sin of dating from the imperial régime. Princes and ministers gave away the honour wholesale.

#### THE GROWTH OF OPPOSITION

It was inevitable that such an accumulation of imprudences should sooner or later react on the contrivers. Weary as France was of wars and revolts, she could not suffer dishonour thus at the hands of debilitated and unreasonable authority which, existing only by virtue of its compromise with the spirit of the Revolution, seemed to deny that compromise and to lean solely on a clique of men with retrograde notions, intrepid only in insulting a past they had not known how either to appease or to resist. As early as the month of September everything was ripe for a revolution.<sup>g</sup>

The Napoleonic legend dates from this epoch. Constitutionals, liberals, carbonari, freemasons, the débris of the republic becoming the débris of the empire, the participators in the Hundred-Days, dismissed royalists, Orleanists—every party aided in its construction. There was no longer any question of the administrative despotism under which France had groaned, of the harvests of men mown down each year on all the fields of Europe, of the egotistical and unrestrained policy whose deceptions and mistakes were paid so dearly by the blood and treasure of France. Separated from the empire by an abyss, these platonic partisans set their hero upon a mighty pedestal; he became the modern Cæsar, the god of victory, Prometheus on his rock. The exaggerations of poetry became the daily language of controversy.

What was Bonapartism at this time? Barely a dream. The emperor was far away, his son, a child, languished under the guardianship of Austria; his brothers had neither partisans nor personal influence; the powers would not have tolerated a member of the Bonaparte family on the throne of France, not even Prince Eugène, although he was allied to one of the courts of the north. Still more, among so many people who glorified the empire, how many were really attached to it by recollection or office? The empire, set up again, would have scattered them, or, perhaps, they would not even have come forward to share in its power and honours. For the greater part, Bonapartism was only an instrument of opposition.<sup>h</sup>



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A nation still heaving with so great a storm, with people embittered by the animosity of five-and-twenty years, with so many injuries to avenge on both sides, and such a total prostration of dignity and honour as the rapid alternation of success and defeat had produced, found it impossible to fulfil the conditions of the compact it had made between the past and the present. It could not satisfy the disinherited seigneur, nor dispossess the roturier of his lately purchased estate. "Seigneur," indeed, and "roturier," had lost their signification, but not their recollections. The seigneur remembered his rights and immunities—his donjon keep and gilded chair at court; the roturier, within a month of the publication of the charter, began to remember the little man in the gray riding-coat who had kept those harpies so gallantly from the land, and scowled with ill-concealed hatred as he saw the tents of the Tatars and Croats pitched all down the beautiful avenues of the Champs Élysées, and met long trains of priests and bishops going to return thanks to God for the humiliation of their country. Priests and bishops were busy in all directions. Over every death-bed hung a priest denouncing endless woes unless the sufferer restored his secularised lands to the church, or his government-guaranteed lands to their legitimate owners the refugees.

All this time there was an immense army of the allies to be maintained at France's cost, and an enormous war-contribution to indemnify the invaders against the expenses of their campaign. The taxes from ordinary sources were dried up; there was little commerce, and agriculture had come to a standstill from the uncertainty of political events. The returned exiles had no money, and the whole burden fell on the comparatively opulent middle class, who had saved some hard coin, and were now forced to bring it out from their depositories under the thatch or in the dry well of the orchard, and pour it into commissioners' hands for the enrichment of Prussians and Muscovites. Very slight were the hopes of amelioration from the congress which commenced its sittings at Vienna. There, scissors in hand, sat the delegates of the allied sovereigns, ready to clip off bits of territory, and round the national maps to their own satisfaction.

Meanwhile a hundred and thirty thousand soldiers had returned to France: two hundred thousand more were scattered through the villages and farms. They found their fields neglected and their cottages in disrepair, but the object of their indignation was changed. They no longer blamed the conscription for the want they saw around them, but the foreigner who had trod their soil, and the wretched poltroons who, in their absence beyond the Rhine, allowed the tricolour to be trampled in the dust. "If we had been there," they said—"if the Little Corporal had had the men of Marengo and Eylau at his side, this would not have happened." And everywhere, shortly after this, there were whispers about great things that would occur when the violet appeared in the spring. Ladies wore violets in their bonnets, and little sketches were circulated, in which the figure of a violet was so disposed that the interval between the leaves formed the well-known countenance of the emperor, with his plain gray riding-coat and little cocked hat. He was talked of as "Corporal Violet"; and the tedious winter wore away.

It did not seem that the bursting forth of that pretty but common flower excited much attention in Elba. The island was guarded by English cruisers, and commissioners from various nations were resident to watch that the newly appointed monarch of the Elbese territories did not leave his domains. There appeared no wish on the part of that somewhat petty potentate to withdraw his paternal care from the empire across which he could ride in a

couple of hours ; and he was busy making roads, building bridges, and calculating the expense of a better pier to his imperial city of Porto Ferrajo. His only relaxations were scientific discussions with his friends, and quiet evening-parties at the house of his sister Pauline.

#### NAPOLÉON LEAVES ELBA

It chanced, on the 26th of February, 1815, that the ball at Pauline's was deprived of much of its usual brilliancy. The captain of the English cruiser had taken his ship for a few days to Leghorn ; the commissioners of the allied powers were absent on leave or otherwise engaged ; and at ten o'clock at night a small cannon discharged on the rampart did not interfere with the enjoyment of the supper that followed the dance. The report, however, had great effect in other quarters. Six hundred men of the Old Guard marched silently down to the harbour ; there they were joined by four hundred Poles and Corsicans ; and the whole force embarked in a brig called *The Inconstant*. Just before the sails were hoisted, the men caught sight of the gray riding-coat and cocked hat as the wearer stepped upon the deck. Not a word was said ; the anchor was raised, no obstruction was offered ; the little vessel left the lights of the town behind it. Three tedious days were passed upon the voyage ; English frigates were swarming everywhere, and some one or two passed in sight of *The Inconstant*. At length French soil was seen, and the invading army landed in the gulf of Juan, near the town of Cannes. The few inhabitants of that district were too remote from public affairs, and too ignorant, to be much moved by the strange apparition of a thousand men disembarking from a brig from some unknown region beyond the sea.

It was only on the 8th of March that the Parisians read in the *Moniteur* that Napoleon was in France. By this time he was in Lyons at the head of a considerable army. All the forces hitherto sent to oppose him had gone over at sight of the tricolour. At Grenoble he had been met by a regiment of seven hundred men, who prepared to resist his advance. He walked slowly forward to the front line, and said, "My friends, if there is one among you who wishes to kill his emperor—his general—he has it in his power!" He unbuttoned the little gray coat to receive the ball, and shouts arose of "*Vive l'empereur!*" while he continued his march with an addition of seven hundred men. The same enthusiasm arose among the soldiers wherever he appeared—the ranks rushed into each other's arms, and the officers shook hands. Ney, "the bravest of the brave," was sent to arrest the audacious madman, and promised largely<sup>1</sup> before he took leave of the king ; but when he came within sight of his ancient chief—when he saw the colours he had fought under, and heard the shouts of the men he had so often led to battle—above all, when he saw the sorrowful but benignant countenance of his friend and master—all his old love and reverence returned : he put his sword into its sheath, and was again the Ney of former days—the sword of France and follower of Napoleon. There was no longer either the power or the will to resist.

The congress was still pursuing its labours at Vienna ; discussions were going on about the boundaries and populations of newly constituted states, when, on the 25th of March, the duke of Wellington entered the council chamber, and informed the plenipotentiaries that their work was all to do over again, for the emperor was in Paris, and the grand army as numerous and enthusiastic as ever.<sup>d</sup>

[<sup>1</sup> Ney had volunteered to bring Napoleon back to Paris in a cage.]

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## HOW LOUIS XVIII LEFT PARIS AND NAPOLEON CAME BACK

About midnight of March 19th, in fearful weather, to the sound of wind and heavy rain, Louis XVIII, walking with difficulty and leaning on M. de Blacas and the duke de Duras, first gentleman of the chamber, descended the grand staircase of the Tuileries, by the light of torches carried before him by an usher. The bodyguards, the national guards on service in the palace, the court servants, knelt as he passed and kissed his hands, with signs of the greatest grief. He himself appeared deeply moved, and was unable to say more than, "My children, your devotion touches me, but I need rest; I shall see you again." An hour later, the count of Artois and the duke de Berri took the road to Flanders. The ministers, public functionaries, and all who thought themselves in any danger, also left during the night. The secretary of the council, Vitrolles, started for the south of France, charged with all the powers of the king. Such was the hurry of departure that Blacas left important papers in his cabinet, which were even compromising for some people. But they had remembered to take away the crown jewels.

The king had ordered the closing of the session of the chambers, charged the members to separate immediately, to reassemble as soon as possible at the place which he would indicate as the provisional seat of his government, and declared null and illegal all meetings of either chamber which should take place elsewhere without his authorisation.

The greater part of the troops had received orders to retire to St. Denis. With the exception of the Swiss regiments who went immediately, they received the announcement of this movement with signs of the greatest discontent. They had, however, started in the morning: but, at the first halt, an infantry regiment revolted, and a second soon followed the example; the other corps did not fail to imitate it. Soldiers, drunk with joy and wine, went through the streets flourishing their swords, and shouting in a manner which seemed to menace France with the odious and humiliating rule of the soldiery; at nightfall fatigue and the bad weather began to thin the ranks of this multitude without completely dispersing it. And yet Napoleon did not appear. He had been at Fontainebleau since four o'clock in the morning. At two o'clock in the afternoon he left for Paris, but the crowds of villagers who thronged the route and saluted him with acclamations, the bodies of troops, the generals who came to meet him and to whose congratulations he was forced to listen, only permitted him to advance slowly; it was eight o'clock in the evening when he entered his capital. His carriage, preceded by a group of generals, was escorted by only a hundred horsemen. He reached the Tuileries by the quays. It was only with great difficulty that he was able to cross the gates of the court, obstructed by a mass of officers and soldiers, who almost threw themselves under the horses' feet. Seized by vigorous arms, he was literally carried to the foot of the grand staircase, which he slowly mounted, with his eyes shut, his arms stretched out in front of him, like a blind man, and only expressing his happiness by a smile. He found already assembled in the throne-room with his sisters-in-law, Julie and Hortense, the wives of his brothers Joseph and Louis, several of his former ministers, his intimate servitors, the ladies of the empress' palace, and princesses, giving way to all the joy of so unexpected a return of fortune. The excitement was such that they kissed his hands and even his clothes. He himself appeared gay, moved, and excited. They say, however, that with him a certain anxiety mingled with the joy of his



triumph. The reception of the Parisians had not come up to his expectations. Tearing himself from the homage and admiration of the courtiers, he occupied himself with the formation of his ministry.<sup>j</sup>

#### THE NEW ADMINISTRATION AND A NEW WAR

In spite of the extreme rapidity and apparent facility of this revolution, France showed that it was stupefied. War was imminent, and the immediate consequence of this war would be despotism. Napoleon would always be the same; his dream of glory and ambition had become a fixed idea, and he flung to Europe a defiance more daring than those of 1813 and 1814. The coalition, the "holy alliance," still existed, and on the 13th of March the Vienna congress declared that the usurper whom it delivered over to public vengeance should be a second time overthrown. But finances, an army, fortresses—all had to be reconstructed to carry on again such a gigantic struggle.

In vain had Napoleon announced at Grenoble that he would have a representative government, and at Lyons that he did not seek conquests. Such declarations were too contrary to his own nature to be believed. His first acts before arriving in Paris were the proclamation of an amnesty, with exceptions, the dissolution of the chambers, and convocation of the electoral colleges of the departments to a *champ de mai*, this being in reality an appeal to the sovereignty of the people. Scarcely was he reinstated at the Tuileries when he constituted his ministry with Cambacérès and Maret, the inevitable Fouché, willing to serve everybody, and Carnot, who in a widely-circulated pamphlet had put himself forward as the revolutionary advocate against the Bourbons. He sequestered the goods of these latter; ordered the state council to annul the act of dethronement; abolished the old nobility; expelled all émigrés from the army, and published a list of a score of persons not included in the amnesty. In spite of this exhumation of the empire, there were few Bonapartists except those in the army.

Napoleon, who did not want to convoke a constituent assembly and who, moreover, had not time to do so, sent for Benjamin Constant, although he was a declared enemy, and charged him to draw up what he chose to call "a supplementary act to the imperial constitutions," for he did not want, any more than the Bourbons, to deny his past. Benjamin Constant applied himself to the work, and drew up a constitution both wide and liberal, conforming to the greater number of the principles of the charter. Napoleon accepted everything save an article abolishing confiscation, which he declared necessary to every government. He was anxious also, as was Louis XVIII, that the act should emanate from his will only, so as not to be fettered by wills which were foreign to him.

Finally this act was submitted to the people for sanction, and in the various mayoralties received the assent of 1,300,000 voters [against 4,206 negative votes]. The number of non-voters was very high. In fact, the public showed much indifference. Napoleon named four ministers of state to superintend parliamentary discussions, but he himself took little interest in home affairs. All his thoughts were of war. The great question was for him to conquer, for he was fully aware that as conqueror alone would he be really master.<sup>i</sup>

Now all Europe was hurrying to battle and besides foreign war there was civil war. The allied sovereigns in congress at Vienna declared: "Napoleon had placed himself outside the pale of civil and social relations, and as enemy and disturber of the peace of the world he is delivered to public ven-

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geance." Thus they outlawed not only the emperor but France. "We march," they said, "to divide this impious land. It is necessary to exterminate this band of brigands called the French army. The world cannot rest in peace while there remains a French people. It must be changed into the peoples of Burgundy, of Nerstria, of Aquitaine, etc. They will tear each other to pieces, but the world will be tranquil for centuries." Blücher promised the Prussian students that he would hang Napoleon.

These were the words of Brunswick in 1792 at the declaration of Pillnitz in the first coalition against France: and they excited in the eastern provinces an enthusiasm almost equal to 1792; but Napoleon did not love the revolutionary troops and moreover in some parts of the country there was lassitude, and even defiance.<sup>1</sup> The chamber of deputies showed an opposition that wounded Napoleon. "They want to chain the old arm of the emperor; they drive me along a path that is not mine." He felt a loss of spirit; he no longer believed in his destiny. "I had," he said, a foreboding of misfortune." None the less he displayed all his zeal; he worked sixteen hours out of the twenty-four. In fifty days an army of the line of about 182,000 men was organised. Another of 200,000 national guards mobile was prepared for defence and as reserve for the active army.

The allies had no need of such efforts; their troops were ready to take the field. Austria despatched 300,000 Germans towards the Rhine and the Alps; 170,000 Russians were due at Nuremberg towards the middle of June, at Mainz on the 1st of July. In Belgium there were already 95,000 Anglo-Dutch troops<sup>2</sup> under the command of Wellington, a methodical general who lacked great inspirations but who left nothing to chance; and 124,000 Prussians under Blücher, an impetuous old man whom his soldiers called Marshal "Forwards" (Marschall Vorwärts). He had most frequently been obliged to lead them to the rear; but he had just conducted them from the Oder to the Seine and he was to lead them there again. The arrival of the Russians was awaited in order to commence operations.

#### THE BATTLES OF QUATRE BRAS AND LIGNY

The emperor determined to forestall the enemy, the offensive seeming to him most in accordance with the genius of the French nation; above all he was loath to abandon to the ravages of the enemy the provinces of the east and north, which were showing themselves so devoted to his cause and so burning with patriotism. Besides, a great victory in Belgium might change many things. "Soldiers," he said, at the close of his proclamation to the troops, "for every Frenchman who has a heart the moment is come to conquer or die," and he crossed the Sambre with 124,000 men and 350 cannon (15th of June). He counted on surprising the Prussians; but Lieutenant-General Bourmont went over to the enemy and Blücher, warned of the peril, had time to concentrate his forces at Ligny. The French advanced in three sections: the right wing composed of 48,000 men under Marshal Grouchy; the centre of 28,000 under the immediate orders of Napoleon; the left, 48,000 men under Marshal Ney. The right and the centre went to meet the

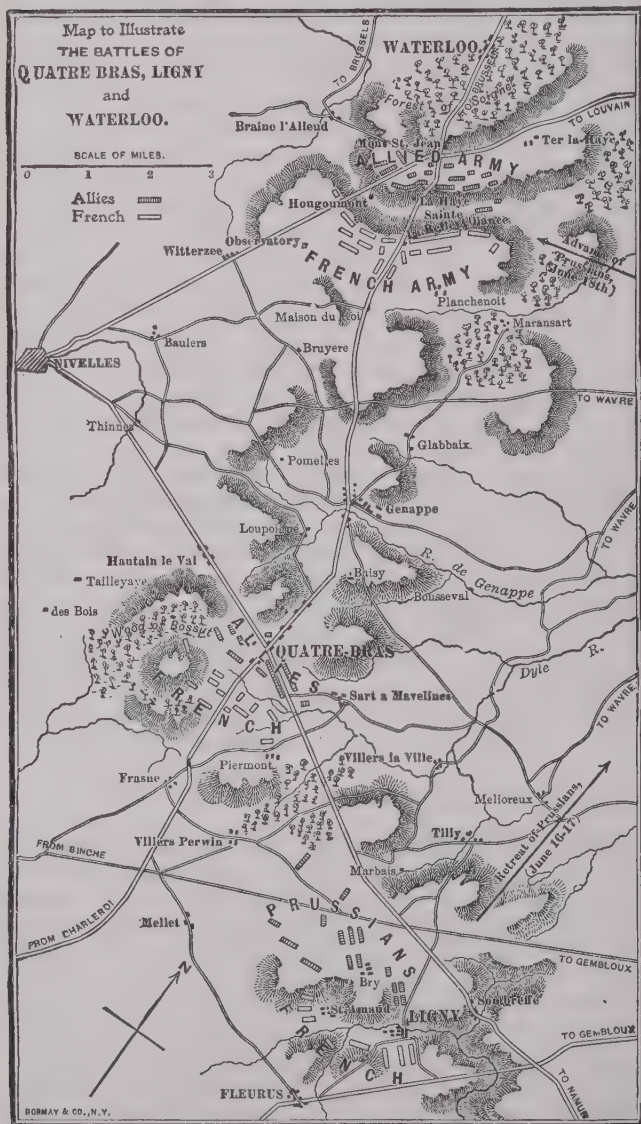
[<sup>1</sup> Viel-Castel; shows vividly the exhaustion of France and the apathy with which Napoleon's appeals were received, none of his levies being responded to with anything approaching his expectations and many districts making no answer at all. The army he recruited was greatly exaggerated in the reports to deceive Europe; and France, calming after the first transports of joy at the exit of the Bourbons, found that, in place of King Log, she had recalled King Stork, the devourer.]

[<sup>2</sup> There were not more than 32,700 English in the army.]

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Prussian front; the left should have seized Quatre Bras in order to arrest the English, who could only debouch by that point, and then have fallen back on the Prussians to complete their rout.

But the orders having been given too late, the plan was only half executed; the English had time to establish themselves in force at Quatre Bras; and if Ney with his indomitable energy succeeded in confining them there without allowing a single one of them to come to Blücher's assistance, he could not co-operate in the attack on the Prussians. The emperor had begun a terrible action against the latter; Ligny was twice taken and retaken. One of Grouchy's lieutenants, General Gérard, nevertheless maintained himself there; and the enemy began to retreat, after having suffered considerable losses<sup>1</sup> but without having been destroyed as they might have been if Count D'Erlon, who commanded under Ney, had not been confused by contradictory orders and so marched his



MAP ILLUSTRATING THE BATTLES OF QUATRE BRAS, LIGNY, AND WATERLOO

20,000 men between Quatre Bras and Ligny, where they were equally useless to both battles (16th of June).

[<sup>1</sup> Blücher himself had his horse killed under him, and fell in the middle of the French ranks, but he owed his preservation to the oncoming night, whose obscurity equally favoured his retreat. He left on the battle-field 20,000 men, 40 cannon, and 8 standards.

The French lost 6,200 men, 1,900 of whom belonged to the Gérard division. The triumph was



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For the moment the Prussians seemed to have been driven back on Namur; it was time to think of the English. Napoleon marched on them on the 17th. Wellington, surprised at a ball on the 16th by the news of the approach of the French, had preserved great coolness and repaired his want of foresight by his activity. During the 16th he had assembled 32,000 men at Quatre Bras; on the 17th, in the course of a few hours, he assembled 70,000 of them before the village of Waterloo, on the plateau of Mont St. Jean. He had studied this position long beforehand. A year previously he had pointed it out in his despatches as an excellent one to cover Brussels on the side of the Sambre, because the two roads of Nivelles and Charleroi meet at the foot of this plateau and he was determined to defend himself there to the last.

Napoleon left Grouchy 34,000 men with orders to follow the Prussians in the direction of Namur. He himself with the remainder of his forces joined Ney to attack the English. The French army counted only 72,000 combatants, but they were full of enthusiasm. Wellington, with the forest of Soigne behind him and having but one way of retreat, was lost if he were not victor. It had been agreed between him and Blücher that whichever of them should find himself attacked should make a desperate resistance in order that the other might come to his aid. Wellington had only half kept his word the day of Ligny: Blücher, unhappily for the French, kept his on the day of Waterloo. The English general sent to ask for two of his corps; he answered that he would come with all. Wellington therefore counted on the Prussians; but Napoleon also calculated that the Prussians, driven towards the Maas or held back by Grouchy, would not arrive.<sup>e</sup>

Of all the Napoleonic campaigns this was by far the most rapid and decisive. Even the Marengo campaign had lasted a month, but this was decided in three days. Leaving Paris on the 12th, Napoleon was in Paris again on the 21st, his own fate and that of his empire and that of France decided. Everything occurred to make this short struggle the most interesting military occurrence of modern history — its desperate intensity, its complete decisiveness, the presence for the first and last time of the English army in the front of the European contest, the presence of the three most renowned commanders, Napoleon, Wellington, and Blücher. Accordingly it has been debated with infinite curiosity, and misrepresented on all sides with infinite impartiality. The battle itself was one of the most remarkable and terrible ever fought, but was perhaps on both sides rather a soldier's than a general's battle. It consisted of five distinct attacks on the English position: (1) an attack on the English right by the division Reille; (2) an attack on the left by the division D'Erlon (here Picton was killed); (3) a grand cavalry attack, where the splendid French cavalry "foamed itself away" upon the English squares; (4) a successful attack by Ney on La Haye Sainte, which Wellington is thought to have too much neglected; it was after this that the French prospects seemed brightest; (5) the charge of the guard. In the middle of the third act of this drama the Prussians began to take part in the action.<sup>r</sup>

doubtless a brilliant one; but if Napoleon's orders had been carried out by the left wing there had been an end of Blücher, and Wellington, alone, would have avoided risking a battle against victorious Napoleon. At Quatre Bras Marshal Ney displayed a firmness equal to his courage, and sustained until nightfall the terrible assaults of the English army. Wellington lost 5,000 men, Ney 4,000. That memorable 16th cost the French 10,000 dead on the two battle-fields. Bülow's corps repaired the enemy's losses; nothing could repair that of the French but a decisive victory. In the morning Marshal Ney had destroyed Blücher's right wing; in the evening he saved the French army. — DE NORVINS.<sup>k</sup>

## VICTOR HUGO'S ACCOUNT OF THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO

If it had not rained the night between the 17th and the 18th of June, 1815, the future of Europe would have been changed. Certain drops of water, more or less, overthrew Napoleon. In order that Waterloo should set an end to Austerlitz, providence needed only a little rain; a cloud crossing the sky out of season sufficed for the downfall of a world. The battle of Waterloo — and this gave Blücher time to arrive — could not commence until half-past eleven. Why? Because the earth was soaked. It was necessary to wait till it grew a little firmer before the artillery could manœuvre. Napoleon was an officer of artillery and he showed the effects of it. There was something of the shooting gallery in his genius. To hammer to pieces the squares, to pulverise regiments, to break lines, to grind up and scatter masses — his way of doing this was to pound, pound, pound, unceasingly; he confided this business to the cannon-ball: a ghastly method, which joined to his genius for fifteen years kept this sombre pugilist of war invincible. The 18th of June, 1815, he counted more than ever on the artillery, since numbers were in his favour. Wellington had only 159 cannon; Napoleon had 240.

If the ground had been dry and the artillery able to roll, the action would have commenced at six in the morning, and the battle would have been gained and ended at two o'clock, three hours before the Prussian catastrophe. How much to blame was Napoleon for the loss of this battle? Is the shipwreck to be blamed on the pilot? Was the evident physical decline of Napoleon complicated at this time by a certain inward weakness? These twenty years of war, had they used up the sword as well as the sheath, the soul as well as the body? Had Napoleon lost the instinct of victory? Was he seized with a supreme folly at the age of forty-six? Was this Titanic charioteer of destiny no more than a great breakneck? We do not at all believe this. His plan of battle was, by general confession, a masterpiece; to go straight to the centre of the allies; to make an opening in the enemy; to cut him in two and push the British half on Hal and the Prussian half on Tongres; to shatter Wellington and Blücher; to carry Mont St. Jean; to hurl the German into the Rhine and the Englishman into the sea — all that was Napoleon's plan in this engagement.

Those who wish to picture neatly the battle of Waterloo have only to spread on the ground an imaginary capital A. The left leg of the A is the road to Nivelles, the right leg is the road to Genappe, the tie of the A is the sunken road from Ohain to Braine-l'Alleud. The peak of the A is Mont St. Jean; there is Wellington. The lower left tip is Hougoumont; there is Reille with Jerome Bonaparte. The lower right tip is La Belle Alliance; there is Napoleon. A little below the place where the tie of the A meets and cuts the right leg is La Haye Sainte. In the middle of this tie is the exact point where the last word of the battle was spoken; it is here that they have placed a lion, symbol of the supreme heroism of the imperial guard. The triangle at the peak of the A is the plateau of Mont St. Jean; the dispute over this plateau made the whole battle. The wings of the two armies stretched right and left of the two roads from Genappe and Nivelles, D'Erlon facing Picton; Reille facing Hill. Behind the peak of the A is the forest of Soigne. As for the plain itself, imagine it a great rolling prairie; each rise dominates the following rise, and all the billows mount towards Mont St. Jean and break on the forest. The two generals had carefully studied the plain of Mont St. Jean, called to-day the plain of

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Waterloo. On this field and for the duel, Wellington had the good post, Napoleon the bad; for the English army was on the heights; the French army below.

It had rained all night, the earth was staved in by the flood; water was gathered here and there in the hollows of the plain as in basins. At certain points the gun carriages sank to the axletrees; the bellybands of the horses dripped liquid mud. If the wheat and rye borne down by this crowd of wagons had not filled the ruts and made a litter under the wheels, all movement would have been impossible. Work began late; Napoleon had the habit of holding his artillery in his hand like a pistol, aiming it now at this point, now at that, and he wished to wait till the batteries could roll and gallop freely. He must wait until the sun appeared and dried the soil. But the sun would not appear; it no longer kept the rendezvous as at Austerlitz. When the first cannon-shot was fired the English general Colville looked at his watch and noted that it was thirty-five minutes after eleven.

The battle was engaged with fury, perhaps more fury than the emperor had wished, by the left wing of the French before Hougomont. At the same time Napoleon attacked the centre by precipitating Quiot's brigade on La Haye Sainte, and Ney pushed the French right wing against the English left wing which rested on Papelotte. The attack on Hougomont was in some degree a feint to draw Wellington there and make him incline to the left; this plan would have succeeded if the four companies of the English guards and the brave Belgians of Perponcher had not solidly guarded the post and enabled Wellington instead of massing there to limit himself to sending as reinforcement four other companies of the guards and one Brunswick battalion. The attack of the French right wing on Papelotte was meant to overthrow the English left, to cut the road to Brussels, to bar the way to Prussian possibilities, to force Mont St. Jean, to crowd Wellington on Hougomont, from there on Braine-l'Alleud, thence on Hal. Nothing could be neater and, aside from certain incidents, the attack succeeded. Papelotte was taken; La Haye Sainte was carried. After this the battle vacillated.

There is in this day, from noon to four o'clock, an interval of obscurity; the middle part of the battle is nearly indistinct and shares in the blur of the *mêlée*. Twilight covers it. One sees vast fluctuations in this fog, a vertiginous mirage, accoutrements of war almost unknown to-day — bearskin caps with streamers, floating sabre-taches, cross-belts, cartridge-boxes for grenades, the dolmans of the hussars, red boots of a thousand wrinkles, the heavy shakos wreathed with twisted fringe, the infantry of Brunswick almost black mingled with the scarlet infantry of England, the English soldiers with great white circular pads for epaulettes, the Hanoverian lighthouse with their bands of copper and red horse-tails, the Scotch with bare knees and checkered plaids, the great white gaiters of the French grenadiers; it is pictures that we see, and not lines of battle.

In the afternoon at a certain moment the battle grows more definite. About four o'clock the situation of the English army was grave. The prince of Orange commanded the centre; Hill the right wing, Picton the left. The prince of Orange, desperate and intrepid, cried to the Hollando-Belgians: "Nassau! Brunswick! Never to the rear!" Hill worn out came to lean upon Wellington. Picton was dead.

Wellington's battle had two bases, Hougomont and La Haye Sainte. Hougomont still held out, but was burning; La Haye Sainte was taken. Of the German battalion that defended it, only forty-two survived; all the



officers except five were dead or captive. Three thousand soldiers had been massacred in that barn. A sergeant of the English guards, a champion boxer of England and thought invulnerable by his comrades, had been killed by a little French drummer-boy. Many flags had been lost. The Scots Grays no longer existed; the heavy dragoons of Ponsonby had been hacked to pieces. The valiant cavalry had gone down before the lancers of Bro and the cuirassiers of Travers; of 1,200 horses there remained 600; of 3 lieutenant-colonels, 2 were on the ground, Hamilton wounded, Mater killed. Ponsonby had fallen gashed with seven lance thrusts; Gordon was dead, Marshal was dead; two divisions, the 5th and the 6th, had been destroyed.

Hougomont invested, La Haye Sainte taken, there was only one knot, the centre. That knot always held. Wellington reinforced it; he called thither Hill who was at Merbe-Braine, he called there Chassé who was at Braine-l'Alleud. The centre of the English army, a little concave, very dense and very compact, was strongly situated. It occupied the plateau of Mont St. Jean, having behind it the village and in front of it the slope, quite steep at that time. All around the plateau the English had cut the hedges here and there, made embrasures in the hawthorns, thrust a cannon's throat between two branches, fortified the thickets. Their artillery was in ambush under brushwood. This Punic work was so well done that Haxo, sent by the emperor at nine o'clock to reconnoitre the enemy's grounds, saw nothing. It was the time when the harvest is high; on the selvaige of the plateau a battalion of Kempt's brigade armed with carbines lay hidden in the tall grain. The peril of this position was the forest of Soigne. An army could not retreat without dissolving there; the artillery would have been lost in the swamps. Wellington had in hand twenty-six battalions. An enormous battery was masked by sacks of earth. Wellington had also in a hollow the dragoon guards of Somerset, 1,400 horse.

Uneasy but impassive, Wellington remained all day on his horse in the same attitude, a little in front of the old mill of Mont St. Jean, beneath an elm. He was frigidly heroic. There was a rain of bullets. The aide-de-camp Gordon fell at his side. Lord Hill, pointing to a shell that burst, said to him, "My lord, what are your instructions, and what orders do you leave us, if you are killed?" "To do as I do," answered Wellington; to Clinton he said laconically, "To hold this place to the last man." The day was plainly going wrong. Wellington cried to his old companions of Talavera, Victoria, and Salamanca, "Boys, can anyone dream of retreating? What will they think of us in England?"

Towards four o'clock the English line gave way. Suddenly nothing was seen on the plateau but the artillery and the sharp-shooters; the rest disappeared; Wellington retired. "The beginning of retreat," cried Napoleon.

The emperor had never been in such good humour as to-day. Since morning his impenetrability smiled. The man who had been sombre at Austerlitz was gay at Waterloo. At the moment when Wellington retrograded, Napoleon felt a thrill. There remained only the task of completing the retreat with destruction. Napoleon turning abruptly sent a despatch to Paris to announce that the battle was gained. Then he gave the order to the cuirassiers of Milhaud to carry the plateau of Mont St. Jean. They were 3,500. They made a front of half a mile. They were giant men on colossal horses. They had back of them for support Lefebvre-Desnouettes, the 106 picked gendarmes, the chasseurs of the guard, 1,197 men, and 880 lancers of the guard. Ney drew his sword and took the head. The enormous squadron set forward. Then was seen a formidable spectacle.

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All that cavalry, sabres on high, standards and trumpets in the wind, descended with the same movement and like one single man. With the precision of a bronze battering-ram opening a breach—the hillock of La Belle Alliance—they plunged into the dreadful depth where so many men had already fallen; they disappeared in the smoke; then, issuing from that shadow, reappeared on the other side of the valley, always compact, with ranks closed, and through a cloud of grapeshot breaking over them, mounted at full trot the terrible and muddy slopes of the plateau of Mont St. Jean. They mounted, grave, menacing, imperturbable. In the interval of the musketry and artillery, that colossal trampling was heard. From afar one could believe that he saw crawling towards the crest of the plateau two great serpents of steel. They were seen through a vast smoke here and there; a pell-mell of helmets, of sabres, a tumult disciplined and terrible; and over all shone the cuirasses like the scales on the hydra.

By a strange coincidence of numbers, twenty-six battalions were to meet these twenty-six squadrons. Behind the crest of the plateau, in the shadow of the masked battery, the English infantry waited, formed in thirteen squares, two battalions to the square and in two lines, the butts of their muskets at the shoulder, and aiming at what was to come, calm, mute, immobile. They did not see the cuirassiers and the cuirassiers did not see them. They heard the mounting of that flood-tide of men. They heard the swelling thunder of the 3,000 horses; the beat alternate and symmetric of hoofs at full trot; the rattling of cuirasses, the click of sabres, and a sort of huge, wild breathing. There was a solemn silence, then suddenly a long line of arms uplifted brandishing sabres appeared above the crest, and then came the helmets, and the trumpets, and the standards, and three thousand gray-moustached faces crying "*Vive l'empereur!*" The whole cavalry rolled along the plateau; and it was like the coming of an earthquake.

Abruptly a tragedy: at the left of the English the head of the column of cuirassiers reared with fearful clamour. Come to the peak of the crest in a frenzy amidst all their fury and their charge of extermination on the squares and cannon, the cavalry saw, between them and the English, a ditch. It was the sunken road of Ohain. The moment was appalling. The ravine was there, all unexpected, yawning perpendicular beneath the hoofs of the horses. It was thirteen feet between the two embankments. The second rank shoved in the first, and the third the second; the horses rose upright, threw themselves back, fell on their haunches, sliddered, all fours in air, crushing and overwhelming their riders. There was no means of escape; for the whole column was nothing but a projectile; and the impetus acquired to destroy the English destroyed the French. The inexorable ravine could only be conquered when filled; and horsemen and horse rolled into it pell-mell, grinding on one another and forming but one flesh in the pit. When the ditch was full of living men, the rest marched over and passed on. Almost a third of the Dubois brigade sank in that abyss, and this began the loss of the day.

Was it possible that Napoleon should gain this battle? We answer No. Why? Because of Wellington? Because of Blücher? No. Because of God. Bonaparte victor at Waterloo—that was no longer according to the law of the nineteenth century. Another series of events was preparing, wherein Napoleon had no further place. The too great heaviness of this man in human destiny troubled the balance. The moment was come for the incorruptible supreme equity to take counsel. Doubtless the principles

and the elements whereon depend the regular gravity of the moral, as of the material order, complained. The blood that smoked, the overplus of the graveyards, the mothers in tears, these are redoubtable pleaders. When the earth suffers a surcharge, there rise mysterious groanings in the dark, which even the very abyss understands.

Napoleon had been denounced in the infinite and his downfall was resolved. He bothered God. Waterloo is not a battle; it is the universe changing front.

At the same moment with the ravine, the English battery was unmasked, sixty cannons and the thirteen squares thunder-smote the cavalry men point-blank. All the flying artillery of the English had galloped into the squares, but the cuirassiers had not even time to pause. The disaster of the sunken road had decimated but not discouraged them, for they were of the sort that, diminished in number, are enlarged of heart. The cuirassiers rolled down on the English squares — at full speed, bridles flying, sabres in their teeth, pistols in their fists; thus they attacked. There are moments in battle when the soul so hardens the man that it changes the soldier to a statue, and flesh to granite.

The English battalions, though desperately assailed, did not budge. Then it was frightful. All the faces of the English squares were attacked at the same time. A frenzied whirlwind enveloped them: that cold infantry rested impassive; the first rank, kneeling on the ground, received the cuirassiers on their bayonets; the second rank fired on them; behind the second rank the cannoneers charged the guns; the front of the square opened to let pass an eruption of grapeshot, and closed again.

The cuirassiers answered destruction with destruction. Their great horses reared, bestrode the ranks, leaped across the bayonets, and fell gigantic in the midst of those four living walls. The squares were no longer battalions, they were craters; these cuirassiers were no more a cavalry, they were a tempest. Each square was a volcano assailed by a cloud. Lava fought lightning.

The square on the extreme right, the most exposed of all and unsupported, was almost annihilated at the first shock. It was formed of the 75th regiment of Highlanders. The bagpiper in the centre, while ruin went on about him, was in a profound oblivion; seated on a drum, he lowered his melancholy eyes full of the reflections of forests and of lakes; on the bagpipe under his arm, he played the tunes of the mountains. These Scotchmen died musing on Ben Lothian, as the Greeks remembering Argos. The sabre of a cuirassier, cutting down the bagpipe and the arm which carried it, ended the song by killing the singer.

The cuirassiers, relatively few in numbers and diminished by the catastrophe of the ravine, had almost the entire English army against them; but they multiplied themselves, each man equalling ten. Meanwhile some Hanoverian battalions yielded. Wellington saw this and thought of his cavalry. Had Napoleon at the same moment remembered the infantry he would have gained the battle. That negligence was his grand and fatal mistake. Of a sudden the cuirassiers assailing felt themselves assailed, for the English cavalry was at their back. Before them the squares, behind them Somerset. Somerset had 1,400 dragoon guards. Somerset had at his right Dornberg with his German lighthorse, at his left Trip with his Belgian carbineers. The cuirassiers, attacked in flank and in head, front and rear, by infantry and by cavalry, must face in every direction. What mattered that to them? They were a hurricane; their bravery grew inexpressible. Besides, they



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had behind them the battery always thundering; only thus could those men be wounded in the back. For such Frenchmen it needed nothing less than such Englishmen.

It was no longer a *mêlée* now, it was a mystery, a fury of souls and of courages, a cyclone of sworded lightnings. In an instant the 1,400 dragoon guards were only 800. The plateau of Mont St. Jean was taken, retaken, and taken again, but the squares still held firm. There were a dozen assaults, Ney had four horses killed under him and half of the cuirassiers were on the ground. This struggle lasted two hours.

The English army was profoundly shaken. No doubt if the cuirassiers had not been weakened in their first charge by the disaster of the sunken road, they would have overthrown the centre and decided the victory. They had annihilated seven squares out of thirteen and captured six flags which three cuirassiers and three chasseurs of the guard carried to the emperor at the farm of La Belle Alliance. Wellington felt himself tottering; the crisis was near. And the enfeeblement of the English seemed irremediable. The hemorrhage of that army was horrible. Kempt on the left wing cried out for reinforcements. "There are none," Wellington answered. "Let him die at his post." Almost at the same moment, by a singular coincidence that paints the exhaustion of the two armies, Ney demanded infantry of Napoleon, and Napoleon exclaimed, "Infantry? Where does he want me to get it, does he want me to make it?" Meanwhile the English army was the weaker, the furious onslaught of the squadron in cuirasses of iron and breastplates of steel had ground away the infantry. A few men around a flag marked the place of the regiment. Many a battalion was commanded by a captain or by a lieutenant; the Hanoverian hussars, a whole regiment, had turned bridle and were in flight through the forest of Soigne, scattering panic as far as Brussels. The wagons, the caissons, the baggage, the ambulances full of wounded, when the French gained ground and approached the forest, fled headlong; the Dutch sabred by the French cavalry gave the alarm. For nearly two leagues towards Brussels there was a flood of fugitives. The panic was such that it reached the prince of Condé at Meehlin and Louis XVIII at Ghent.

The Iron Duke remained calm but his lips were blanched. At five o'clock Wellington drew out his watch, and he was heard to murmur these sombre words: "Blücher or night!" It was at about this moment that a far-off line of bayonets glittered on the heights towards Frischemont. Here is the turning-point of this giant drama.

The poignant mistake of Napoleon is well known; Grouchy was hoped for, but Blücher was coming up—death in place of life. If the little shepherd who served as guide to Bülow, Blücher's lieutenant, had counselled him to debouch from the forest above Frischemont rather than below Planchenoit, the form of the nineteenth century would have been perhaps different, for Napoleon would have gained the battle of Waterloo. By every other road except below Planchenoit the Prussian army would have come out upon a ravine impassable for artillery, and Bülow would not have arrived.

An hour later—it is the Prussian general, Müffling,<sup>m</sup> who declares it—Blücher would not have found Wellington standing; the battle would have been lost. At five o'clock, seeing the peril of Wellington, Blücher ordered Bülow to attack and said these remarkable words: "We must give the English army a little breath."

The rest is well known—the irruption of a third army, the battle disarranged, eighty-six muzzles thundering all at once; Pirch arriving with

Bülow, the cavalry of Zieten led by Blücher in person; the French repulsed, Marcognet swept from the plateau of Ohain, Durutte dislodged from Papelotte, Donzelot and Quiot retreating, Lobau taken on the oblique, a new battle precipitated upon the dismantled regiments of France in the falling night, the whole English line resuming the offensive and pushed forward; a gigantic trench cut in the French army, English grapeshot and Prussian grapeshot collaborating; extermination; disaster in front, disaster in flank; the guard entering the line during this fearful breakdown.

When the guard knew that it was going to its death, it cried, "*Vive l'empereur!*" History has nothing more moving than this agony breaking forth in acclamations. The sky had been hidden the whole day. All at once, at this very moment, eight o'clock in the evening, the clouds on the horizon parted and let through the elms on the road to Nivelles the great sinister crimson of the sun, which was now setting—they had seen it rise over Austerlitz! When the tall hats of the grenadiers of the guard, with the large plaques carrying the eagle, appeared, symmetrically aligned, tranquil, superb in the fog of that mêlée, the very enemy felt a respect for France; for they seemed to see twenty victories enter the field of battle, wings outstretched. Those who were the conquerors, thinking themselves conquered, retreated. But Wellington cried, "Up, guards, and at them!" The red regiment of the English guard hidden behind the hedges rose, a storm of grapeshot riddled the tricoloured flag shivering around the French eagle. Everyone flung forward and the supreme carnage began. The imperial guard felt in the gloom that the army was giving way around it, felt the vast emotion of the rout. It heard the "*Sauve qui peut!*" which had taken the place of the "*Vive l'empereur*"; but despite the panic behind it, it continued to advance, more and more thunder-beaten and perishing the more with every step that it took. There were no hesitants and no cowards. Not a man was missing to that suicide.

Ney, distracted, grand with all the haughtiness of accepted death, offered himself to every bolt in the tempest. He had his fifth horse killed under him. With eyes aflame, with lips frothing, uniform unbuttoned, one of his epaulettes half cut in two by the sabre slash of a horseguard, his plaque with its great eagle dented by a bullet—Ney, bleeding, muddy, magnificent, with a broken sword in his hand, said, "You shall see how a marshal of France dies on the battle-field." But in vain; he did not die. He was haggard and indignant; he tossed at Drouat d'Erlon this question, "Why don't you get yourself killed?" He cried out in the midst of all this artillery destroying a handful of men, "Is there nothing here for me? Oh, I wish that all the English bullets might enter my bowels!" But you were reserved for French bullets, poor wretch!

The panic back of the guard was lugubrious, for the army broke suddenly on all sides at once, from Hougomont, from La Haye Sainte, from Papelotte, from Planchenoit. The cry "treason" was followed by the cry "*Sauve qui peut!*" The ruin of an army is a thaw. Everything fails, splits, snaps, drifts, rolls, sinks, collides, flies, falls. And now there is disintegration unheard of. Ney borrows a horse, leaps upon it hatless, cravatless, swordless, throws himself across the highway from Brussels, checking at the same time the English and the French. He strives to hold back the army; he recalls it; he insults it; he clamps himself against the panic; but he is overwhelmed and the soldiers run from him crying "*Vive le Maréchal Ney!*" Two regiments of Durutte's come and go, amazed, pitched and tossed between the sabres of the Uhlans and the fusillade of the brigades of Kempt, Best, Pack,

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and of Rylandt. The worst of *mêlées* is in the time of panic: friends kill each other to escape; squadrons and battalions shatter and scatter each other into the enormous spume of battle. So now Lobau at one extreme and Reille at the other are rolled away in the drift. In vain Napoleon makes barricades with what remains of the guard; in vain he squanders with a last effort his service squadrons. Quiot recoils before Vivian, Kellermann before Vandeleur, Lobau before Bülow, Moran before Pirch, Dornon and Subervie before Prince William of Prussia. Guyot, who has led the emperor's squadrons to the charge, falls under the feet of the English dragoons. Napoleon scuds along the line of fugitives, harangues them, urges them, threatens, implores. All the mouths that in the morning cried "*Vive l'empereur!*" are gaping now; the soldiers hardly know him.

The Prussian cavalry, arrived all fresh, dashes forward on the wing, slashes, thrusts, chops, kills, and exterminates. The teams bolt; the cannon take flight; the soldiers of the artillery-train unhitch the caissons and seize the horses to escape. Wagons overturned, their four wheels in air, block the road and are the occasion of massacre. Everybody tramples, crowds, overruns the dead and the living. Arms are torn off. A swirling multitude overflows the roads, the paths, the bridges, the plains, the hills, the valleys, the woods, choked by this flight of forty thousand men. Cries of despair, knapsacks, muskets flung into the rye, passages made with slashes of the sword, no more comrades, no more officers, no more generals — an ineffable dismay; Zieten sabring France at his ease; the lions become deer — such was that flight.

At Genappe they tried to turn back, to make a front, to apply the brake. Lobau rallied three hundred men and they barricaded the entrance to the village; but at the first volley of Prussian grapeshot, all turned again to flee, and Lobau was captured. The Prussians flung into Genappe, furious, no doubt, at having so small share in the victory. The pursuit was monstrous; Blücher ordered extermination. Roguet had set the dismal example by threatening with death any French grenadier who should bring him a Prussian prisoner, but Blücher surpassed Roguet. The general of the young guard, Duhesme, at bay against the door of a tavern in Genappe, offered his sword to an hussar of death, who took the sword and slew the prisoner. Victory was completed by the assassination of the vanquished. Old Blücher dishonoured himself, his ferocity gave the climax to the disaster. The panic in despair crossed Genappe, crossed Quatre Bras, crossed Gosselies, crossed Frasnes, crossed Charleroi, crossed Thuin, and paused only at the frontiers. Alas! and who was it then fleeing like this? The Grand Army!

This vertigo, this terror, this tumbling into ruin of the most high bravery that has ever astounded history, is it without cause? No. The shadow of an enormous justice falls across Waterloo. It is the day of destiny. The power above man had granted this day. Therefore the fearful bending of these heads; therefore all these great souls surrendering their swords. Those who had conquered Europe are fallen confounded; having nothing more to say or do, feeling in the shadow a terrible presence. *Hoc erat in fatis*. On this day the perspective of mankind has changed. Waterloo is the hinge of the nineteenth century. The going of the great man was necessary to the coming of the great cycle. The One who is not mocked has taken charge. The panic of the heroes is explained: in the battle of Waterloo there is more than a cloud, there is a meteor — God has passed by.

In the falling night, in a field near Genappe, Bernard and Bertrand seized by the skirt of his long coat and held back a man haggard, pensive,



sinister, who had been dragged thus far by the current of the panic, but now dismounted, passed his arm through the bridle of his horse, and with wild eyes turned back alone towards Waterloo. It was Napoleon trying once more to go forward, the immense somnambulist of a dream dissolved.

Certain squares of the guard, immovable in the flood of the panic like rocks in running water, held fast till night. Night coming, death also, they waited this double shadow unshaken, and let it envelop them. Each regiment, isolated from the others and having no further bond with the army broken in every part, died in its own account. There, abandoned, conquered, terrible, these sombre squares agonised horribly. Ulm, Wagram, Jena, Friedland, died in them.

At twilight, near nine o'clock in the evening, at the foot of the plateau of Mont St. Jean, there remained one square. In that deathly valley, now overflowed by the masses of English, and under the converging fire of the enemy's victorious artillery, under a frightful thickness of projectiles, this square struggled. It was commanded by an obscure officer named Cambronne. When the legion was no more than a handful, when their flag was no more than a tatter, when their guns, empty of bullets, were no more than clubs, when the pile of corpses was greater than the living group, there came among the vanquishers, the victors, a sort of sacred fear of men dying so sublimely, and the English artillery taking breath kept silence. This gave a sort of respite. Then the batteries blazed and the hill trembled; from all those mouths of bronze issued a last vomit of grapeshot and horror: a vast smoke vaguely blanched in the rising moon rolled up. When the smoke was dissipated, there was nothing left. The formidable remnant was annihilated; the guard was dead. The four walls of the living fortress were prone; hardly was there distinguishable here and there a quiver among the corpses. And it is thus that the French legions, more grand than the Roman legions, expired on Mont St. Jean, on the earth drenched with rain and blood, in the gloomy wheat, on the very spot where now, at four o'clock every morning, whistling and gayly flicking his horse, Joseph passes with the mail from Nivelles.

The battle of Waterloo is an enigma, it is as obscure to those who won it as to those who lost it. To Napoleon it is a panic; Blücher sees in it nothing but fire; Wellington understands nothing at all (look at the reports). The bulletins are confused, the commentaries are involved; these stammer, those stutter. Jomini<sup>l</sup> divides the battle of Waterloo into four movements, Müffling<sup>m</sup> cleaves it into three transformations.

A fulgurant day it was, in fact the crumbling of the military monarchy which, to the great stupor of the kings, had entrained all the realms—the fall of force, the defeat of war. Civilised people, especially in our times, do not rise or fall by the good or bad fortune of a captain. Their specific gravity in the humankind results from something more than a combat. Their honour—thank God!—their dignity, their light, their genius, are not numbers which heroes and conquerors—those gamblers—play in the lottery of battles. Often a battle lost is progress conquered; less glory, more liberty; the drum hushed, reason speaks. It is the game where whoso loses wins. Let us then speak calmly of Waterloo on both sides. Let us render to chance that which is chance's and to God that which is God's. What is Waterloo—a victory? No, a capital prize—the capital prize gained by Europe, paid by France.

Waterloo is a battle of the first order, won by a captain of the second. That which must be admired in the battle of Waterloo is England, it is

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English firmness, it is English resolution, it is English blood. The superb thing about England—craving her pardon!—is herself; not her captain, but her army. Wellington is only a hero like another. Those Scots Greys, those horse guards, those regiments of Maitland and of Mitchell, that infantry of Pack and of Kempt, that cavalry of Ponsonby and of Somerset, those Highlanders playing the pibroch under the grapeshot, those battalions of Rylandt, those recruits all raw, who hardly knew how to handle the musket yet kept pace with the veteran bands of Essling and of Rivoli—there lies the glory! Wellington was tenacious—that was his merit, and we would not cheapen it; but the least of his footmen and of his horsemen was as solid as he. The iron soldier is worth as much as the iron duke.

What we admire above all in a contest like that of Waterloo is the prodigious skill of chance; that night rain, that wall of Hougomont, that sunken road of Ohain, Grouchy deaf to the cannon, Napoleon's guide who deceives him, Bülow's guide who enlightens him—the whole cataclysm was marvellously managed. On the whole, we say that Waterloo was more of a massacre than a battle. Waterloo is, of all set battles, the one that has the smallest front for the number of combatants: Napoleon a mile and three-quarters, Wellington, a mile—and that with seventy-two thousand combatants on each side. From that density rose the carnage.

The field of Waterloo has to-day the calm which belongs to the soil, the impassive support of man; and it resembles all plains. But at night a kind of visionary haze detaches itself. If perchance a traveller saunter there, if he look, if he listen, if he dream like Virgil in the funereal plains of Philippi, an hallucination of the disaster possesses him. The terrifying 18th of June lives again; the false hill built as a monument is effaced, and the lion somehow vanishes; the field of battle resumes its reality; lines of infantry undulate in the plain; furious gallops cross the horizon; the awestruck dreamer sees the flash of sabres, the glint of bayonets, the flare of shell, the monstrous interlacing of thunders; he hears like a rattle in the depths of a tomb the vague clamour of phantom battle. These shadows, they are grenadiers; these glimmers, they are cuirassiers; that skeleton is Napoleon; that other skeleton, Wellington. All this is no more, and yet it moves, it fights. The ravines robe themselves in purple, and the trees shiver; there is a fury even in the clouds, and, in the gloom, all those savage heights, Mont St. Jean, Hougomont, Frischemont, Papelotte, Planchenoit, rise in confusion, crowned with whirlwinds of ghosts, warring to the death.<sup>a</sup>

#### MINOR INCIDENTS OF WATERLOO

While there is perhaps no more famous battle-picture in literature than Victor Hugo's account of Waterloo, from which we have quoted above, it is strange that his unsurpassed dramatic power and his fervent patriotism should have slurred over one of the noblest incidents of the battle—the charge of the imperial guard. It remained for a British writer, Sir Archibald Alison, to pay French heroism a compliment equal to that paid to English oak by Victor Hugo. This and certain isolated incidents which precede or follow the charge of the guard we quote from Alison, beginning with Ponsonby's charge.<sup>a</sup>

#### *The Cavalry Duels*

Wellington no sooner perceived the formidable attack preparing against his left, than he drew up the fine brigade of horse, under Sir William

Ponsonby. His brigade, bursting through or leaping over the hedge which had concealed them from the enemy, dashed through the intervals of the infantry, which opened to let them pass, and fell headlong on the wavering column. The shock was irresistible; in a few seconds the whole mass was pierced through, ridden over, and dispersed. In five minutes two thousand prisoners and two eagles were taken — one by the Greys and the other by the Royals — and the column was utterly destroyed. Transported with ardour, the victorious horse charged on against a second column of D'Erlon's men, which quickly was ridden down, and a thousand more prisoners were taken. The Highland foot-soldiers, vehemently excited, breaking their ranks, and catching hold of the stirrups of the Scots Greys, joined in the charge, shouting "Scotland for ever!" and collected the prisoners made during the fiery onset. Unsatisfied even by this second triumph, these gallant horsemen, amidst loud shouts, rode up the opposite height; and having reached its summit, turned sharp to the left and dashed through D'Erlon's batteries, which had sent such a storm of shot through their ranks before the charge began. Taken thus suddenly in flank, the gunners could neither wheel round their pieces nor make any resistance, and they were speedily cut to pieces, the traces cut, and the horses hamstrung or killed.

So forcibly was Napoleon struck by this charge, that he said to Lacoste, the Belgian guide beside him, "*Ces terribles chevaux gris — comme ils travaillent!*" He instantly ordered Jaqueton's light cavalry to charge the victorious British; and these fresh troops easily overthrew the English horsemen, now much disordered and entirely blown by their unparalleled efforts, as they were retiring from the theatre of their triumphs. In the hurried retreat to their own position, General Ponsonby was killed, great numbers of his men were cut down or dispersed, and the brigade hardly brought back a fifth of its numbers. But the lancers in their turn shared the fate of their gallant opponents; Vandeleur fell upon them in flank when streaming in pursuit up the English slope, and drove them back with great slaughter into the hollow.

By the help of this timely succour, the heavy brigade, by small detachments, regained their own lines though grievously weakened. But never, perhaps, had a charge of an equal body of horse achieved greater success; for, besides destroying two columns five thousand strong, and taking three thousand prisoners, we have the authority of Jomini,<sup>1</sup> the great military historian of Napoleon, for the fact that they carried, cut the traces, and rendered useless for the remainder of the day, no less than forty pieces of cannon.

The British guns, which stood in front, forty in number, repeatedly fell into the hands of the French cavalry, whose valour, always great, was now roused to the most enthusiastic pitch of daring.<sup>1</sup> The artillerymen took refuge in the nearest squares: the cuirassiers rode round them anxiously looking for an opening, sometimes with desperate valour striving to make it at the sword's point, until the rolling fire of the infantry repelled the charge; and as soon as the horsemen turned about, the gunners issued forth, quickly reloaded their pieces, and sent a destructive storm of grape after the retiring squadrons.

[<sup>1</sup> By Wellington's orders, the gunners, after discharging their pieces when the cavalry were close upon them, unlimbered the near wheel of each gun and retired rapidly, rolling the wheel with them into the nearest square. Speedily the French horsemen came up, and threw ropes prepared for the purpose, like the South American lasso, over the gun; but they could not make it move along on one wheel; and when striving to drag along their prize, the deadly volley of the square stretched on the ground half of those engaged.]



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*The Old Guard Charges*

It was a quarter past seven when the first column of the guard moved forward to the attack. The veterans of Wagram and Austerlitz were there:<sup>1</sup> no force on earth seemed capable of resisting them; they had decided almost every former battle. The sun was low in the heavens when this formidable body began to ascend the slope. The shadow of the mass before its level rays augmented its awful impression. The huge caps of the grenadiers seemed a dark forest, slowly rolling on like "Birnam wood to Dunsinane"; and though it occasionally rocked under the terrible fire of the English artillery, yet the shock was quickly recovered. The ranks closed as gaps were made; and through the smoke and fire of the tirailleurs, the sable plumes of the grenadiers were seen unceasingly approaching. The British felt that the decisive moment had arrived:<sup>2</sup> their honour, their country, was at stake; a few paces more, and Europe was enslaved. The French were inspired with the utmost confidence.

The impulse of this massy column was at first irresistible. The guns on the sides, especially those of Bolton's battery, tore its flank without checking its advance.<sup>3</sup> The lofty bearskins of the grenadiers, as they crowned the summit of the ridge amidst the smoke, gave them the appearance of giants.

The British soldiers were lying down in a ditch three feet deep behind the rough road which there goes along the summit of the ridge. "Up, guards, and at them!" cried the duke, who had repaired to the spot, and the whole, springing up, moved forward a few paces, and poured in a volley so close and well directed, that nearly the whole first two ranks of the imperial guard fell at once. A rapid and well-sustained fusillade ensued; Adam's artillerymen, who worked their guns with extraordinary rapidity, firing grape and canister within fifty paces of their flank, at length staggered the column, which gave ground and began to recoil down the slope.

The second column of the guard now advanced to the attack, in all four thousand strong. Without taking their muskets from their shoulders, the men, preceded by a cloud of tirailleurs, marched unshrinkingly, and with loud cries of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" into the cross-fire of the English batteries. Adam's guns opened on them a fire so terrible that the head of the body, constantly pushed on by the mass in rear, for long seemed never to advance, but melted away as it came into the scene of carnage. With dauntless intrepidity, however, the guard advanced through the storm; and, at length,

[<sup>1</sup>No one was admitted into the Guard, Middle or Old, until he had served twelve campaigns.]

[<sup>2</sup>Wellington, foreseeing that this attack would be the last, arranged his defence like a general who knows that help is coming, that his safety depends on a short resistance, while, if he gives way, not a gun, not a man of his army can escape. — VAULABELLE.<sup>s</sup> General Foy<sup>t</sup> paid this tribute to the English: "We saw on the day of our disaster the children of Albion formed in battalion squares on the plain between Hougomont and the village of Mont St. Jean; the cavalry which supported them were torn to pieces; the fire of their artillery was extinguished; death was before them and in their ranks—shame was behind them. In this terrible affair the bullets of the imperial guard shot point-blank and the cavalry of victorious France could not tame the immovable infantry of Britain. You might have believed that it had taken root in the earth if some moments after sunset these battalions had not moved majestically forward, as the arrival of the Prussian army apprised Wellington that, thanks to numbers, thanks to the power of inertia, and as his prize for knowing how to range brave men in battle, he was about to carry off the most decisive victory of the age."]

[<sup>3</sup>When the imperial guard, led by Ney, about half-past seven o'clock, made their appearance from a corn-field in close columns of grand divisions, nearly opposite, and within fifty yards from the muzzles of the guns, orders were given to load with canister-shot, and literally five rounds were fired with this species of shot before they showed the least symptom of retiring. At the twenty-ninth round, their left gave way. — *Letter of an artillery officer, given in Maxwell.*<sup>u</sup>]

the huge body reached the top of the hill. The British in silence threw a terrible volley, on receiving which the two front ranks of the imperial guard went down like grass before the scythe. Wellington at this decisive instant ordered Adam's brigade to advance against the flank of the column; and soon after directed Vivian with his brigade to descend in the rear of Adam's men, between the guard and Hougomont, and Vandeleur to follow him. The effect of this attack at once in front and in flank was decisive: Napoleon in his official account ascribed to it the loss of the battle. The broken remains, closely pursued by Adam at the point of the bayonet, were hurled back, and all rallying was rendered impossible.

### *The Prussians Arrive*

From morning till night on this eventful day, the British squares had stood, enduring every loss and repelling every attack with unparalleled fortitude. But the instant of victory had now arrived; the last hour of Napoleon's empire had struck. At the very moment that the last column of the Middle Guard was recoiling in disorder down the hill, Wellington beheld Blücher's standards in the wood beyond Ohain. He instantly ordered a general advance in the formation in which they stood, and himself, with his hat in his hand raised high in air, rode to the front and waved on the troops. The last rays of the sun glanced on 40,000 men, who, with a shout which caused the very earth to shake, streamed over the summit of the hill; a long red continuous line along the ground marked where they had stood at the commencement of the fight. At the same time, Bülow's and Zieten's corps of Prussians, of whom 36,000 had already come up, emerged entirely from the wood, and advanced with a swift step and in the finest order. A hundred guns, arranged in the form of an amphitheatre on the skirts of the wood, opened a tremendous fire over their heads, and the balls soon began to fall in the midst of the French army, on the chaussée of La Belle Alliance.

Seven times the wearied French, ready to drop down, tried to form bivouacs; seven times they were roused by the dreadful sound of the Prussian trumpet, and obliged to continue their flight without intermission.<sup>1</sup>

At Genappe some resistance was attempted. But the town was taken amid loud cheers, and with it Napoleon's travelling carriage, private papers, hat, and sword. The torrent — horse, foot, and artillery, all intermingled — continued to defile over the bridge at Charleroi during the whole day; but scarcely 40,000 passed the Sambre, and they carried with them only 27 guns.

"Such," said Napoleon, "was the battle of Mont St. Jean: glorious to the French army, yet how fatal!" The loss of the allies in it was immense. That of the British, King's German legion, and Hanoverians, alone amounted to 10,000, of whom 2,023 were killed. The loss of Waterloo itself, on the part of the whole troops engaged, was above 22,000. The field of battle next day presented a scene of matchless horror. The total loss of Wellington's army, from the 15th to the 19th, was 20,290, including that of the Belgian and German auxiliaries, but exclusive of the Prussians, who lost 7,000 more at Waterloo alone. The Prussian loss on the 16th and 18th, including the action at Wavre on the latter of these days, was 33,120. Of the French army it is sufficient to say that it was weakened on the field by at least 40,000 at Waterloo alone; but, in effect, it was totally destroyed, and scarcely any of the men who fought there ever again appeared in arms.

<sup>[1]</sup> "Die Franzosen so aus sieben bivouacs nacheinander aufgejagt wurden."—GROLMAN DAMITZ. P]

[1815 A.D.]

## GROUCHY'S USELESS SUCCESS

While this terrible battle was raging at Waterloo, Marshal Grouchy, with his corps, was actively engaged with Thielmann in the neighbourhood of Wavre. Napoleon's orders, verbally communicated to that marshal when he received the command, were to follow the Prussians, to attack them, and never lose sight of them. At noon, the cannonade at Waterloo was distinctly heard in Grouchy's army. But Grouchy was too well aware of the implicit obedience to orders which the emperor exacted to adopt these suggestions; and he received soon after instructions from Soult, dated 10 o'clock on the 18th of June, to continue his movement on Wavre.

On the following morning, Thielmann, who had now heard of the glorious victory on the preceding day, attacked Grouchy at daybreak, but was vigorously repulsed; and the French general was preparing to follow up his success and march upon Brussels, when the fatal news arrived of the rout at Waterloo on the preceding day, followed by orders from the emperor for Grouchy to retreat and effect a junction with the remainder of the army.<sup>1</sup> He faithfully obeyed his instructions, and rejoined the main body of the French army with 32,000 men and 96 guns in excellent order.

The campaign of Waterloo having been the intermediate cause of the overthrow of Napoleon, it has been made, as may well be believed, the subject of unfounded discussion and criticism, both on the continent and in Great Britain, and equally on the part of the allied writers as on that of the French. In the first place, it is evident, whatever the English writers may say to the contrary, that both Blücher and the duke of Wellington were unexpectedly assailed by Napoleon's invasion of Belgium on the 15th of June; and that he gained in the outset a great, and what had well-nigh proved a decisive, advantage by that circumstance. Being superior by nearly 70,000 troops to those at the command of the French emperor, it was to their interest never to have fought at a disadvantage, and not to have made a final stand till their two great armies were in a situation mutually to assist and support each other.

In justice, however, to Blücher, it must be recollected that he gave battle at Ligny in firm reliance on the effective co-operation of Wellington's army, 60,000 strong at least, in the latter part of the day. He had been promised by Wellington in person that he would be on the French flank that afternoon. It was to gain time for their co-operation that he prolonged, with such desperate resolution, the murderous strife in the villages, and all but gave his life to hold his ground. In a word, Blücher did at Ligny, on the 16th, what Wellington did on the 18th at Waterloo; and for the same reason, that he hourly expected a decisive attack from a friendly force on the enemy's flank. And this shows how much the English general's delay in concentrating his army disconcerted at the outset the plan of the campaign. The campaign would thus have been secured, and Napoleon overthrown in the very first encounter, without risk to either party.

In considering the comparative shares which the British and Prussian armies had in the achievement of this glorious victory, an impartial judgment must award the highest part to the British troops. On the other hand, it is equally clear that the arrival of Bülow's corps at that hour compelled Napoleon to detach the two divisions of Lobau's corps, and at last

[<sup>1</sup> Even after he first heard of Napoleon's defeat, Grouchy proposed to march upon Brussels, and from thence regain Flanders by passing along the rear of the allied armies, but he yielded to the unanimous wish of his generals for a direct retreat. — CHARRAS.?] ]



eleven battalions of his Young and Old Guard to maintain Planchenoit against them, and consequently withdrew them from the field of battle against the English. Had they not appeared in force on the field, as they did at half-past seven at night, it is doubtful if the French army would have been repulsed. Indeed, the nearly balanced state of the battle, at the time of the last attack by the imperial guard, renders it very doubtful if the English could have maintained their ground if Lobau's two divisions and the eleven battalions of the guard had, at that decisive moment, been thrown into the scale, and the attacking columns of infantry, as on all former occasions, had been flanked by powerful bodies of cavalry.

The loss of the battle of Waterloo to Napoleon seems to have been mainly owing to the imprudent use he made of nearly his whole cavalry in a desperate strife during the middle of the action. So sensible indeed was he that his defeat was chiefly owing to this cause, that he said afterwards that the cavalry, in the enthusiasm of the moment, engaged in part "without his orders." This, however, is not probable, when his imperious character is considered; and it affords another example of what his history so often showed, that he never took blame to himself if he could, justly or unjustly, lay it on another. Had Napoleon followed a different course: had he husbanded his horse till the close of the action, and then brought up his columns of the guard, supported by D'Erlon's and Reille's divisions, and screened on either flank by 5,000 of his formidable lancers and cuirassiers, it is difficult to see how it could have been resisted, when it is recollected how nearly such an attack had succeeded without the aid of such flank protection.<sup>o</sup>

#### THE EMPEROR'S SECOND ABDICATION (JUNE 23RD, 1815)

At Waterloo 72,000 Frenchmen had struggled against 115,000 enemies and had twice seen the victory escape from their hands. Such was this four days' campaign. The retreat was as disastrous as those of Leipsic and of Moscow; nothing had been prepared for a reverse; the whole of the baggage was lost. From Laon, where the army began to rally, Napoleon set out for Paris. He entered the capital at midnight and took up his quarters at the *Élysée*. He counted on the patriotism of the chambers. "If they support me," he said, "nothing is lost." But Fouché, minister of police, spread a rumour that the emperor was meditating an 18th Brumaire, and the chamber of representatives, on the motion of La Fayette, proclaimed that the country was in danger, summoned the national guard to its defence, and declared guilty of treason whosoever should attempt to dissolve it. Napoleon, stupefied by this attack, endeavoured to reassure the deputies and called for concord. "I see but one man between us and peace," said La Fayette; "we have done enough for him; our duty is to save the country."

A message was sent to the emperor demanding his abdication, and Napoleon resigned himself. "Frenchmen," he said, "I offer myself as a sacrifice to the hate of the enemies of France; my political life is ended: I proclaim my son, Napoleon II, emperor of the French." The assembly accepted this declaration, though without pronouncing the name of Napoleon II, who was then in the hands of the Austrians. A provisional government was appointed and a special commission was charged to negotiate with the allies. But the latter refused all offers of peace. Wellington and Blücher marched with all speed on Paris. This was a not imprudent step; the relics of Waterloo, the uninjured corps of Grouchy, had concentrated near the capital, where,



NAPOLEON ON BOARD THE BELLEROPHON  
(Published by Goupil, Paris)





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joined by numerous reinforcements, they formed an army of 100,000 men. More than 60,000 national guards and workmen defended the city, which had been fortified on the northern side. The hostile army was less numerous than the French; but the president of the provisional government, Fouché, wished to place the younger branch of the Bourbons on the throne, or, if this could not be accomplished, to return to the elder branch.

When Napoleon offered to put himself at the head of the troops, showing how easy it was to crush at least this first enemy, Fouché not only answered by a refusal, but he forced the emperor to quit Malmaison, whither he had retired.

Threatened with being delivered up to the enemy, Napoleon set out for Rochefort, thinking to seek a refuge in the United States. But all the passages were guarded. After long hesitation he presented himself on board the English ship *Bellerophon* and wrote to the regent of England:

“YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS:

An object of attack to all the factions which divide my country and of the enmity of the great powers of Europe. I have ended my political career and I come like Themistocles to take my seat at the hearth of the British people. I place myself under the protection of its laws, whose shelter I claim from your royal highness as from the most powerful, the most constant, and the most generous of my enemies.”

The English government treated as a prisoner of war the man who came so nobly to claim its hospitality. The emperor was conducted to the island of St. Helena in the middle of the Atlantic under a burning sky five hundred leagues from land. As, from the deck of the *Bellerophon*, he saw the coast of France disappear, he exclaimed: “Farewell, land of the brave! Farewell, dear France! A few traitors less and thou wouldst still be the great nation, the mistress of the world!” A cry of grief but not of justice; for the defections of the last hour had been without importance for his destiny, and France’s misfortunes came, not from treason, but from his mistakes.

### *Treaties of 1815*

In the wreck of the empire France well-nigh perished. Neither the chamber nor the government could have defended Paris save by an heroic madness which would have retarded her fall by a few days only. In spite of an address from seventeen generals who desired to continue the struggle, in spite of the ardour of the troops who still wished to fight, Davout signed a convention with Blücher, in accordance with which the French army was to withdraw behind the Loire without firing a shot. The allies took possession of Paris as of a conquered town. Blücher wanted to blow up the Pont d’Iéna and throw down the column of the Grande Armée. The museum of the Loire was despoiled of the masterpieces which victory had heaped up there: the libraries, the collections of treasures, were given up to pillage.

The chamber of deputies had thought that the invaders would deal with it; but the allies closed the hall of assembly and replaced Louis XVIII on the throne. This second restoration cost France dear: 100,000,000 francs had to be paid to the allies, then another war indemnity of 700,000,000 francs and 300,000,000 francs more for individual claims. This was not all: 150,000 foreign soldiers remained for three years on French soil, paid and fed at the French expense that they might do police duty for Europe in France. Finally the Treaty of Paris (November 20th) took from her Philippeville, Mariembourg, the duchy of Bouillon, Saarlouis, and the banks

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of the Saar, Landau, several communes of the country of Gex and Savoy, which the treaty of 1814 had left her ; in all 534,000 inhabitants. She was also deprived of the right to maintain garrisons in the principality of Monaco, beyond the Var, and the fortifications of Hüningen were to be destroyed and never rebuilt. This city had earned its fate by the heroic defence made there from the 25th of June to the 27th of August by a garrison of 135 men. Auxonne also had not capitulated before that date, fifty-five days after the second capitulation of Paris.

After twenty-five years of victories the national territory extended less far in certain directions than was the case a century earlier, at the end of the reign of Louis XIV ; and during that century the other powers had all immeasurably increased their strength. Prussia, from a simple electorate, had become a great monarchy ; Russia, then scarcely in existence, was now a colossus ; England had gained 100,000,000 subjects in the Indies and had seized the empire of the ocean. Thus France was not only weakened by what she had lost but by all that her rivals had gained.

Besides all this, the treaties of 1815 had perfidiously made gaps in her frontier. Philippeville, Mariembourg, and Bouillon commanded the passes of the Ardennes ; nothing was left on that side but Rocroi. Saarlouis afforded a base in the middle of the valley of the Saar, between the Moselle and the Vosges, and Landau defended the approaches of Strasburg ; these two cities were taken from France. Hüningen could threaten Bâle with her cannon or at least close her bridge on the Rhine ; so Hüningen was dismantled. Savoy restored to Piedmont placed France at a distance from the Alps, her frontier. Bavaria, her ancient ally in Germany, was placed at her gates in the Palatinate to become her enemy. Prussia was established in the valley of the Moselle in order to arrest her if she attempted to go out of Metz or Thionville ; the kingdom of the Netherlands was erected to keep her away from the mouths of the Maas and the Schelde, and in the Italian peninsula the gift of the kingdom of Lombardy to Austria re-established Austrian influence in the Italian peninsula at the expense of the French who were thus excluded. In a word, by the Treaty of the Holy Alliance, that Europe which Napoleon had desired to unite under his sway, was indeed united, but against France.

#### THE LAST YEARS OF NAPOLEON AT ST. HELENA (1815-1821 A.D.)

Napoleon did not long survive the most distinguished of his old companions in arms. Although he was subjected to no restraint at St. Helena, was permitted to ride over nearly the whole island, and enjoyed a degree of luxury and comfort, both in his habitation and in the society with which he was surrounded, which bore a striking contrast to the stern severity with which he had treated state prisoners ; yet his proud spirit chafed against the coercion of being confined at all to an island. The British government had given the most express instructions that he should be treated with all the respect due to his rank as a general, and with all the indulgence consistent with security against his escape ; but Sir Hudson Lowe, who was appointed to the military command of the island, proved an unhappy selection. His manner was rigid and unaccommodating, and his temper of mind, not softened by chivalrous ideas or high-bred society, was little calculated to alleviate the distress which the emperor endured during his detention.

But while all must regret that it should have been necessary, under any circumstances, to act with even seeming harshness towards so great a man, yet justice can see nothing to condemn in the conduct of the British

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government in this particular, whatever it may do as to want of courtesy in the governor of the island. It was indispensable to the peace of the world to prevent his escape; and the expedition from Elba had shown that no reliance could be placed either on his professions or his treaties. Detention and secure custody, therefore, were unavoidable; and every comfort consistent with these objects was afforded him by the British government. He was allowed the society of the friends who had accompanied him in his exile; he had books in abundance to amuse his leisure hours; saddle-horses in profusion were at his command; and the bill of fare of his table, which is given by Las Cases<sup>v</sup> as a proof of the severity of the British government, would be thought the height of luxury by most persons in a state of liberty. If the English government had acted towards Napoleon as he did to others who opposed him, they would have shot him in the first ditch, as he did the duke d'Enghien or Hofer, or shut him up in an Alpine fortress, as he did the cardinal Pacca.

But his mortal career in the scene of his exile and suffering was not destined to be of long duration. The vexation which he experienced at finding all the plans frustrated which had been formed—and they were many—for his escape, the fretting which he suffered from the sight of the English sentries round his dwelling, the recollection of his lost greatness, the prospect of endless detention, combined with a hereditary malady to produce severe complaints. He suffered much from these; but it was at first hoped that they would yield to the skill of his medical attendants. Gradually, however, the affections became more severe; and they at length assumed the decided symptoms of cancer in the stomach, to which his father had fallen a victim at a still earlier age. Towards the end of March, 1821, his strength sank rapidly; he dictated his will, with a great variety of minute bequests; but obstinately refused to take medicine, to which he had a great aversion. "All that is to happen," said he, "is written down; our hour is marked; we cannot prolong it a minute beyond what fate has predestined." He directed that his heart should be sent to the empress Marie Louise at Parma, and his stomach examined, to see if he had died of the hereditary malady.

At two o'clock on the 3rd of May, 1821, he received extreme unction, declared that he died in the Roman Catholic faith, which had been that of his fathers, and gave minute directions for his body being laid in state in a *chapelle ardente*, according to the form of the Catholic worship. "Can you not," said he to Antommarchi,<sup>w</sup> his physician, "believe in God, whose existence everything proclaims, and in whom the greatest minds have believed? I am of the religion of my fathers."<sup>1</sup> On the 5th, a violent storm of wind and rain arose; the death-struggle of Napoleon took place during its fury; and the last words he was heard to utter were, "*Tête d'armée*." He breathed his last at eleven minutes before six in the evening. In his will, which contained a vast number of bequests, were two very remarkable ones: the one was a request that his body might repose on the banks of the Seine, among the people whom he had loved so well; the other, a legacy of 10,000 francs to the assassin Cantillon, who had attempted recently before to murder the duke of Wellington.

Napoleon had himself indicated the place in St. Helena where he wished his remains to be interred, if they were not allowed to be removed to France. It was in a small hollow called Slane's Valley, where a fountain,

[<sup>1</sup> Lord Rosebery,<sup>x</sup> however, shows that Napoleon was generally skeptical of Christianity, and when not entirely materialistic, favoured Mohammed above Christ.]



shaded with weeping willows, had long been a favourite spot for his meditations. He was laid in the coffin in his three-cornered hat, military surtout, leather under-dress, and boots, as he appeared on the field of battle. The place of sepulture was consecrated by an English clergyman according to the form of the church of England. The coffin was lowered amidst the speechless emotion and tears of all present; three successive volleys of musketry and artillery announced that the mighty conqueror was laid in his grave; a simple stone, of great size, was placed over his remains; and the solitary willow wept over the tomb of him for whom the earth itself had once hardly seemed a fitting mausoleum.<sup>o</sup>

#### ESTIMATES OF NAPOLEON

##### *Lamartine's Estimate*

The intelligence of Napoleon's death changed the immense terror, which had beset Europe during his life, into immense pity. When people ceased to fear him, they ceased to hate. Impartial minds began to do him justice. Genius and glory were not denied to him; but it was deplored that so much genius and so much glory had been consecrated only to the personal greatness of one man, instead of being devoted to the amelioration of the world. This is where he failed to his destiny, to God, to humanity, to France, and to himself. The fine part of his character was not equalled by the good. He was the greatest man of modern times, but he was also the most sterile in results for the human race. He wasted France and Europe for fourteen years, without imparting to them an idea, a liberty, or a virtue. He shook the world without displacing it. France, however, which owes him a severe judgment, owes him also impartial gratitude. He made her illustrious, he made her resound with the splendour of his own name, during the early part of a century, through the universe. It is a service to aggrandise the name of one's country, for the name of a people is a spell in time and history, and a certain claim to immortality.<sup>y</sup>

##### *Edmond Schérer's Estimate*

History, in judging the total of Napoleon's career, will pronounce it sterile and disastrous. If one seeks to discover what he really wished, what he did, what he left, one finds nothing. He acted without object, lived upon chance, bestirred himself in a vacuum. He may have saved France, but to allow her to fall deeper than before. He did not give his great mind to the service of one grand idea. He has not attached his name to any work. He rendered no service to humanity. He represented nothing in history. He pursued that insensate and barbarous thing, war, for the sake of war. He piled up conquests after the manner of the ancient Eastern despots.

Napoleon was not a statesman because he had no political ideas. And what must we say, if, instead of placing ourselves at the point of view of French politics, we wish to judge him from that of civilisation. Civilisation is composed of moral ideas, and he misunderstood them all. What contempt of humanity! What ignorance of its instincts and its needs! What a misconception of modern society! What contempt of everything spiritual! He knew only force, and in matters of thought only that which serves force. He trampled under foot all rights. As he understood only the lower parts of government, so he understood in civil society only the material elements.

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He restored the church, but only to keep it under his hand and govern it. He reorganised the Institute, but he conceived eloquence, poetry, and literature only as charged with burning an eternal incense in his honour. He gave us a code, but he refused us institutions. He re-established our finances and suppressed our liberties. He showed himself, properly speaking, neither virtuous, nor vicious. He was one of the southern natures, in which the moral side of the man was simply wanting. That is why he is at once great and so small, so astonishing and so vulgar.<sup>z</sup>

*Sir William Napier's Estimate*

The annual expenditure of France was scarcely half that of England; and Napoleon rejected public loans, which are the life-blood of state corruption. He left no debt. Under him no man devoured the public substance in idleness merely because he was of a privileged class; the state servants were largely paid, but they were made to labour effectually for the state. They did not eat their bread and sleep. His system of public accounts, remarkable for its exactness, simplicity, and comprehensiveness, was vitally opposed to public fraud and therefore extremely unfavourable to corruption. Napoleon's power was supported in France by that deep sense of his goodness as a sovereign, and that admiration for his genius which pervaded the poorer and middle classes of the people; by the love they bore him, and still bear for his memory, because he cherished the principles of a just equality. They loved him also for his incessant activity in the public service, his freedom from private vices; and because his public works, wondrous for their number, their utility, and grandeur, never stood still: under him the poor man never wanted work. To France he gave noble institutions, a comparatively just code of laws, and glory unmatched since the days of the Romans. His *Cadaastre*, more extensive and perfect than the *Doomsday Book*, that monument of the wisdom and greatness of our Norman Conqueror, was alone sufficient to endear him to the nation. Rapidly advancing under his vigorous superintendence, it registered and taught every man the true value and nature of his property, and all its liabilities public or private. It was designed and ably adapted to fix and secure titles to property, to prevent frauds, to abate litigation, to apportion the weight of taxes equally and justly, to repress the insolence of the tax-gatherer without injury to the revenue, and to secure the sacred freedom of the poor man's home. The French *Cadaastre*, although not original, would, from its comprehensiveness, have been, when completed, the greatest boon ever conferred upon a civilised nation by a statesman.

To say that the emperor was supported by his soldiers, is to say that he was supported by the people; because the law of conscription, that mighty staff on which France leaned when all Europe attempted to push her down, — the conscription, without which she could never have sustained the dreadful war of antagonist principles entailed upon her by the Revolution, — that energetic law, which he did not establish, but which he freed from abuse and rendered great, national, and endurable, by causing it to strike equally on all classes, — the conscription made the soldiers the real representatives of the people. The troops idolised Napoleon, well they might; and to say their attachment commenced only when they became soldiers, is to acknowledge that his excellent qualities and greatness of mind turned hatred into devotion the moment he was approached. But Napoleon never was hated by the people of France; he was their own creation and they loved him

as never monarch was loved before. His march from Cannes to Paris, surrounded by hundreds of thousands of poor men, who were not soldiers, can never be effaced or even disfigured.<sup>b</sup>

### *Jules Barni's Estimate*

That monster, the legend of Napoleon, is still before us, always devouring truth and historical morality; and the pretended philosophy of history which sanctifies this legend by elevating the Cæsars as great and providential men, and presents malefactors as saviours of the people—this detestable philosophy of history has reached its greatest hour of triumph.

History does not offer us any subject of study more extraordinary. Where shall we find in fact a more marvellous fate than that of the man who, from a simple officer of artillery, made himself absolute master of France; filled all Europe with the terror of his arms; raised the throne which had been swept away by the storms of the Revolution, to place himself on it under the name of emperor, distributed the spoils of the conquered countries, as if to vassals, amongst his brothers and comrades-at-arms; endeavoured in fact in the nineteenth century to realise a universal monarchy; succumbed under the strokes of all the European powers united against him; saw himself compelled to abdicate, and reduced to reigning in the island of Elba, he the erstwhile master of France and Europe. He soon escaped to reappear for a moment at the Tuileries; and vanquished again, went to die a prisoner on a rock of the Atlantic Ocean, leaving a name as famous as that of Alexander and Cæsar, a name which was in every mouth and all imaginations, as he said himself at St. Helena.

But contrary to legend, Napoleon, far from being the continuer of the Revolution, had been, according to the expression of Madame de Staël, "the first of the counter-revolutionists." The 18th Brumaire, far from having been an act of salvation, had been a misfortune for France, and, in any case, a crime. In fact his exile to St. Helena had been the too just expiation, as badly borne as well merited, of the many outrages which had commenced at 18th Brumaire.<sup>bb</sup>

### *Lord Rosebery's Estimate*

By the philosopher, and still more by the philosopher who believes in the divine guidance of human affairs, the true relation of Napoleon to the world's history will be reduced to a very simple conception: that he was launched into the world as a great natural or supernatural force, as a scourge and a scavenger, to effect a vast operation, partly positive, but mainly negative; and that when he has accomplished that work he is withdrawn as swiftly as he came. Cæsar, Attila, Tamerlane, and Mohammed are forces of this kind; the last a much more potent and abiding factor in the universe than Napoleon—another proof, if proof were needed, of how small is the permanent effect of warfare alone on the history of mankind. These men make great epochs; they embody vast transitions; they perplex and appal their contemporaries; but when viewed at a distance, they are seen to be periodical and necessary incidents of the world's movement. The details of their career, their morals, their methods, are then judged, interesting though they may be, to be merely subordinate details.

Scavenger is a coarse word, yet it accurately represents Napoleon's first function as ruler. We do not discuss his military greatness; that is universally acknowledged. To the civilian eye he seems, at his best, the greatest



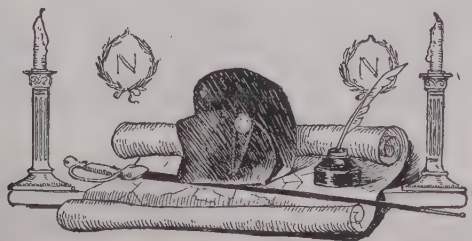
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of all soldiers. Later on, even civilians may see faults. But, let what will be subtracted, there remains an irreducible maximum of fame and exploit.

His financial management, by which he sustained a vast empire with power and splendour, but with rigid economy, and without a debt, is a marvel and a mystery. In all the offices of state he knew everything, inspired everything.

Into a career of a score of years he crowded his own dazzling career, his conquests, his triumphant assault on the Old World. In that brief space we see the lean, hungry conqueror swell into the sovereign, and then into the sovereign of sovereigns. Then comes the catastrophe. He loses the balance of his judgment and becomes a curse to his own country, and to all others. He has ceased to be sane. The intellect and energy are still there, but, as it were, in caricature; they have become monstrosities. Body and mind are affected by the prolonged strain to be more than mortal. Then there is the inevitable collapse; and at St. Helena we are watching, with curious compassion, the reaction and decline.

There is one question which English people ask about great men, which one cannot put with regard to Napoleon without a sense of incongruity which approaches the grotesque. Was Napoleon a good man? The irresistible smile with which we greet the question proves, we think, not the proved iniquity, but the exceptional position of this unique personality. Ordinary measures and tests do not appear to apply to him. We seem to be trying to span a mountain with a tape. But that he was great in the sense of being extraordinary and supreme we can have no doubt. If greatness stands for natural power, for predominance, for something human beyond humanity, then Napoleon was assuredly great. Besides that indefinable spark which we call genius, he represents a combination of intellect and energy which has never perhaps been equalled, never, certainly, surpassed. He carried human faculty to the farthest point of which we have accurate knowledge. Napoleon lived under the modern microscope. Under the fiercest glare of scrutiny he enlarged indefinitely the limits of human conception and human possibility. Till he had lived no one could realise that there could be so stupendous a combination of military and civil genius, such comprehension of view united to such grasp of detail, such prodigious vitality of body and mind. "He contracts history," said Madame d'Houedetot, "and expands imagination." "He has thrown a doubt," said Lord Dudley, "on all past glory; he has made all future renown impossible." This is hyperbole, but with a substance of truth. No name represents so completely and conspicuously dominion, splendour, and catastrophe. He raised himself by the use, and ruined himself by the abuse, of superhuman faculties.²



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<sup>b</sup> H. MARTIN, *op. cit.*—<sup>c</sup> COMTE FOY, *op. cit.*—<sup>d</sup> E. E. CROWE, *op. cit.*—<sup>e</sup> J. R. SEELEY, *op. cit.*—<sup>f</sup> R. SAVARY, *op. cit.*—<sup>g</sup> BARON DE NORVINS, *op. cit.*—<sup>h</sup> SIR WALTER SCOTT, *op. cit.*—<sup>i</sup> L. P. E. BIGNON, *op. cit.*—<sup>j</sup> C. DARESTE DE LA CHAVANNE, *op. cit.*—<sup>k</sup> J. B. R. CAPEFIGUE, *op. cit.*—<sup>l</sup> BARON FAIN, *Manuscrit de 1812*.—<sup>m</sup> COMTE PHILIPPE DE SÉGUR, *Histoire de Napoléon et de la Grande Armée*.—<sup>n</sup> MARQUIS DE CHAMBRAY, *Histoire de l'expédition de Russie*.—<sup>o</sup> J. B. A. CHARRAS, *Histoire de la campagne de 1815*.—<sup>p</sup> ADMIRAL TCHITCHAGOFF, *Mémoires inédits de la campagne de Russie*.—<sup>q</sup> E. E. CROWE, *History of France, 1868*.—<sup>r</sup> SIR R. T. WILSON, *Narrative of Events which occurred in 1812 during the invasion of Russia*.—<sup>s</sup> V. DURUY, *Histoire de France*.—<sup>t</sup> A. ALISON, *op. cit.*

## CHAPTER XXI. THE REVOLUTION OF EUROPE AGAINST NAPOLEON

<sup>b</sup> H. MARTIN, *op. cit.*—<sup>c</sup> J. R. SEELEY, *op. cit.*—<sup>d</sup> V. DURUY, *Histoire de France*.—<sup>e</sup> T. LAVALLÉE, *op. cit.*—<sup>f</sup> J. WHITE, *op. cit.*—<sup>g</sup> E. E. CROWE, *op. cit.*—<sup>h</sup> H. VON SYBEL, *Die Erhebung Europas gegen Napoleon I.*—<sup>i</sup> BARON DE NORVINS, *op. cit.*—<sup>j</sup> J. B. R. CAPEFIGUE, *op. cit.*—<sup>k</sup> C. DARESTE DE LA CHAVANNE, *op. cit.*—<sup>l</sup> VICOMTE DE MEAUX, *La Révolution et l'Empire*.

## CHAPTER XXII. THE END OF NAPOLEON (1814-1815 A.D.)

<sup>b</sup> SIR W. F. P. NAPIER, *History of the War in the Peninsula and in the South of France*.—<sup>c</sup> H. MARTIN, *op. cit.*—<sup>d</sup> J. WHITE, *op. cit.*—<sup>e</sup> V. DURUY, *Histoire de France*.—<sup>f</sup> SIMON KAISER, *Französische Verfassungsgeschichte von 1789*.—<sup>g</sup> L. P. E. BIGNON, *op. cit.*—<sup>h</sup> VICTOR PIERRE, *Histoire de la République de 1848*.—<sup>i</sup> C. DARESTE DE LA CHAVANNE, *op. cit.*—<sup>j</sup> LOUIS DE VIEL-CASTEL, *Histoire de la Restauration*.—<sup>k</sup> BARON DE NORVINS, *op. cit.*—<sup>l</sup> BARON JOMINI, *Vie politique et militaire de Napoléon*.—<sup>m</sup> FRIEDRICH MÜFFLING, *Geschichte des Feldzugs der Armee unter Wellington und Blücher, 1815*.—<sup>n</sup> VICTOR HUGO, *Les Misérables*.—<sup>o</sup> A. ALISON, *op. cit.*—<sup>p</sup> KARL W. VON GROLMAN UND DAMITZ, *Geschichte des Feldzugs 1815 in den Niederlanden*.—<sup>q</sup> J. B. A. CHARRAS, *op. cit.*—<sup>r</sup> J. R. SEELEY, *op. cit.*—<sup>s</sup> A. DE VAULABELLE, *Ligny-Waterloo, 1815*.—<sup>t</sup> COMTE FOX, *Histoire des guerres de la Péninsule sous Napoléon*.—<sup>u</sup> H. MAXWELL, *Life of Wellington*.—<sup>v</sup> COMTE DE LAS CASES, *Mémorial de Saint-Hélène*.—<sup>w</sup> C. F. ANTOMMARCHI, *Les derniers moments de Napoléon*.—<sup>x</sup> LORD ROSEBERY, *Napoleon: The Last Phase*.—<sup>y</sup> A. DE LAMARTINE, *Histoire de la Révolution de 1848*.—<sup>z</sup> EDMOND SCHÉRIER, *Études critiques sur la littérature contemporaine*.—<sup>bb</sup> JULES BARNI, *Napoléon et son histoire, M. Thiers*.





